

GyroScope Review

FINE poetry to TURN your WORLD around



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GYROSCOPE REVIEW

fine poetry to turn your world around

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Gyroscope Review accepts previously unpublished contemporary poetry submissions through our online submissions system, gyroscopereview.submittable.com/submit. Please read our guidelines before submitting.

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FROM THE EDITORS

Here we are in April already, and *Gyroscope Review* is one year old. We hope you enjoy our anniversary issue and all the wonderful poems we bring you. While putting the issue together, something struck me as interesting. It took a couple of read-throughs, but I finally identified it. This could be the precipitation issue. Many of the poems mentioned water in some way, shape or form. Look at this list of watery terms found in the poems:

| | | | | | |
|--------|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| Flood | Lagoon | Creek | Pool | Drip | Shower |
| Sea | Ocean | Spray | Bay | Hail | Fog |
| River | Waves | Snow | Tides | Squall | Foam |
| Stream | Storms | Well | Drop | Briny | Steam |
| Rain | Pond | Tears | Gulf | Splash | Moist |

There's probably a few terms I missed, but I thought it was a great collection for spring, a time of rebirth and renewal. Even in poems about loss there was a melancholy to hopeful air. That's one of the things I love about reading for *Gyroscope Review*: the poems seem to come in waves of similar themes and subjects.

Jump into *Gyroscope*'s Spring Issue with a cannonball splash. If you find a poem that moves you, strikes you, or just plain tickles your fancy, give the author some feedback. Drop them a line (most have ways to contact them in the author bios), give a shout out on Facebook or Twitter, let them know there are folks out there on our watery planet enjoying their hard work. It's National Poetry Month; let's celebrate our poets!

Constance Brewer, Editor

In our first year of publication, we've gotten poems from poets far and wide, from people writing in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere. Some of our contributors have published well-received books of poetry, including James Graham whose new book, *Becoming a Tree: Poems 2007-2015*, we reviewed on our website, and Alexis Rhone Fancher, whose book, *State of Grace: The Joshua Elegies*, won an honorable mention at the Los Angeles Festival of Books in March. Isabella David McCaffrey's book, *The Voices of Women*, is newly-released by Finishing Line Press. Sandra Lindow was nominated for a 2016 Rhysling Award for her science fiction poem, *An Introduction to Alternate Universes: Theory and Practice*, which we published in the Winter 2016 issue of *Gyroscope Review*.

We have also worked hard to streamline the process of how we put this magazine together, including a less-cumbersome acceptance contract implemented during our last reading period. We've set ourselves apart by sending our contributors a PDF proof of the magazine before it goes live; this has allowed us to prevent a few little mistakes. We've stuck to our philosophy of

publishing work that has not appeared elsewhere, although we did have one poem early on that appeared in a journal in Europe.

So, what's in store for *Gyroscope Review's* second year? A redesigned logo, a new typeface for our cover, and, this month, some fun posts on our website to celebrate National Poetry Month. Co-editor Constance Brewer had a little fun with the design work; we hope you like it. And I'm having fun putting together a list of links to newly-published books of poetry that deserve to be shared. One of the things we are quite clear about is that poets and readers are a fantastic community. We are honored to be part of it.

Kathleen Cassen Mickelson, Editor

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Fine poetry to turn your World around



Gyroscope Review

TORNADO
by Tobi Alfier

Kansas City, convention center,
sixteenth floor. Sick, gray-yellow outside,
so thick, all that's visible is trash
hitting the windows, trying to get in.

Newspaper, metal, wood—
like when a bird strikes the breakfast patio
on a stormy morning, falls back stunned,
and you're helplessly trapped inside by the flood.

The noise, the wind, day and night look the same.
No sirens that high up, no television warnings,
no elevator. Can't see out to be frightened of rain,
no thunder to be heard, no lightning.

This is the muffled nightmare that silences
everyone, the dream never familiar.
Conventioneer with a mini-bar, held hostage
by the storm, a glass coddled in your shaking fist.

SUGAR MAPLES IN MARCH
by John Grey

Cold nights still grip trunks fierce
but days are warmer,
and when shadows lift,
sap rises.

The weather is like
an unwitting cook
following an ancient recipe:
freeze then thaw then freeze again.

Spikes are hammered into bark.
Buckets wait beneath, mouths open.

Dregs of gray snow
live out their last days.
Birds whistle joy
at the shape the world is taking.

The tapping of the trees
is but a modest annotation
to great changes coming.

And yet, a drop forms at the edge
of that iron spigot,
eventually falls,
hits bottom with a silent ping.

Winter can go now.

AT HOME FOREIGN
by Clyde Kessler

I checked. Today's Irish word of the day is *líomóid*.
Lemon. It sounds bitter, the sample sentence is bitter.
I am still checking the sound, the peeling I bite. It cracks
the sunlight because it's a dream, and it's October, squeezed
from Florida. It sounds *limmish* with some sugar midday.
Or it wants to be a tree sprouting from a voice. Lemon-ish
will trip a jetty, a flock of sandpipers, the low-tide shells.

It means I will have to log off, and walk out to find broken
sand-dollars and pieces of razor-clam wedged lightly into
a sand castle one kid abandoned. It sounds like gulf waters
are heating the Emerald Isle where some moonlight begins,
where the moon's a lemon slice. You'll tell me the future
with this lemon rind and some tea leaves. The future holds
the sky across a runway, jets taxiing with darkness. Stars,
pressing down, can always sneak by us without our words.

FOR ROGER
by Jayne Marek

The ferry, underway, plunges, a hard heavy light-box against void

Somewhere in the night Strait flow strings of photospheres,
plankton and families of sea creatures that flash to each other

A man I passed on the ferry stairs seemed familiar, as tall as you
who have been gone for five years, or six, I forget
since once the dark sea receives a man, all days cease to be counted,

for him, all colors submerge,
he cannot acknowledge a nod or the static announcing embarkation,
the grind of seismic motors will not rouse him

as the lights of the shore let go finger by finger: blurs of red and yellow
like your Hawaiian shirts, splashes of exuberant rainbow fantasies
I'm going to get better

You knew you were dying from drink
you apologized to your son
trying doesn't necessarily work

So low a tide here we hang offshore for many minutes, not arriving,
unseen water moves like years while we are still

There are so few of us aboard
I almost believe we don't exist

BY THE DIGHTY, AFTER FLOODS
by Beth McDonough

Waist high, debris wattles trunks,
carrier bags remember flood height.
Finger twigs droop, catch drip
half-drown clog ghosts
as slipbanks pock with a rush-up
slewed by fled rats.
Beside the spate of this town's
bourne, whatever passed
still pulses. I choose
to suppose myself safe.

