

Gyroscope Review

Fine poetry to turn your world around



ISSUE 16-3
SUMMER 2016



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Summer 2016

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FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the Summer Edition of *Gyroscope Review*. It's hard to believe how far we've come in just a little amount of time. One of our goals is to continuously improve your *Review*. We want to keep moving forward, and to that end, we put up a survey on our webpage to ask our readers a few questions. Some of the results were interesting. Of those who answered "How do you read your poetry online?" 78% said they read on their desktop computer. Only 7% said by phone, which surprised me. We asked "How often do you access the *Gyroscope Review* webpage?" 35% said only to read a new issue, 28% said once a week. 14% said only when something new is posted, and 14% said Never. 57% said you follow us on Twitter, and 42% on Facebook. When asked "Would you prefer *Gyroscope Review* have a "Read on Mobile Phone" option?" 42% said No, 14% said yes, and 42% said reading the PDF on their phone was okay with them.

57% of you would like the ability to purchase a hard copy of the magazine. That's something we're discussing having available. Stay tuned. 50% would like to see a newsletter. Finally, 35% would like to see contests and themed contests that resulted in publication (and prize money). Thank you everyone who participated in the survey, and those who left additional comments. We've got a lot to mull over as we move forward to improving your *Gyroscope Review*. I'll leave the survey live for another couple of weeks, so if you haven't answered yet, now's your chance. Scroll down the front page of our web page to find it. Thanks, everyone, for being a part of our first two years.

- Constance Brewer, Editor

Wow! Is this really our sixth issue? Sitting here at my desk in Roseville, Minnesota, with the windows open to the sounds of summer, I think about how lucky I've been to run this literary magazine from its beginning with fellow poet Constance Brewer. Our first year flew by in a nanosecond, and the second is zooming along equally as fast. Before we got down to finalizing everything for this issue, Constance and I had the pleasure of a Friday night dinner together with our partners in Gillette, Wyoming, where she lives. My husband Mick and I passed through Gillette on our early summer road trip from Minnesota to the Pacific Northwest; Constance and her partner Scott made reservations for the four of us at their favorite restaurant. Working together online is a great thing, but talking in person has no equal. I've thought about that night often since. And I've thought about how it is for the poets who send us work, how they don't have the chance to sit down with us in person. That's the norm for a lit mag and its contributors, but I would love to have a real happy hour chatting in person with all the writers we've had the pleasure to publish. We did try a virtual happy hour on Facebook right after the last issue went live, but it really isn't the same. In the end, what we have are our words as we craft them into verse, slide them into editorials, offer them as proof that we see each other and understand what matters.

The poems in this issue matter. We've included 43 poems from 29 authors who reside in the United States, Australia, England, Indonesia, New Zealand, and Scotland. The feel of summer runs through many of these pieces; they are perfect for reading outside beneath a tree or beside a lake. They take on heat, love, nostalgia, the not-so-straight line from seed to fruition, those we cling to and those we let go. They dig beneath the images that come at us every hour of every day. Our days may be zooming along with unfathomable speed, but step off for just a while and let these poems wash over you. Let the words lodge themselves inside you in the most real of ways.

Happy Summer. If you come to Minnesota, I'd love to meet you.

Kathleen Cassen Mickelson, Editor

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POEMS

HAVE BEES WILL TRAVEL
by Sally Evans

“There is in my head a bee that talks” – Max Jacobs

But it is myself talking to the bees, my bees that are two hundred miles away, out in the sunshine if there is sunshine to guide them, out into the light if there is enough light, out to collect their pollen and nectar and the sticky stuff called propolis they find on chestnut buds and walnut trees. After a while, said my old friend beekeeper, you start to think like a bee, planning for them, where they can find their plants, you start to think in terms of the day, the hour, the season. A bee does not think in sentences but in light, in darkness, in peace, in strife, a bee thinks in terms of flying and surviving, of crawling and surviving, of drinking and surviving. A bee does not think of dying though it knows well enough to throw a dead bee out of the hive. And now I remember how I fetched these bees, transported them from England to Scotland in a travelling box, how I proudly put *Bees in Transit* stickers on my car, drove them down from Scotch Corner on the small roads after Brough, the week that Appleby Fair was breaking up and how I passed horses and caravans and singing Gypsies all the way, and how I thought, *They can never accept me*, meaning the Gypsies not the bees, but how *Bees in Transit* on the back of my car flagged me up as a countrywoman. And how I took them up the motorway to Scotland. And how the bees were not consulted when they became Scottish bees, but how they settled down to being bees none the less. It is in the nature of a bee.

do not disturb –
a spray of sugared water,
our lives take flight.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?
by Carolyn Martin

Day lilies come
and go by the clock.
Evergreens remain.
The devil frog
horrifies.
And there's
the Milky Way,
the whitish smudge
that, like a toddler
burping up,
spews messy gas
across the universe.

