Afternoon Discoveries: November 8, 2026

Emerging Writers, Debuts, & Reading Worth Revisiting

AMONG THE LETTERS
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Emerging Writers, Debuts, & Reading Worth Revisiting

A help desk fields calls about wheat that moves like the sea, and a wolf waits quietly in the aisles of a Dollar General. Today's emerging and debut voices come from The Masters Review, Reckon Review, Cleaver, Maudlin House, and Fictive Dream. In the paid section, a grandfather tells his shipwreck story, a pizza summons the dead, and a cleaning bot keeps sweeping a ruined abbey.

The back shelf brings two debut conversations, a Canadian poet's six answers, and a return visit to Leacock's Mariposa.

All links in today's edition were checked against the linked publication, magazine, or publisher page on November 8, 2026.

Featured Discovery

Global Environmental Support Hotline - Deahna Fumarol

This story unfolds entirely as support tickets sent to a hotline for environmental anomalies. A wheat field moves in waves with no wind, and later a second moon hangs over town while the stars stop arranging themselves. The automated replies grow stranger and kinder as the template runs out. Deahna Fumarol, a writer and artist in Newport, Oregon, placed third in The Masters Review Prize for New Narratives, judged by Charles Yu. It is a chilling, patient, and surprisingly tender debut find.

Read "Global Environmental Support Hotline" at The Masters Review

The Discovery Desk

I Don’t Think I’ve Told You Anything That Isn’t True - Siobhan Ring

The narrator is shopping for an ice cube tray, a mop, and markers in primary colours when a wolf appears beside the aluminum foil. The wolf yawns, watches, and vanishes, then returns as the errands carry on. Siobhan Ring, who grew up in the Adirondack foothills and now writes from the Pacific Northwest, makes the ordinary and the uncanny share one aisle. The story moves like a quiet trance with an edge of dread. Its last cold glass of water lands beautifully.

Read “I Don’t Think I’ve Told You Anything That Isn’t True” at Reckon Review

Paint and Sip - Swetha Amit

A mother and her eleven-year-old daughter sit in a paint-and-sip studio, copying a wine bottle tilted over a glass. The husband has not come this time, and the absence shapes every brushstroke. The daughter asks what wine tastes like, and the mother answers that it changes over time. Swetha Amit, a Writers Grotto member nominated for Best Microfiction, keeps this flash piece spare and luminous. The final image of drying canvases side by side is quietly devastating.

Read “Paint and Sip” at Cleaver

Shimmering Strappy Sandals and Yellow Dresses - Arva Bhavnagarwala

A wealthy woman with a cane asks her driver to stop on Nakhuda Street in Mumbai, a lane she has not walked in years. Her mother once brought

her here to shop for bright, flimsy dresses that would fade and lose their beads. Arva Bhavnagarwala, a pediatrician whose debut novel is A Little Bit of Love, writes the memory in a close second person. The story honours a mother's quiet courage in leaving a dull life. It sparkles and stings at once.

Read "Shimmering Strappy Sandals and Yellow Dresses" at Reckon Review

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I Can't Stop Thinking About Orange Juice - Jordan Moffatt

Phoebe mentions a craving for orange juice on the way to a meeting, and then a colleague from the Orange County office brings it up too. Soon the whole world cannot stop talking about orange juice. Baby names follow, appointments are missed, and speeches veer off script. Jordan Moffatt builds the absurdity with deadpan care, while his narrator abstains because of reflux. It is a funny, oddly wistful piece about desire and the thoughts we cannot shake.

Read "I Can't Stop Thinking About Orange Juice" at Maudlin House

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Thank you for spending some time with this afternoon's edition. Below this point are six more stories from emerging and established voices, three conversations with debut and Canadian writers, and three special recommendations worth revisiting.

Special Recommendations can be found near the bottom of the article.

More From the Discovery Desk

Autobiography - Lou Gallo

Grandma hobbles in from the kitchen with a familiar bowl of pork in golden gravy, and six people take their usual places at the table. Everyone hopes Grandfather will tell his story about serving as a telegraph operator on a ship lost to German mines. Lou Gallo, a New Orleans native and Professor Emeritus at Radford University, writes family memory as a gathering of food, ritual, and old tales. The details are warm and exact. It is a gentle Sunday read from Fictive Dream.

Read “Autobiography” at Fictive Dream

Gifts - Molly Giles

Letitia has not left her house in months, watching from behind the curtains as a young handyman named Scotty fixes her sagging gate. Soon he is paying for things, and she wonders whether that means he loves her. Molly Giles, author of two novels and five story collections, balances comedy and ache in every line. Letitia is sharp, flirtatious, and frail all at once. The closing scene, with dust motes turning gold in her palm, is unforgettable.

Read “Gifts” at Cleaver

I Never Eat Pineapple Pizza - Yang Zefan

The narrator carries a laminated card asking strangers never to offer pineapple pizza. The last slice summoned part of a dead father through the drain, and an earlier one ended in a brief marriage to a woman named Fan. Now there is a support group that meets every Saturday at a Pizza Hut. Yang Zefan writes surreal comedy with a straight face and a soft heart. The final ritual of a pizza left to grow cold is perfectly judged.