ANTICIPATIENCE
by Norma C. Wilson

Even in seasons of drought,
finches turn yellow-gold;
and cherry trees don't pale
pink crowns more fragile than glass.

We rely on the wind and clouds
to provide. Yet thunderstorms cause
updrafts. Air rises and cools. Ice
crystals form and grow into stones
too heavy to float.

Hail smashes the blossoms of spring.
Yet after the storm, sun dazzles
Earth's jewels, warming the backs
of turtles, mallards, snakes.

Earth grows tipsy in spring! A turkey
struts with tail fan wide. We inhale wild
plums' sweet breath. At night we check the forecast,
fingers crossed that we won't get frost.

Days we're lucky, rain gently washes
lace-like flowers and lime green leaves
as emerald grass glows.

BIRDS, 3
by Toti O'Brien

She remembers
when she saw flamingos
by the thousands.
First on land
necks bent
some perched on one leg like a crane.
Throbbing pink
her favorite color.
Waves of it
the hemorrhage spread till the horizon.
Then the flight
breathtaking and sudden.

In the car
she recalls her husband.
Her child... was he there?
Someone else drove.
Someone shared the back seat.
Circumstances have gone.
Only stays the flamingo flight
in the sunset.

Strange.
No feeling
surrounds the vision.
If she insists
digging scraps out of mud
her throat knots itself.
A stab of pain surfaces.
Must be why she
suppressed it.
Isn't it what
consistently
fills the blank?

She recalls they
drove through the swamps...
that is where flamingos live.
Immense moors
a borderless region.
The still waters
are peach tinted
packed with miniature shrimps
the birds gulp alive.
Those small critters
make their feathers rosy
like dreams.

They drove
through the swamps
until dark.
The road was a ribbon
squeezed among mirrors, scarlet.
She's quite sure the birds
made a noise
when they lifted.
First a shuffling
like tearing pages and pages.
Then a cry
getting distant.

LEARNING TO DANCE THE DIFFICULT STEPS
by Matthew Smart

The notes are always there, if you're attuned
in twilight and dusk, in daydust and dawn
A low b-flat drawn along the spine of our days.

A keening in the rigging, a poorsoul thrum
squalls of gust and lust and the what left behind,
The music of the you and the neveryet you.

And how some fill themselves on its steady wind,
that hollowshins boy airtrotting in place,
pulling kohleye deeper into his maelstrom.

but children are inured to that steady cure
for recklessness we relics call age.
We ache for another spar to throw away.

STILL TALKING ABOUT ENDINGS
by Kelli Allen

Tell me how to roll-up and flee. When I touch
your wrist with three fingers and am checking
not for pulse but for birds, lilies, trapped, both
in their unfurling, under your skin, maybe
mine, tell me how to instead ache on my own.

Tonight you fill your mouth with pebbles
collected from our river's narrow bank
and this, too, is refusal to listen. How
can you hear the stories I surrender
with mica between your tooth and jaw?

Once there were two of us. And now
the briny pears are blossoming and every
walk I take without you is a reminder
that we left what matters spilt over silk
sheets we spread together to mark *this* and *ours*.

CLEARING, LIBERTY WASHINGTON
by Roberta Feins

Sunny field by the river
squared with knotted wire, grass
apron-high, peopled by bees
and two lilacs, one white, one lavender

in full flower, but without the house
whose woman planted them, without
a jelly glass to hold their spires
on a wooden table next to a dish of peas.

Isn't this the way you'd rather
be remembered? Not "Wife"
or "Mother" but as lilacs,
full fragrant in the senses
of a stranger on a late spring day.

RENAISSANCE
by Oonah V Joslin

Under a sense of duty we returned. We stood on the hill outside the house that was your home, remembering friends and loved ones we longed to see, now gone. The sparkling bay when Summer warmed our hearts. That night the moon hung pregnant with dark thoughts; whispering how long we'd dwelt in the umbra; bad blood not of our making; and how they say blood's thicker – but it's not. The super-moon eclipsed the past; expunging it, absolving it. The cord that held you snapped and left a shining face. Light we turned North as if for the first time; no part of the heart left behind. North with no backward glance or stalking shadow.

A super-blood-moon
hung womb-like over the bay.
Severed connections.

MY FATHER MAILS ME HIS WIFE'S CLOTHING
by Karen Loeb

I will not wear her clothes that
you have sent me, lovingly folded
and packed, sweater upon sweater,
cashmere and silk jackets she probably
never wore once her feet hit California soil.
I will not wear her blouses, the ones
with pearl buttons up the spine
and the faded green one with no sleeves.
I will not wear the mink hat
and the cracked leather gloves with
the blue silk lining. I will not wear
the India print blouse, though it's
probably the only item that appeals
to me. I will not wear the high heels
with scuffed soles. I will not wear
these clothes that are forty years out of
date, that were made for a body that
is not mine, that are filled with moth
holes and material snags and cigarette
burns and permanent stains. I appreciate
your thoughts, that you want her
somehow to live on even though she's
gone. I'm glad the Rocky Mountains
are between us, that there's little chance
you'll visit, so you won't see that I haven't
kept a stitch of them. I'm grateful your
note, scrawled on yellow legal pad paper, said,
"Wear what you can, and donate the rest."

THE TRUTH
by Tom Montag

Word-hoarder,
speaker of

what is seen
and unseen,

what is cloud
and what is sky

behind the cloud,
what is cold

and what is the
color of cold,

as Li Po
would say.

Word-hoarder,
old poet,

speak. Tell us
the truth until

it hurts. Then tell
us more. That is

your business.

DEAD LINE
by Claire Scott

The line is dead
It has been dead for six months
I pay \$69 a month for a dead line
I never call AT&T to have it fixed
Why you may ask (if you haven't turned the page)
You don't know the half of it

A year ago my mother lost her mind
Now in a home (well, hardly a home) with others
Still looking for theirs, or maybe having forgotten they ever had one
Inmates doddering and drooling, soiling their Depends
Getting lost in hallways, hollering at caregivers,
Determined to escape at night

She called me fifty times a day
They are starving me
They lock me in a closet
Steal my money
Get me out of here
You are useless
I despise you

I cut the line to the phone
With a pair of sharp scissors
Found in the back of a kitchen drawer
And that's the all of it

CHATTERMARKS
by Michael G. Smith

- Small, curved scars in bedrock resulting from the vibrational chipping action of rock fragments in a glacier's base, each mark roughly at right angles to the direction the glacier was moving;