Which leads me to
our micro-galaxy.
In the blur
of everyday,
we're lovers/
partners/
friends
with an appetite
for constancy
that soaks in
tiffs and blame,
rings out kisses
and regrets.

But what if
we recalibrate?
Let's call ourselves
excited atoms
on an errant star
shooting through
a dozen Milky Ways –
not caring
where we are –
like reckless
first-borns in
a pre-name paradise.
Or something
close to that.

SOWING SEED IN MAY
by Ann Howells

Here where time-worn Arbuckles—
three hundred million years old,

angles softened, weathered,
like loose-skinned old women—

remain implacable as granite,
we adhere to three sisters planting.

Squash retain moisture around corn
which, in turn, supports beans;

each supplies nutrients for others.
Blood sings in my ears as

heart and body work in unison.
But, May can be a seething bitch—

brutal month in a brutal season.
Rain-wrapped tornadoes build

between prairie and stars;
ghost-like they sweep the plains,

suck our lives into the cloud
with smug omnipotence.

JULY NIGHT WITH CRICKETS
by Robert Ford

Heat is supposed to rise, but in the gnawed, unslept hours
of horse latitude stillness, I feel it pressing down instead
like a steam iron, flattening the dark crumpled collar
of the night, squeezing out the comfortable creases,
making tiny bubbles simmer deliriously in the blood.

In the hall of leaves beyond the mosquito screen,
a hundred thousand invisible percussionists
rehearse their moment of moonstruck definition,
announcing themselves in ascending rattles of friction,
a clamour of legs and feet, answering the imprinted call.

We lie mutely, speckled with sweat, between the
top sheet of an unfamiliar bed and a drunken ceiling fan,
its blades flicking their way through uneven circles.
Before they even arrive, I can feel your fingertips
reaching out to bridge the narrow space separating us.

RORSCHACH IMAGE #5
by Gloria Heffernan

Upside Down



Right-Side Up



Congress

two conjoined crows
beaks snapping
shriek the shrill cawcawcaw
saying nothing
wings atrophied
unable to take flight
struggling for emergence
left wing, right wing
shriveled and paralyzed
each pulling
in the opposite direction
earthbound.

Monarch's Migration

the flight from Mexico
was exhausting—
turbulence over Tijuana
thunderstorms in Santa Cruz
and the smog in L.A.
could make an atheist
out of a preying mantis.
too tired to fly
she dons a black cape
and walks home
to her condo in
San Francisco.

UNSCHEDULED DOWNTIME
by Jeff Jeppesen

outside

a summer hailstorm is beating the shit out of my two month old car
but I won't find that out for about 15 more minutes

inside the warehouse

it is snowing through the automatic skylight/roof-vent thing
the winds ripped open

cold hissing drowns out the grinding of miles of conveyor belts
chills the sweat our clothes have soaked up

and all around the growing pile of ice

myself and a dozen or so floor workers on their pallet-jacks
and forklifts have stopped to watch the weird wonder

KEYS
by Dave Malone

She and I can't drive yet
but at thirteen we vow to steal cars.

Spring dies in summer's wrist.
Our block glows an ill, dirty orange.

She skateboards in my driveway
with surfer shoes and black hair chopped.

I bounce a basketball
into our nonexistent conversation.

Since I don't have stolen Jag keys,
she curses at the limp leather I now cradle

as if not only I but the entire world breeched
a life of possibility.

MANIFESTATION
by Michael Harmon

I was twelve years old
but still remember
that night. I could hear
them scurry behind
the strip of woodwork
where the ceiling and
the wall met. My eyes
followed the patters,
and saw a small whip
of tail slither through
a crack in the wood-
work I didn't know
was there, until then.

THROWING OUT THE TRASH
by Kristina England

Hike the
Kinneywood.

Foot
falls through hole,
marsh some marmalade toast
my mother used to serve -
sticky, gooey,
hard to wash off.