Read “I Never Eat Pineapple Pizza” at Maudlin House

Clown Picture - Amelia Anthony

At a Halloween party full of magazine people, a tall stranger dressed as a Frenchwoman insists she knows the narrator from somewhere. None of the usual answers satisfy her, from college to childhood summer camp. The mystery seems to involve a clown picture and a man the narrator once knew. Amelia Anthony writes social unease with sly precision. Its last glimpse through two passing train windows is both funny and eerie.

Read “Clown Picture” at Maudlin House

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situation with tacos - Per Olvmyr

This tiny hybrid piece moves through three situations at Taco Bell, with tortilla chips, guacamole, and finally a taco. The speaker breaks chips into crumbs and studies the shades inside the guacamole. Every sentence runs without capitals, as if thinking aloud over lunch. Per Olvmyr turns close attention into gentle comedy about how hard it is to say what anything tastes like. It is a two-minute read that rewards slow chewing.

Read “situation with tacos” at Maudlin House

The Fall of the Automatous Abbey - Maria Haskins

Long after the final attack, the wrecked Automatous Abbey tumbles through a nebula while a cleaning bot named Seal keeps scrubbing its floors. Seal was freed from the asteroid mines and chose its humble purpose while other machines became Worshippers of the Song of the Universe. Maria Haskins, a Swedish-Canadian writer living outside Vancouver, gives this small machine enormous dignity. The prose rises toward something like a hymn. It is a moving story about devotion in ordinary work.

Read “The Fall of the Automatous Abbey” at Translunar Travelers Lounge

Beyond the First Shelf

Debut Author Spotlight: Kate Blakinger - Kate Blakinger

Kate Blakinger’s debut collection, How to Court Disaster, won the Iowa Short Story Award and was written over nearly twenty years. In this Masters Review essay, she traces that long road with honesty and humour. She describes drafting one fairy tale retelling in four days during graduate school, while other stories took years of rewrites. Her account will reassure anyone whose book is taking longer than planned. It is generous and practical writing about patience.

Read “Debut Author Spotlight: Kate Blakinger” at The Masters Review

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Six Questions with David Ly - All Lit Up with David Ly

All Lit Up talks with poet David Ly about his new collection, Ritual, Interrupted, which brings his experience of depression and anxiety to the foreground. He explains how dark imagery can feel comforting and how hope threads through even the heaviest poems. He was surprised to find many pieces written in second and third person. That distance, he suggests, made difficult material lighter to hold. It is a short, thoughtful look at Canadian poetry in progress.

Read “Six Questions with David Ly” at All Lit Up

Finding Tenderness in the Grotesque: Alyson Mosquera Dutemple Discusses Marvelous Freaks of Nature! - Kim Weldin with Alyson Mosquera Dutemple

Alyson Mosquera Dutemple spent years writing romantic comedies for the screen before turning to fiction. Her debut collection follows outsiders, eccentrics, and oddballs through a world that is grotesque, funny, and tender. In this Debutiful interview, she talks with Kim Weldin about loneliness, mixtapes, and letting a story surprise her. She traces the title story’s book of freaks back to the curiosity books her children left around the house. It is a lively conversation about debut craft.

Read “Finding Tenderness in the Grotesque” at Debutiful

Special Recommendations

The Hostelry of Mr. Smith - Stephen Leacock

Stephen Leacock opens Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town by inviting readers into Mariposa, a lakeside Ontario town much like a dozen others. Its steamer goes nowhere in particular, and nobody uses the official names of its lake or main street. Soon Josh Smith and his hotel take centre stage, with all the town's affectionate vanity on display. Leacock's comedy is warm and exact. This is a perfect Canadian classic to revisit on a Sunday afternoon.

Read "The Hostelry of Mr. Smith" at Project Gutenberg

The Ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Drone - Stephen Leacock

The Church of England in Mariposa stands on a side street where the maple trees are thickest. Beneath two wild plum trees, Rural Dean Drone reads Theocritus in the Greek beside his yellow beehive. Leacock follows the gentle clergyman through church debts and well-meant schemes that go wonderfully astray. The humour is affectionate rather than cruel. It remains one of the loveliest chapters in Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town.

Read "The Ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Drone" at Project Gutenberg

The Darling - Anton Chekhov

Olenka, the daughter of a retired collegiate assessor, sits on her back porch while the theatre manager Kukin laments another day of rain. She loves him, then others, and each time she takes on the opinions of whoever she loves. Anton Chekhov writes her with a tenderness that has puzzled and moved readers for more than a century. Constance Garnett's translation keeps the warmth intact. It is a story well worth revisiting with fresh eyes.

Read "The Darling" at Project Gutenberg

Thank you for spending part of your day among the letters with us.

Many of today's pieces find the strange inside the everyday. A hotline answers the sky, a wolf waits by the foil, and a whole town cannot stop craving orange juice. Others keep company with memory, from a grandfather's shipwreck story to a mother's bright dresses on a Mumbai street. New voices and old favourites share the same table here. We hope a few of these pages keep you company this Sunday.

I hope one of today's pieces gives you somewhere worth staying for a while.

Take care!