- Franklin Burroughs

As I lay down
the *chuck chuck chuck*
of the adze
chipping into a pine plank
follows me,
spreads before me,
returns me to Dad
building planter boxes
for flowers and vegetables.
Generous with his labors,
harsh with his mouth,
the boxes rotted long ago,
and yet again as I again
empty myself for sleep
I hear him chipping, chipping,
chipping to get the dovetail
joints just right,
and because sleep
falls like the chips
of the plank that was,
the *chuck chuck chucks* are,
the *chuck chuck chucks* are not,
and no longer his
they have become mine,
they are mine
and never were.

with gratitude to William Faulkner

MY SISTER TELLS ME
by Kathleen McClung

and we hear
barking barking

in a minute
she will feed him
fill this silence
between us
with can opener hum
careful not to press
jagged edge of lid
into whorls
of fingertips

but she doesn't
stand up just yet
from beanbag chair
color of jack o'lanterns
on our porch

she doesn't
fasten the top button
of her Jordache jeans
because she can't any more
because it's 1979
she's sixteen
and can't hide
her belly any more

and she's wishing
for something
other than this silence
other than my lips carved
in a tight line
no candle inside
to make me glow

AMAZING GRACE – PERFORMED MORE THAN TEN MILLION TIMES A YEAR
by Tricia Knoll

I was born sorting yellowing linens
in that steamer trunk of heritage.

Have I finished airing fabrics
in open-window blow of compassion?

Does fingering privilege mean
I commit supremacy?

Razor-blade words and blood on our hands.
How deep are cuts in remnants?

I eavesdrop on my milquetoast words
– eavesdrop, where the rain falls from the roof

splash-dash. I draw columns, humming.

| Privilege | Supremacy |
|--|--|
| well-soaped saddle smells of fine leather | a skeletal horse races a shooting star |
| my telescope sees the brightest stars | assume a rising star has your name on it |
| white men walk away from Waco | a black man serves three years at Rikers for stealing a backpack |
| a child's inheritance in a safety deposit box | a stone mausoleum with steep caretaker fees |
| the weight of the lost umbilical cord | the navel you live with until you die |
| unopened birthday presents of complacency | arrogance bound in centuries of tree rings |
| a fat beast of burden snug in its traces | the bull god's gold sarcophagus |

| | |
|--|---|
| a salt water tank in the dentist's office | shark-infested waters float a gone-fishing sign |
| water-mirage on the hot highway headed home | blind spot in the rear view mirror |
| shadow boxing with name calling, racism and inequity | the black war eagle's menace over barbed-wire borders |

This and more. Why we sing *a wretch like me*.

TEN O'CLOCK, THE DAY ALREADY THREATENING
by Kari Gunter-Seymour

Light making the whole place look queer,
angles and shadows, sky dark,
ratcheting everything down.
Tops of the oaks toss back and forth,
clacking their branches together.

Behind them a rumbling.
Thunder? Someone's truck gearing
down to take the hill,
life somehow slipping out of gear?

I taught you to dream this yard in Ohio
where the grass holds the shapes of your feet,
where clouds are the breaths of trees,
the wind their voices.

Prayed it would ward you,
the blood and bone smell of it,
overthrowing the hiss in your head.
They can say anything, do anything,
bring anything out at any moment,
hope to do you in.

You will have spring rain,
splashing newly sprouted grass,
the tin roof, the window sill,
the smell of fresh baked bread,
your rascally black dog
haunched and cock-eyed,
waiting by the mailbox.

WHAT THEY DON'T SAY WHEN YOU'RE FINALLY RIGHT
by Rich Ives

Death is not the end of it any more than life
is the beginning.
Where do you think
you've been all these years?

What is this god you speak of but a horse cart
without the horse.
What is this life force
that comes with its own death?

Temporary could mean seeing without deliberation,
or several examples of the same thing repeating itself.
It might appear to be boring if everything around it
hadn't changed completely in the meantime.

One way is to take it upon your self. The other way
is to take it upon your other self, the one you hide,
so that no others take it upon themselves to take you
up on your word, which is yet another self. Shut up.

You could not tell us what you're thinking, or
you could tell us what
you're not thinking, which
would then become a lie, or you could sit in the corner

and do everything at once, if only you could find the corner
of the multiple choice question,
or better yet select a subject
to change your mind about before your mind changes.

Half of everything is enjoying yourself, and the other half
is enjoying yourself when you're not enjoying your self.
Perhaps you could try to be more reasonable.

IRON PENNIES
by Michael Brockley

(Inspired by "Possibilities" by Wislawa Szymborska)

I choose Mexican wedding cakes, crunchy peanut butter and persimmon pudding. I choose Chevrolets on Kansas highways on November nights. I choose cheerleaders on teams with no trophies. Brunettes in black dresses. The virgin saints. I choose German shepherds, oracles that howl at thunder. I choose the Ghost Who Walks over Superman. Marvel over D.C. I choose unrequited love. And those Grimm's fairy tales refulgent with bitter queens. I choose deafness. I choose the buzz of wasps plotting new revolts in their January nests. I choose Calvin and Hobbes. And the enemy who is us. On the day the ACME anvil falls, I choose Wile E. Coyote. I choose a stranger's Pandora's box. After last call, I choose saxophone solos and westbound trains. I choose the day after in Triggering Town and the leap between needing and wanting. I choose the stiff arm. I choose the spin move. Soundtracks of songs with "run" in their titles. Silver Certificates and iron pennies. And dictionaries written to rescue extinct words. I choose Rosalita. I choose Ruthie in her honky-tonk lagoon. I choose van Gogh. No, I choose Miró and Breakfast of Champions. I choose the god who chose not to believe in me.

MOVING ON
by Laurie Kolp

I submerge fingers
in raw meat and squeeze
curlicues into a mound.

The seasoning squishes
egg yolk, ketchup, bread crumbs
mixed by hands

as cold as winter nights
without you here. Soon enough
hunger will call me

to the table. I'll savor
your favorite meal, your plate
my empty heart.

CAR TIME IS
by Sandra Lindow

Time is too slow for those who wait
*And time is too swift for those who fear**

Cars are womb wonders, mobile mothers,
umbilicals that bind us every day,
warm in winter, cool in summer.
Driving to work, bursting through sunlit,
leaf change loose fall October,
my little blue Fiesta was easy labor,
sky like the cover of *It's a Beautiful Day*.

I always thought danger came
in big packages:
semis, cement mixers, garbage, gravel, beer--
big guys, big trucks,
a cocktail mix of fear,

but I was blindsided
down by the Jesus Church,
slammed sideways by a Buick,
barging a stop sign,
swung like sunset at midday
past the Macho Messiah
coffee house sandwich board.