Pull leg from mud,
skin pinks
from graze-burn,
possible
bruise.

Shoe remains deep
in wet, brown
bowels.
Robin reaches in,
brave nature buddy,
saves it,
says she was
scared the earth
would take her hand.

Get home to
find dead tree leaves
have cemented
the sole.

Think to toss shoes
same place
I've tossed
so many losses
throughout
the years

Darn dumpster
is full.
Spot one last space.
Shove them
in.

GRAVITY
by Andrea Jackson

The mountain is stiff from straining to hold itself up and together and not dribble down its own sides in pebbles and clots, big and little boulders, all racing toward level ground, every last particle in love with the center of the earth and bent on pursuing its passion at the cost of its very existence until all that is left is a field of rubble every particle of which still presses itself close to the beloved Mother Earth. And the mountain as a whole is no stranger to that love, that draw of the red hot center of Earth – tall and stiff it clings, at its base, to the crust of Earth like a great mouth sucking, hungry for that central fire.

NEWS CYCLE
by Steve Klepetar

It is a strange spring
rivers lined with skeletons

- Agha Shahid Ali

Winter froze the bodies
but now in spring

rains and thaw.
Bones in the mud

on river banks
where we walk

listening
to the awful news

as if it really
were strings

of words
we'd never heard ,

the way our fancy
reinvents the sound

of wings beating
at window panes.

Night fills frames
with street

lights burning
through darkness.

Our ears chafe
and redden;

a cycle ebbs to silence ,
frozen to our screens.

KARMA
by James Penha

The spider web on my iPad screen
is no web
no collection of filmy water stains
but a network of cracks—
I feel them now—imposed—
I see now—when the dog chasing
his ball last night toppled the table
on which the tablet
in its case in its bag lay
an accident as freak
as the little boy yesterday
running after his ball into the street
maybe two seconds ahead
of my brakes
and I'm wondering if I should
refrain today from peeling snails
from the leaves in the garden
and pitching them as far as I can
over the wall
into the rocky creek.

FOR HOURS IT'S BEEN YEARS
by Jared Pearce

I'm watching how you follow
Your book, tap your screen, seeking.

I'm watching how your drifting
Ripples you away from me.

I'm wishing you'd drop your anchor
In my gut, the chain straining taught

So the internet's rip tides would be
The force we conquered, tying each

Other to our masts and cramming our ears
With only our names, or that you'd be

The Scylla grappling me, tearing this
From this in a rush of ecstasy,

Making love understood, receivable, like
That boy who, discovering his parakeet

Belly up, whanged on its cage, screaming,
Get up, Birdie, Get up!

BIG BLUE
by Sandra Anfang

My husband's parents dubbed him Big Blue,
counted on his regularity
like the morning paper's slap against the screen door.

As he gutted large-mouth bass at the outdoor sink
Bob greeted the heron gliding in on silent wings
to its post where the grass sloped down to kiss the sea.

We unloaded the boat,
handed up our measly string of fish.
Blue watched with solemn eye,
mind married to his motive.

He wore a cornflower coat
with a hint of slate rubbed into the feathers,
the most brilliant male I'd ever known,
poised on one leg, head cocked, mouth agape,
awaiting the first of many prizes
like a puppy after training.

Bob would perform his Ginsu magic,
a ritual of entrails and tails.
Damned if that bird didn't snatch them from mid-air,
an expert juggler who never missed a pitch.

Bob loved him like a prodigal son.
Maybe it was his wildness, his utter sense of purpose,
the one he and the wife lost years ago
to Barcaloungers and five-o'clock martinis.

She grew up on a Kentucky dairy.
The photo with a painted backdrop's all that remains:
Brother's rifle laid across his knee,
hand cradling it like a lover,
Mother with her bible,
children splayed like poker hands along the picket fence.

I'd track the progress of a fish head
as it slithered down Blue's two-foot neck
and disappeared into his belly
like my father's casket riding on hydraulics
down to its final resting place.

NOT YOUR BONES
by Steve Klepetar

*we have climbed the long stair
with a sack on our backs:
the crushing precedence
of more illustrious bones.*

- Neruda

It's not your bones I carry father,
from the burning wreck of Troy,
not the weight of your skeletal
frame or crackling wires of your
nerves. It's not the thin canals
of artery and vein I haul over
these stones, cutting my feet,
straining the tendons of my heel.
It's not even the memory of your
face, clouded in photographs,
bewildered by this new country
where cities have a thousand
names. Here in my hands I hold
your eyes, each one a green marble
burnt into my palms like some
Masonic sign, something carved
into the podium when you lectured,
swaying backward and forward
so that every other word was lost,
flung back into your history,
heaped on the pyre to burn with the rest.

