

Room

LITERATURE, ART, AND FEMINISM SINCE 1975

40.2

Our Rubble,
Our Loss

Featuring:

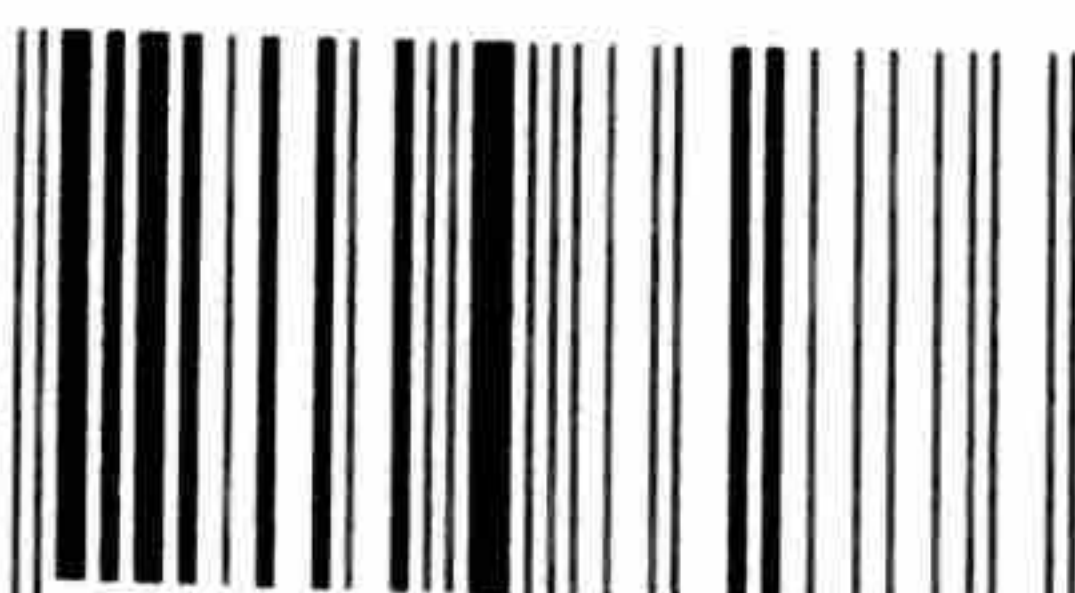
2016 Contest Winners

New Fiction by
Carleigh Baker

An Interview with
Chelsea Rooney

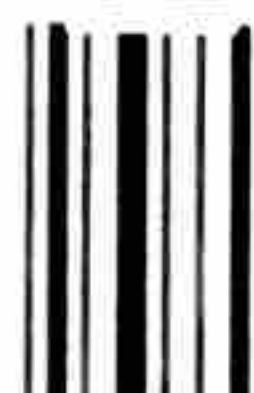


\$12 CAD / \$10 USD



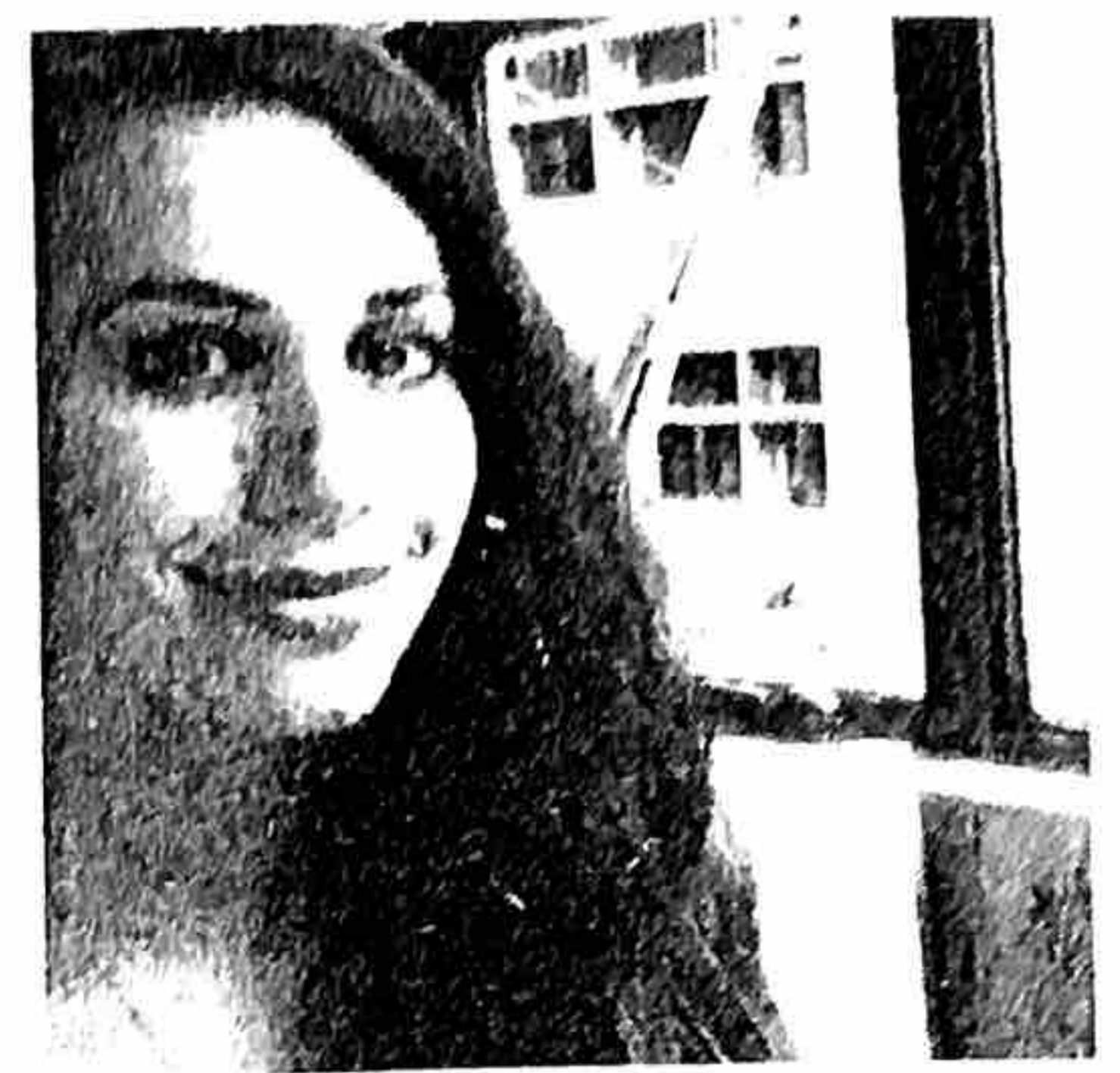
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BackRoom

Lauren Kirshner



Lauren Kirshner is a Toronto-based writer and the founder of Sister Writes, a free, intersectional, creative writing organization for cis and trans women affected by experiences of trauma, marginalization, mental health issues, and other extraordinary life circumstances. Since 2010, Sister Writes has mounted over two hundred workshops across Toronto, numerous literary events and launches, and published seven issues of their magazine, which features writing by their program's participants.

What inspired you to found Sister Writes? Around the time my first novel came out, I worked with Parkdale Street Writers, a terrific program that offered creative writing workshops for at-risk youth led by authors. When I learned that no similar program existed for women, I became determined to fill the gap.

What was your original vision for Sister Writes? I wanted to create a platform for culturally diverse women to connect with each other, receive artistic mentorship, and share their wisdom and experiences with the community. Powerful writing comes from taking risks on the page, and risk-taking becomes much easier when we feel supported. My aim was to build an environment of trust, fun, and creativity, where women could write fearlessly.

Why do you think Sister Writes has been so successful? So many talented women writers, artists and curators have lent tremendous support to the program: Anna Gallagher-Ross, Catherine Graham, Hoa Nguyen, Meredith Sadler, Souvankham Thammavongsa, Zoe Whittall, and many more. The Arts Councils have been hugely supportive. Most of all, Sister Writes is co-creative, which means that the participants themselves also guide the direction the program takes—from what we read in workshop, to what our magazine looks like, to how our launches are run. Knowledge flows in multiple directions; all of us are leading the program. Diversity and collaboration are Sister Writes' greatest strengths.

—Cara Lang