Emerging mostly unharmed,
from the modus of my operandi,
I met my Nemesis midstreet,
little lady in bottle-sized bifocals,
grandmother in go-to-meeting clothes,
weeping her way to a funeral,
blessed that it wasn't ours,
who cried that she didn't see,
trying to comfort me
while I consoled her,

and my beloved, baby blue car lay
unswaddled, unbaptised, umbilicals torn,
unbreasted like breast cancer,

surgically struck, radiator ripped,
license plate and lights loose in the street,
ripped chrome reflecting
skidding clouds, totaled by a woman
who could have been my mother,
birthing me breech
into brilliant blue,
beautiful day somehow saved.

*Time is too long for those who grieve,
too short for those who rejoice,
but for those who love, time is eternity.**

*Henry Van Dyke via David La Flamme (*It's a Beautiful Day* album)

THE SALVIFIC PARSNIP
by Jane Roop

I could say you're stubborn as a parsnip
but you don't even know what a parsnip is
let alone ever tried to pry one from the dirt
when its hairy root refuses to give up
earth's warm, wormy darkness,
where you're going to be someday.

I'll just say you're stubborn as a mule
and everyone will know exactly what I mean
although ninety-nine out of a hundred people
have never been as close to a mule as they have
to a parsnip in the grocery store.

You can't see what's right in front of your face.
Flap your lips all you want about right and wrong.
They'll be no peace until you've dug a parsnip.

NEW ATLANTIS
by Sally Zakariya

Rising water licks the toes of Florida
rinses New York's subway tracks
floats fish into the frying pan and boils
potatoes while it's there

We live on mountains if we're lucky
otherwise on boats
we all learn to swim

We redraw the maps as oceans
overlap their shores
everywhere is hot and wet
our sweat salts the sea

That's where the old ones came
from after all—
time comes we'll all sink back
into the womb of waves

**MODERN PROSTITUTES RESPOND TO DELACROIX'S
WOMEN IN ALGIERS IN THEIR APARTMENT**
by Kim Baker

We want to be them, kept
in a crib where even the black girl
is frontin' and maxin' in bling, in rainbows,
her ass so fine, but her sistas don't notice—
the hookah, the fucked up of too much stuff—
they don't need Food Stamps and Rite Care
cuz I don't see no kids there, no pimp
scratchin' sass and WTF in their ears
all day, those rugs got no bugs big
as a fist he swung in your face, no bruises,
no neighbors complainin' about gangstas
(but it's the losers with the mommy complex
that scare the ever lovin' shit outta us)
no social worker jerkin' them about the clap,
no DAR hard core *they deserve what they get*,
no state reps goin' Rambo when the new
guy says we oughta legalize prostitution
as if putting food on your baby's plate any way
you can should require an act of Congress,
no HIV disease, as if losin' your immune system
and having to rest all day dressed in linen in silk
like a queen smokin' the local weed in a pretty place
they call a brothel would be so god damned bad.

Women of Algiers in their Apartment (French: *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement*) is an 1834 oil on canvas painting by Eugène Delacroix. It is located in the Louvre, Paris, France. (Painting in the public domain----see image below)



THIS IS NOT A PIG
by Allyson Whipple

The head below the counter—
you could hollow it out, preserve it,
make it a mask.

Those muscles the butcher is carving—
remember, that is the meat you love.

Under the skin you love to touch,
there is meat, too.

Do you ever think about that
when I am naked in your bed,
just before your flesh devours mine?

The smooth white fat, almost
like a rind, that is the same fat beneath
my hips, my breasts.

Do you ever wonder what animal I am?

Do you feel the animal I am
when I am on top of you
when I am beneath you?

This is not a pig anymore
it is ham, ribs, pork,
breakfast, Christmas dinner, picnic lunch.

Take me home
turn out the light
cook bacon for me in the morning.

ENTROPY GARDEN
by Matthew Smart

We talk about progress
but the only thing we've learned
is how to build better sandbags.

Lounge a while. Abandon the fight
with me, amongst the vines.
Dirt multiplies, like everything not dead.

There are sparks flicking all around us:
radio waves, wifi networks, light.
Neutrons birthed in distant novae.

All the crosswise flame lines
on your old VHS tapes
slide upwards like flattened angels.

You are nothing but heat
that hasn't yet bled away.
I am nothing but heat, chilled tonight.

And that river will always flood.
We'll cry and scamper and dodge, then
rush to reclaim our bogged futures.

But tonight let the TV stutter its snow
into the distant dark. Maybe someone
will see it blink, and wonder.

THE WEATHER BREAKS
by Ron Singer

Somewhere between Kennebunk and Jay, the weather broke. In New York, there had been a killer heat wave, no breaks there, it wouldn't go away. Brain dead, we packed poorly ("Luggage of the Living Dead"), then aired up and fled.

In Kennebunk, where we stopped to pee and get gas, the humidity made us blink. "Oh, no, not here, too! No, please!" Back in the air, on up the highway, cut off till we stopped again, in Jay, for groceries. "Hey, it's gone!"

By the time we reached Weld, in the western mountains, you'd never have known. A blustering westerly doubled the trees. Fast-scudding clouds swept past the farm, as if they needed to be home before dark.

Next morning, we heard it on the radio: "The weather has finally broken ... storms up and down the east coast ... a hundred thousand without power."

Henry, our landlord, came by to say hello and collect the rent. "Well, yes, it's been hot here, too, but not so bad. We heard about what you folks went through down there."

We poured him the last of the coffee, wrote the rent check, and sat on the porch enjoying the cool blue mountain view and cool blue mountain air. "Maine," as they say, "weather like it used to be."

MANY OF THEM THAT SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH
by Jeff Jeppesen

Lifetimes ago,
Uncle Oscar had an entire room devoted to toy trains
and sometimes he'd let his nephew work the controls all by himself.
A whole little town to move the train through.
Tonight, that nephew
takes the chemical train out of town and
for good.
No one doubts he did it. A whole family
for about 250 dollars cash and a laptop PC.
He'll tell you himself they just wouldn't stop staring.

This one, the Warden says, may be uncontestable
but every death gives him pause.
To execute for the State is a monumental responsibility.
He has to look each man in the face and speak doom.
Comes "the nod", then his heart pounds.
The sensation is like, yet light years removed
from, the burning in his blood
every time he faced down a new batter
in Little League games.

The loudest applause of the evening comes as the Governor
tells the crowd he's lost not one minute of sleep over
those men put to death under his stewardship.
"We are not here to argue statistics,
this is an issue of morality. Of right and wrong, people.
You commit the ultimate crime; in our great state, you pay
the ultimate price."
The Governor loved to fly paper kites his Daddy made
from old newspaper and thin wooden dowels,
long bright tails made from pieces of cloth
swiped from Mom's scrap bin
and you better believe she let Dad have it
when she found out.