BEING IN THE BEST CEMETERY
by Oonah V Joslin

Hope, broken and exposed,
lies in sulphurous graves
in Père Lachaise.

I hear the rough
unvelvet ribbon of
Piaf's Vie en Rose

et toutes les choses
qu'elle ne regretterait
à jamais

makes me doubt
heaven and hell;
rope of faith and salve of blood.

Stone angels weep rosaries.
Remains, very much alone.
How should we pray?

Outside the gate
on sale huge
chocolate topped religieuses

glorious nun buns
bursting with cream
sweet as only life can be.

And we buy some because
we're not young but we are
alive, you and me.



Making Charcoal near Elton, La.

KILN PHOTO
by Edward G. Gauthier

The top hat twill coated reporter left a yellowed photo of our charcoal kiln its ancient process frozen by this game faced stranger with tripod camera and gunpowder flash. We seven all young in white shirts flat brimmed hats even our teeth soot dusted suspected this stranger paid for no-sweat work and way too clean some city guy yap talkin.' Cousin Ozey put him right with "We work hard and honest and we do not know you. Once that pit gets fired there's no backin' down." Ozey had heard cameras freeze a soul to paper. I stacked the logs in square rows for circulation Jamie crawled the middle packed in the kindling we ganged the top and sealed it in and set it all to blazing. Camera man took our pictures, suspicion right there on our faces but nothing slowed this guy him packing into his covered wagon working under a heavy black blanket said he was developing. No one wanted the photo but me so I scratched it with my fingernail but found no souls probably cause this work is so damned hard our souls burned away.

TEMPLE GRANDIN CHARMS THE ACADEMICS
by Sarah Carey

The new calves (one hour old)
lie in sand beds, lazy-eyed

watch from their dust
as someone explains how we feed,

vaccinate, separate. Temple bends down,
grabs a fist full of sand,

lets the grains slip
through her long fingers.

Sand beds are the gold standard
for dairy cows, one scientist claims

speaking of best practices
all jockey to share and explain.

It starts to rain.
Our boots crunch through gravel

to gargantuan trucks. We load up,
move from barns to beef pasture

where our field of experts widens.
I shift between them, optimize my lens

for expressions to take back, angling
for that perspective I might have missed.

Rapid movement drives grazing animals away,
she says, approaching the bulls' pen.

.
A Brahmin leans in. Temple inches a hand
through the barbed fence, strokes his chin.

—*For Temple Grandin*

EMILY AS THE STORY I ONLY TELL MYSELF
by Darren C. Demaree

I am a bull
& the color red
does nothing for me.

LANDLOCKED
by Robert Ford

If you lived around here, with slaughter for history,
you'd end up just like them, growing moustaches,

and belts of lazy fat to go with the empty-eyed looks.
You'd tuck your trouser legs into your boots and kick

every dog you encountered, on the stairwells, in the bars,
and alienate your wives, there being no room for romance

where the ocean, with its soft repetitions, has never been.
With ethanol and torpor to seduce you, to hold your hand,

you'd stumble across solid moments in the emptiness,
where all this fury suddenly made perfect sense to you.

???
by Terry Severhill

The sun that burns our crops brittle brown
The moon with its baleful pale dusting of undelivered promises
The stars, distant, neither mocking nor judging
How do we count the sameness if we can't see beyond our skin?
Please, reveal to me why we breathe the same air
Drink the same water
Birth into the same world
But somehow
We
Are different?

THE BIG ITCH
by John Grey

Tear at the scab
and a whole other wound emerges -
self inflicted,

When I look up
from a tiny trickle of blood,
I see the brown house next door
as an itch of grass and flowers
scratched by a neighbor
pushing a lawnmower.

And look at the sky -
somebody needs to get a fingernail
under those clouds,
pull them apart from the blue.

Nothing begins and ends with me.
Not even a simple hurt
from a fall
that thought a hard coating on the skin
would be enough
to straighten out the mess.

But not while that mower
scrapes at its current irritation
and the seamlessness of the heavens
is threatened by scattered cumuli.

No matter how things start out
they always end up as
what is happening to me.
Nothing's like it thinks it is.
The rest of the world, most of all.