THE EVICTION
by Bob Carlton

Fallen leaves gather
against the doghouse wall--
one skates around
a water dish
filled with last week's rain.

WE NAME THE TOTEMS WITH EVERY MORNING
by Kelli Allen

We say, *If I dive deep into the ocean
and find a camel, everything I know
will cease to matter.* This is how sleep
comes. We listen and turn dancer
tight into a curl against the bricks
resisting the bed's nightly push closer.

Let's pretend that the stories bind
our bodies. Promise that we never
expected familiarity, that when we like it
dirty, there is an opening waiting
to receive what we give to the maw.

We won't stay in our boxer shorts
even in the summer, not when someone
throws a shadow and reminds us *nice
touch*, when we begin to sing all the names
our histories remember, all the words
that make us comfortable on the side of this road.

PATIENCE
by John Francis Istel

Many rains fell before she filled her boots,
put clasps on her ankles, turned them metal.

Now she pursues like Athena, no love
for her prey, craving such simple justice.

She thought about indifference and knew
she dare not knead bread from a yeast of feeling.

Amid hand-me-down quilts old, squared and frayed
at her bed's foot, the stream back-fills with paint.

Sure she can see Madonna from her bakery
a simple rose behind her virgin ear

as fragrant through the swimming heat as prayer
that gnaws or strudel rolls that flake his scent.

She hears his steps, fingers the jam so knife's
wiped clean before the click of her garden gate.

PORTLAND'S WATERFRONT HISTORY
by Tricia Knoll

If my hometown is a Portlandia joke, it's a shaggy dog story
about a burly German Shepherd chasing Canada geese
up the waterfront. Muddy pawprints. A couples' brisk-walk chat
about gluten-free matzoh near the police memorial.

If it's an epic, then the lineage of birthright river people,
ten thousand who gathered on these banks where the geese feed now,
their fires burning below drum-talk of fish, trade and mates.
That land a park named for a white settler, Elizabeth Caruthers.

If a discarded history book, yellow at the edges, then not
the down-played flood allowed to destroy red-lined Vanport,
more often sepia photos of two rich white men
who flipped a coin to name a bustling pioneer city.

Today I read Stafford on the northern-most stone bench. Star-clusters
of cherry blossoms sway overhead, blessing thirteen granite stones
carved with Nikkei poems. The names of internment camps.
His voice: *now is made out of ghosts.*

YOU HEART BREAKER
by Oonah V Joslin

As I brushed her fur
she'd purr and I would sing
my favourite song
Moon River.

She liked contralto tones
sung soft and low and wider than a mile.
Eventually she'd fall into huckleberry dreams
for all I know.

I'd stay and watch her
twitchy whiskers
silky paws
smooth her midnight coat.

One day she crossed in style
left me forlorn on the shore
and when I hear that song
you wonder that I break.

CARP MOBILE
by Jayne Marek

Each scale rimmed with black around
an array of poppy petals
orange white gold salmon
following the wind through a green
meadow of pond-weeds

APOLOGIA
by Cliff Saunders

Tripped by the sin of arrogance,
I offer my apologies to you
and the imagination thief in your head.
I had no idea that you felt a connection
to my collection of oily loons,
of painted buntings. Sorry
to both you and the birds
for popping the question. I'm sorry
your ex-lovers were shedding tears
when the great ship of fury burned
at the creek of empty nests.
I'm sorry you're the one who crashed
into the cold, whose name drifted
to shore like a blossom then faded away.
Maybe I was hasty. Perhaps
I should have melted watches
and chewed gift cards and bragged
about sex with a backyard batting cage.
Maybe, at last, I found myself in a trap.
Who knows? To tell the truth,
I lost so much when darkness sprouted
in front of you from a farmer's field.
I lost everything. I blew it,
and the price I paid was a heavy smoke
floating around in my head.
I felt guilty as a jail cell
filled with children. Sorry,
I only wanted to be a seabird
watching you eat your fill of love.

CLEAN CUT
by Toti O'Brien

Yesterday I killed a dream
with a kitchen knife
rapidly, my hand fast
my teeth clenching.
Now the wound...
hair thin and invisible
until purple appeared
then spread like an avalanche.
Pale, the head rolled in a corner.
I checked it (of course)
turning it face up with a kick:
it was mine.

Reassured
I slept through the night.
Today I'm up early
sound and safe
just slightly compressed
as if soul and body had lost inches
of air fever foam
as if a large stone had crushed me
down to my proper size.
A lingering taste of iron
earthy heaviness
in my limbs.
I thought of coffee
I made toast.

MARRIAGE VOWS – OUR SESTINA
by Carl “Papa” Palmer

From this day forth I
will not be I while I'm with her
and she will not be she
while she's with me.
From this day forth we
as a couple will be us.

Us,
not I.
We,
not her,
not me,
not she.

She
becomes us.
She and me,
I
and her,
become we.

We,
not she,
not her.
Us,
not I,
not me.

Me
is now we,
not I.
She
is now us,
not her.

Her
and me,
together, us,
together, we,
she
and I.

Her, forever we.
Me and she,
Us, forever, vow I.

SOME CALL THIS SELF DEFENSE
by Kelli Allen

It's corrosive, the mirror, some face
dying in snow thick enough to bury
luggage and your lover, both. So, what
does looking publish about the mysterious
ticket that is you, a wound, a drink, a body?

Understand that it is painful work to stitch
inertia and hours and talent into skin
vulgarized by what you think you inherit.
Come money, come time, come hands, all

unremitting even when you lower your arms,
clear the steam from glass, whisper *hurry*
backwards into the rising, rising fog.

TIMING
by **Beth Konkoski**

I am not good soil for anything
these days. And I remember reading
that seeds must not be planted within
two weeks of a waxing moon or they will

tunnel away and rot. What nonsense,
common sense, sixth sense gives us such beliefs?
Never plant on the thirty-first
of any month, do not wear white

after Labor Day and water pansies
only at six a.m. If you wake
at six ten, leave them dry I suppose,
since timing it seems is everything.

Trees cut or laundry hung to dry
will fester in a waxing moon,
but it's good luck to weed, mow, harvest
and kill pests in that same fourth quarter.

What hidden pulse beneath bedrock and soil
aligns us like lovers with the moon?
What we observe becomes what we believe.
What we believe becomes what we pass on.

Such timing may not be everything,
but it may be one thing or some thing.
It probably isn't nothing.
Perhaps in the next moon, if I work

out the timing I will not send
everything scattering out before
me, out of reach, out of time,
without nourishment or a plan.