A PAGE OUT OF THE DICTIONARY
by John Grey

POET (def)

a person engaged
in the creation of poetry

POETRY.

words
placed in a kiln
and heated until

the outer layer
hardens into a crust

then dipped in a tart solution

softened for about three days

before being
cajoled and/or tortured
into the desired consistency

examples include
the ancient English poet
highly respected in the community
(see Keats, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Coleridge)

as was the German dichter
(see Goethe, Heine)

however in certain Latin American countries
the average poeta
was considered radical, dangerous
and was always at the risk
of a reading before a firing squad

POETRY READING

a public exposition of poetry

firing squad optional

CONQUEST CYCLE
by Ken Poyner

When the entire galaxy is without teeth,
The species with dentures rules.
Bring to each biosphere competition
And loss, sorrow and alliances.
Do not count the living things until
You have categorized them, established
Ownership, hold a plan for commerce.
Smash a useless nebula or two,
Let the star-faring tribes know
Your science is superior; let
Those who can only look up at the stars --
Small brains addled by the sky -- imagine that
You are their God, and your fist
Opens and closes to make their hearts
Beat, to rearrange the Heavens, while
Their blood gratefully surges.
Make sport of their needs and excuses.
Let goods and services flow out of them
And become the exotic necessities
Sprinkled all along our thousand galaxy
Trade routes. Tax them for your crimes.

CATAclysm Days: An Update from the Plains
by **Chuck Von Nordheim**

Sleepy Titans clawed their way up from the myth at the heart of the world.
Sure, the lethargic ascent of the old gods made the silt and chert shake,
But no worse than the fracking in Sumner County, so we paid it no mind.
Plains folk would rather pursue their hobbies than worry.
So, we continued to date our lusty horses and sexy meadowlarks,
Despite the disapproving Google eyes of far-off city people.

We might've spelt out a message for nosy Google eyes in burnt wheat,
Something like, Gomorrah then, Gomorrah now, Gomorrah forever,
If those Titans hadn't rid Wichita of high-rise eyesores.
Along with positive urban renewal, most praised the upheaval
For the tax relief the Titans beget by means of bent property lines.
Still, poking those prying Google eyes one last time would have caused applause.

Technological collapse forestalled further cyber revenge.
It also seized up our strategies for romantic innovation.
We'd learned the language of combine harvesters and semi-pivot sprinklers
But found no call to flirt with crankshafts and gears now that science seemed foolish.
So, return to a rule by myth may have kinked up human progress,
But now there's time for any centaur who'll have us.

DREAMS OF SEA MONSTERS
by Mercedes Webb-Pullman

When I dreamt of the Kraken again
just last night, the whales
offered to pay for their own seats
but I wouldn't hear of it *No, no,*
put your money away I said
or maybe
you can buy the popcorn.

Nothing prepared us for the octopodes.

TURRITOPSIS NUTRICULA
by Dave Malone

String theory blooms holes
equal to black ones

still believed by most physicists until
Crothers' dismissal launched PhD candidates

into drunkards. Time doesn't exist unless
you say it does—language the miracle jellyfish

won't utter but lives just the same.

A LAKE AT MIDNIGHT
by Steve Klepetar

*Look, how a god returns
to his wrecked temple*

- Agha Shahid Ali

In this museum case, every stone fragment
becomes a mirror, a tongue frozen into long
silence. Is that the face of the drunken god

riding backward into a new land, his hair
wild and twined with leaves?

I heard him sing last night in a bar downtown,
his neon voice exploding among bottles and taps.
He held five dollars in a sweaty fist.

His face sent light beams out into the ragged
night as if he meant to save us all.

Once I came upon him by a lake at midnight,
moon casting ripples on the dark water's face.
His arms were bound with vines, his cold eyes

empty as a cup drained to the dregs,
his lips bloody and torn.

Then he was gone, and frogs began
their song again, a chorus old as mud,
and leaves pulsing back to life in April air.

IN A NUMBNESS
by Karen Neuberg

Are these hours
crazy. Or are we.
Looking the other way—
away from too much
disturbance and toward
what is still
splendid or diverting.
Between this breath
and those not yet
taken, when effects
will be felt. When
is too late
and what to do
before. I notice
what I notice.
It's everywhere
even when I think
I'm barely looking.