THE DREAMS IN THE VAULT
by Karen Loeb

Never trust a person who says, *I'll be honest with you.*

Reserve a safety deposit box for your dreams,
especially the one about the snarling Doberman chasing you.

Examine a calendar for the phases of the moon.
For some reason, calendars, by law, must illustrate this.



Spread butter across your toast and watch it melt.
This is called a disappearing act.

Grow marshmallows in your garden.
This is not probable or possible, but go for it.

Untie your sneakers before removing them.
Why postpone the inevitable?

Write a poem filled with silly rhyme
to invoke an old fashioned time.

Ask yourself when you last danced.

Worry about all those dreams in the safety deposit box.
Wonder if the Doberman has devoured all the cats
you've dreamt about and left at his mercy.

CHAOS
by Benjamin Ostrowski

back in the sunrise Jeffery and I would bury our heads
in the McCook's Point beach pebbles
and see how long our lungs could last us.
feel the cells stretch.

one time I leapt out of the 13th floor of the library
but I didn't disintegrate or whatever happens upon impact,
I just ran off across the light bulbs into
one of the layers of atmosphere or the East Side of Providence.

two things that hurt the brain are lack of and too much blood.
I read about a guy who sat in his Mazda in a garage and the Mazda was on,
see that's carbon monoxide and that's goddamn.

I made overeasiness eggs this morning so I know I have a frying pan.

but, teary and vertigoes,
I find my little toe tucked safely in the sand.

CUCKOO NOIR
by Michael Brockley

This time I suspect my darling is cheating on me with Dilbert. The cubicle nerd with his necktie curved in defiance of gravity. Potent as primary colors. She enamors herself with these comic strip Lotharios. Their sangfroid in the face of public debasement. Their deadpan expressions. For weeks, she met Dagwood at Starbucks in prelude to their trysts. Opus left cryptic messages on our answering machine. Plus offhand remarks about whipped cream massages. The handcuffs of love. Bill the Cat's interest in three-ways. I've traced the origins of her infidelity to one-night stands with characters from the Far Side. The hunter with the bull's eye on his back. The fat boy who pushed the pull door at the genius school. Her affairs never last more than a few months. She grew bored with Hagar's berserker tales and detested Beetle Bailey for his snoozathon habits. When my honey confessed her fling with Hobbes, she complained the beast had fleas. If I wanted to, I could Dick Tracy the hideaway she's bunkered in with Dilbert. Instead, I'll ring Blondie from my little black book. FedEx just delivered our Archie and Veronica costumes.

I WILL BE A PEBBLE
by Roberta Feins

a pebble falling down a deep well –
silence,
silence
till a small choked sound
rises sounds from the gloom, like grief

A drop of water switches places with the stone.

Seizing the moment, a tear
has thrown itself high into dim air
into the cool moist air
below the surface, below

tree roots cradling my father and mother.

See the gray metal pail
one of the gardeners has brought
filled with tulips
to plant around the sycamore
at the end of the row of markers.

When they are all planted, tucked
into a soil growing chill with winter,
when the gardener is walking back to the shed
winding through the lanes of this quiet suburb,

I will be the cling of dirt
left in the empty bucket
swinging back and forth with his steps.

46TH ANNIVERSARY
by Tom Montag

It is the light
changing which changes
the instant.

It is the murmur,
the shimmer which flutters
the heart.

It is the touch
of your hands still making
me tremble.

WAITING WITH BASIL
by Beth McDonough

I spirit, scarcely smoor
tiny bruise black seeds on warmed
compost. Whatever packets say

their buried congregations rise
too frail for Scots soil. Pots parade
my sills. I watch them wake.

Green prayed up to light, they
unfold, raise supplicant tiny palms,
lily-pad their space.

Ready to breathe incense, they clove
air, drift through all coming summer's red.

QUESTIONS OF BUOYANCY
by Kathleen McClung

The pool has no swimmers on this day,
no one ready to cross over from the shallow end,
thumbs and fingers webbed, kicking, kicking hard,
imagining, if she breathes just right,
the glamour of gold medals around her neck,
master of the butterfly.

The pool has no swimmers on this day,
no ponytailed girl in rubber bathing cap
folding her glasses beside a starfish towel,
dabbing Sea & Ski on the slope of her nose,
a carpet of tanning teenagers ahead—
blurred limbs, transistor static on hot concrete.

She got her father's myopia, his quick-burning skin,
and knows the story by heart: how he lost a contact lens
in a Sacramento pool but somehow, palms swirling
cement floor, found his slim necessity,
pinched it like a pearl, surfaced,
triumphant, wet it with his tongue.

The pool has no swimmers,
and she wonders if she lost something small,
a crumb or a syllable, would she climb the fence,
strip away the buoyant, dive into this alluring blue,
and how deep would she go
before coming up for air?

THE SEA MY LOVER
by Matthew Smart

She moves an arm, swirls the ships at anchor.
Flicks an ash and drowns a coastline.
Stars blink at her inconsiderate moves
but she stares each pointy eye down.
The ebb pulls her breath out to sea
where countless sailors are stricken lightheaded.

She sets down the evening sky.
Stubs out the slivered silver moon
into the ashtray of the bay.
On the far side of the earth
the sun beats some other poor fool down.
Here she glints and slowly stirs her drink.

She feeds the moon fireflies and lures
all the windswept wanderers of this sinking land.
Flashes bone shards and countless beached dreams.
Then she gathers the tide pool bloated corpses
bouquets herself, and silken her cocoon.
Such indifferent hunger, the sea my lover.

Now the tide resides somewhere over earthside.
She turns her back, inattentive as always.
She will return tomorrow, same as the sun,
Which under hurricane orange grass fires
Idly scorches another burned path to the sea.
Wavelines mark her previous attempts at foothold.

ONE DAY IN THE SCIENCE NEWS
by Michael G. Smith

I woke to ice mountains
on Pluto, it's moon Charon
home to Mordor, a polar
expanse darker than any
I have tumbled into

and worked my way through.
And now at the day's other
end, Zhenyuan's Dragon
appears, the soft feathers
of its fossilized remains

bound in 125-million year-
old Chinese limestone
touchingly close
to the down in the pillow
I will soon lay

my tired head on.
What might I wake to,
fathomed worlds after
fathomed worlds
delivered to my laptop

quicker than any human
could possibly keep up
with? Only that
illiterate Hui-neng
was able to put aside

here and there
as he turned
and turned the millstone
grinding the monastery's
dinner rice.

EQUATION
by Sally Zakariya

The sum of all letters is greater
than I can count

 approaches infinity

The square root of words
lies deep underground

 tuber rhizome corm

Each word an equation

 sprouting blooming
resolving into meaning

Your words and mine tangle
in the garden choke out weeds
entwine binomial product
 of two lives

CONTRIBUTORS

Tobi Alfier is a multiple Pushcart nominee and a Best of the Net nominee. Her most current chapbooks are *The Coincidence of Castles* from Glass Lyre Press, and *Romance and Rust* from Blue Horse Press. Her collaborative full-length collection, *The Color of Forgiveness*, is available from Mojave River Press. She is the co-editor of *San Pedro River Review* (www.bluehorsepress.com).

Kelli Allen's work has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies in the US and internationally. She is a four-time Pushcart Prize nominee and has won awards for her poetry, prose, and scholarly work. She served as Managing Editor of *Natural Bridge*, is the current Poetry Editor for *The Lindenwood Review*, and holds an MFA from the University of Missouri, St. Louis. She is the director of the River Styx Hungry Young Poets Series and founded the Graduate Writers Reading Series for UMSL. She is currently a Professor of Humanities and Creative Writing at Lindenwood University and teaches for The Pierre Laclède Honors College at UMSL. Her full-length poetry collection, *Otherwise, Soft White Ash*, arrived from John Gosslee Books in 2012 and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. www.kelli-allen.com

When she isn't teaching the abundant virtues of the comma and writing poetry about big hair and Elvis, **Kim Baker** works to end violence against women and end hunger. A poet, playwright, photographer, and NPR essayist, Kim publishes and edits *Word Soup*, an online poetry journal that donates 100% of submission fees to food banks. Kim's chapbook of poetry, *Under the Influence: Musings about Poems and Paintings*, is now available from Finishing Line Press. Kim is currently working on a book of ekphrasis poems about the stories and portrayals of women in the paintings of female artists.

Michael Brockley is a 66-year old school psychologist who works in several school systems in rural northeast Indiana. He is trying to learn how to submit electronically after having used snail mail during the publications he pursued in his youth. His most recent work can be found in *Flying Island*, *Panoplyzine* and *Third Wednesday*. Forthcoming poems will appear in *Atticus Review* and *Gargoyle*.

Bob Carlton (www.bobcarlton3.weebly.com) lives and works in Leander, TX.

Roberta Feins received her MFA in poetry in 2007 from New England College. Her poems have been published in *Five AM*, *Antioch Review*, *The Cortland Review* and *The Gettysburg Review*, among others. Her chapbook, *Something Like a River*, was published by Moon Path Press in 2013. Roberta edits the e-zine *Switched On Gutenberg* (<http://www.switched-ongutenberg.org/>)

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in *New Plains Review*, *Perceptions* and the anthology, *No Achilles*, with work upcoming in *Big Muddy Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Coal City Review* and *Nebo*.

Kari Gunter-Seymour is a poet, photographer and graphic designer. Her work appears in several publications including, *Rattle*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Still*, *The Journal*, and *The LA Times*. She is the founder/curator of the “Women of Appalachia Project,” which celebrates Appalachia’s visual, literary and performing women artists (www.womenofappalachia.com).

John Francis Istel has published poetry in *New Letters*, *Off the Coast*, *Up the Staircase* (Pushcart Prize nominee, 2015), *Farmhouse Magazine*, and many others. He won Southampton College’s first prize in poetry. His stories can be found in *Weave*, *WordRiot*, *Linden Avenue Literary Journal*, *Brooklyn Free Press*, *Rappahannock Review*, *Helen*, and forthcoming in *Soundings Review*’s summer issue. He has written about theater for *The Atlantic*, *Elle*, *The Village Voice*, *Mother Jones*, and elsewhere. He lives in Brooklyn, curates The Word Cabaret reading series in Red Hook, and teaches on the Lower East Side at New Design High School.

Rich Ives is a winner of the Francis Locke Memorial Poetry Award from *Bitter Oleander* and the 2012 winner of the Creative Nonfiction Prize from *Thin Air* magazine. His book of days, *Tunneling to the Moon*, is available from Silenced Press; a fiction chapbook, *Sharpen*, from Newer York Press; and *Light from a Small Brown Bird*, a collection of poems, from Bitter Oleander Press. He is also the winner of the What Books Competition for Fiction and his story collection, *The Balloon Containing the Water Containing the Narrative Begins Leaking*, has just been released.

Jeff Jeppesen is a Pushcart-nominated, Georgia-based writer. His work can be found in *Space and Time*, *Every Day Poets*, *Strange Horizon*, *Shot Glass Journal*, *The Linnet’s Wings* and other print and online journals.

Oonah V Joslin is currently poetry editor at *The Linnet’s Wings*. She is widely published online. No book yet but she's working on it! She was born in Co Antrim and now lives in Northumberland England, frequently inhabiting cyberspace. You can find her on FaceBook and at her blog [Parallel Oonahverse](http://ParallelOonahverse.com).

Clyde Kessler lives in Radford, Virginia, with his wife Kendall and son Alan. They have an art studio in their home, called Towhee Hill.

Tricia Knoll is an Oregon poet whose work has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies. *Urban Wild* (a chapbook from Finishing Line Press) looks at interactions of humans and wildlife in urban habitat. *Ocean’s Laughter* (Aldrich Press) combines lyric and eco-poetry about Oregon’s northern coast. Website: triciaknoll.com

Laurie Kolp, author of *Upon the Blue Couch* (Winter Goose Publishing) and *Hello, It’s Your Mother* (Finishing Line Press), serves as president of Texas Gulf Coast Writers and treasurer of the local chapter of the Poetry Society of Texas. Laurie’s poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Gargoyle*, *After the Pause*, *Crack the Spine*, *Scissors & Spackle*, *Pirene’s Fountain*, and more. She lives in Southeast Texas with her husband, three children, and two

dogs.

Beth Konkoski's poetry and fiction have appeared in a number of journals including: *Saranac Review*, *The Potomac Review*, *Mid-American Review* and *New Delta Review*. She has been nominated for a Best of the Net award and a Pushcart Prize. She teaches high school English in Virginia where she lives with her husband and two children.

Sandra Lindow is the longest serving Regional Vice President in the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets. She has seven books of poetry. She lives in Menomonie, Wisconsin and teaches part-time at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

A story by **Karen Loeb** won a 2014 Editor's Choice award in the Raymond Carver Short Story Contest. Another story won first place in the 2014 Wisconsin People and Ideas Fiction Contest. Her poetry and fiction have appeared in *Hanging Loose*, *Thema*, *The Main Street Rag*, *Bloodroot*, *New Ohio Review* and other magazines. Poems are forthcoming in *The Cape Rock* and *Allegro Poetry*.

Jayne Marek's poetry and art photos have appeared in publications such as *New Mexico Review*, *Blast Furnace*, *Gravel*, *Lantern Journal*, *Siren*, *Spillway*, *Driftwood Bay*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *Flying Island*, *Isthmus*, and *Windless Orchard* and in several anthologies; she is a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee. She published a chapbook with Finishing Line Press (2013) and co-authored book of poems from Chatter House Press (2013).

Kathleen McClung, author of *Almost the Rowboat*, has poems in *Mezzo Cammin*, *Unsplendid*, *Atlanta Review*, *Ekphrasis*, *West Trestle Review*, *Raising Lilly Ledbetter: Women Poets Occupy the Workspace*, and elsewhere. Winner of the Rita Dove Prize and two-time finalist for the Morton Marr Prize, McClung judges sonnets for the Soul-Making Keats literary competition and reviews books for the William Saroyan International Prize for Writing. She teaches at Skyline College and the Writing Salon and lives in San Francisco. www.kathleenmclung.com

Beth McDonough first trained in Silversmithing at Glasgow School of Art. She finds poems whilst swimming in lochs and rivers, foraging and riddling with Anglo Saxons. Often writing of a maternal experience of disability, she is currently Writer in Residence at Dundee Contemporary Arts. Her work may be read in many places including *Gutter*, *The Interpreter's House* and *Antiphon*, and *Handfast*, her poetry duet pamphlet (with Ruth Aylett) is to be published in May 2016.

Tom Montag is most recently the author of *In This Place: Selected Poems 1982-2013*. He is a contributing writer at *Verse-Virtual*. In 2015 he was the featured poet at *Atticus Review* (April) and *Contemporary American Voices* (August), with other poems at *Hamilton Stone Review*, *The Homestead Review*, *Little Patuxent Review*, *Mud Season Review*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Provo Canyon Review*, *Third Wednesday*, and elsewhere.

Toti O'Brien's work has appeared in *Poetic Diversity*, *Extract(s)*, *Rose Red Review* and *Ekphrastic California*, among other journals and anthologies.

Benjamin Ostrowski is a student, musician, and poet at Brown University. He studies psychology and will graduate in the Spring of 2017. Benjamin grew up in the pink, seaside town of Niantic in Connecticut with his mother, father, sister, and brother.

Carl "Papa" Palmer, retired Army, retired FAA, now just plain retired, lives in University Place, WA. He has seven chapbooks and a contest winning poem riding a bus somewhere in Seattle. Motto: Long Weekends Forever

Jane Roop is a retired securities broker living in Kennewick, Washington.

Cliff Saunders has an MFA in Creative Writing from The University of Arizona. He currently lives in Myrtle Beach and works at a South Carolina correctional facility.

Claire Scott is an award winning poet who has been nominated twice for the Pushcart Prize. She was also a semi-finalist for the Pangaea Prize and the Atlantis Award. Claire was the grand prize winner of The Maine Review's 2015 White Pine Writing Contest. Her first book of poetry, *Waiting to be Called*, was published in 2015. She is the co-author of *Unfolding in Light: A Sisters' Journey in Photography and Poetry*.

Poetry by **Ron Singer** (www.ronsinger.net) has appeared in *alba*, *Anemone Sidecar*, *Arlington Literary Journal*, *Borderlands: The Texas Poetry Review*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Evergreen Review*, *Grey Sparrow*, *The Hampden-Sydney Poetry Review*, *Waterways: Poetry in the Mainstream*, *Windsor Review*, and *Word Riot*. His collection of Maine poems, *Look to Mountains, Look to Sea* (River Otter Press, August 2013), won an award and was nominated for a Pushcart. His eighth book, *Uhuru Revisited: Interviews with Pro-Democracy Leaders*, was published Feb. 1, 2015 (Africa World Press/Red Sea Press), and can be found in about 100 university and other library systems.

Matthew Smart lives in a part of Michigan often overlooked by amateur cartographers. By day he works as an information technology analyst. In his evenings he writes poetry, fiction, and computer code. His writing has appeared in *Vestal Review*, *Unbroken Journal*, *Smokelong Quarterly* and elsewhere.

Michael G. Smith's poetry has been published in *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*, *Cider Press Review*, *Nimrod*, *the Santa Fe Literary Review*, *Superstition Review*, other journals and anthologies. *The Dark is Different in Reverse* was published by Bitterzoet Press in 2013. *No Small Things* was published by Tres Chicas Books in 2014. *The Dippers Do Their Part*, a collaboration with visual artist Laura Young of haibun and katagami from their Shotpouch Cabin residency sponsored by the Spring Creek Project (Oregon State University), was published by

Miriam's Well in 2015.

Allyson Whipple is an MFA student, an editor, a black belt, and a teacher. She lives in Austin, Texas, with her dog, Simon.

“Anticipatience” is part of *Rivers, Wings & Sky*, a collaborative exhibit of Nancy Losacker’s mosaics and **Norma C. Wilson**’s poetry. Norma’s book *Wild Iris [poems]* was published by Point Riders Press of Norman, Oklahoma, in 1978. She completed a PhD in English at the University of Oklahoma that year and joined the University of South Dakota English Department, where she taught for 27 years. Her poetry chapbook, *Under the Rainbow: Poems from Mojácar*, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2012. Norma lives with her husband Jerry Wilson in a geo-solar house they built in rural Vermillion, South Dakota.

Sally Zakariya’s poetry has appeared in numerous journals, including *Tishman Review*, *Apeiron Review*, *Broadkill Review*, *Edge*, *Emerge*, *Third Wednesday*, and *Evening Street Review*, and has won prizes from Poetry Virginia and the Virginia Writers Club. She is the author of *Insectomania* (2013) and *Arithmetic and other verses* (2011) and the editor of *Joys of the Table*, an anthology of poems about food and eating. Zakariya lives in Arlington, Virginia, and blogs at www.butdoesitrhyme.com.

Gyroscope Review will read submissions for our summer 2016 issue
April 1-June 15, 2016.

Please read our guidelines before submitting at
<http://www.gyroskopereview.com/home/guidelines/>

Spread the poetry. Share us with your friends.



PLANNING AHEAD FOR FALL!

Gyroscope Review will accept submissions for its first themed issue
during its fall reading period, July 1-September 15, 2016.

The theme is HONOR.

Honor is both a noun and a verb. Look beyond its everyday meaning.
Plumb the depths of what honor is as well as what it is to honor someone or something.
We will also accept regular submissions during the fall reading period.

Gyroscope Review does not keep submissions
from one reading period to the next.
Please submit only for the reading period
currently open.



GyroScope Review

FINE poetry to TURN your WORLD aROUND



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