GOOD IMPRESSION
by Claire Scott

I want to make a good impression on you,
dear reader, to keep you interested
enticed by my integrity

my intelligence, my grasp of the international
situation so no discussion of bottles of
four buck chardonnay

bought at a different stores, rotating between
Safeway, Laurel Liquors, Benny's Beverage,

Wine Works & Bella Vino
empties dumped in neighbors' recycling

bottles clattering in my backpack as I walk my dog
a nifty cover for late night excursions

but really I can't stand her and at times forget to
feed her or brush her coat which is full of
fleas and burrs

of course I can't tell you any of this, dear reader
if I do talk to you at all I will have to alter my story

make it an occasional glass, mostly on weekends
when I study foreign affairs, read Spinoza &

walk my darling dog with her glossy coat
& new spring sweater

but now syllables begin to crack & collapse
crumpling into heaps of broken letters
can you hear them?

clearly this story can't stand on its own
clearly too many "s's" and "d's" in an
amalgam of annoying alliteration

are you wondering what's the point
I am sure there's a point in here somewhere
while you figure it out

I'm off to Safeway

DEVIANT
by Lauren Bender

My daughters thumb out Polly's skirt
and sniff it a hundred times.
Muffins or strawberries, one of those
sweet scents. They comb out each pony's
hair and shove too many plastic dolls into
the elevator box of their dream house.
Sometimes those dolls are having
orgies, I've heard it. One daughter invents
orgasm noises while another giggles,
maneuvers the dolls into lewd positions.

The neighbor's kid is older, a teenager,
and she sulks on the porch. In the garage.
She has endless dark hours, and
I have caught parts of them, like when
she stood on the sidewalk with arms crossed
watching her own house, and all
I could think was *predator*. But then
the rumors surfaced, stories I heard
more frightening than anything I'd seen:
talk of sociopathy, witnesses to acts
of animal torture; a video shot with
a cell phone of a meltdown in the school
bathroom complete with self-mutilation
blazing its way through the internet.

Every anecdote another step to terror.
I have a clearish moment where I think
*will they say my daughters are too fixated
on sex and there has to be something wrong?
My daughters have no respect for discretion?*
There is no proof anywhere except a girl
who is sad more often than she should be.
I waste several evenings in a desperate search
for the online breakdown video, which
I never find and feel creepy looking for.

The girls come out to the kitchen and
burst through drawer after drawer until
I glance up and ask what they need.
A butcher knife, they tell me. There's a party
in the doll's house and they need a butcher knife
for the surprise murder that's going to happen.

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT
by Kristina England

I hate pedestrians that walk jay-like
across the street and don't
have enough neck to look both ways.

I hate the sound of the train
motoring down the rail near my house,
shaking us trees from our roots.

I hate that I'm not really a tree,
that I am a human pretending to be a stream
but always running

the wrong way from men,
more a rock wall,
a mile of boundaries.

I wonder what nature thinks of
all this hoo-ha, this buzzing around of limbs,
brains humming with technology,

these beings
not harmless enough
to call bees.

TOO DEPRESSED TO MOW
by Mercedes Lawry

I build a box and bury it, along with clues.
I sputter and lie to the only ones who matter.
I follow the line in the tall grass, itching.
I smirk with regret.
I finish the soap and keep it to myself.
I age gracefully and then I don't.
I tear up paper airplanes, causing tears.
I abhor milk but can't explain.
I forget to dust repeatedly.
I climb the apple tree, inviting peril.
I repeat myself.

IN THE MIDST OF DEPRESSION
by Cheryl Kutcher

I've tried to think about a button, how it
fits into fabric, into the buttonhole, sliding
between stitches like a knife through skin.
But if I think about a button, I think
about undoing, how the binding thread
snaps when pulled too hard, too often,
how an item meant to clasp is no match
for the fingertips that seek separation.
When these thoughts overwhelm the mind,
it is easy to forget the cloth surrounding
the button, how none of its stitches intentionally
unseam. All of the dresses I own are missing
buttons. But I've saved them all in this pile,
you see, though by now I've forgotten
which buttons are supposed to fit where.

DARREN
by Louise Robertson

If you're going to haunt
something, make it not
Facebook. Hum. Garden.
Waft above beds.
Lean on things. Facebook
is so crowded.
Ann Marie who killed herself.
Jack of cancer. Gina now hangs
out with that smile
in profile pictures and backgrounds.
Pick a well. Stand by the well
with your transparent body. Hoot.
Warn them of the hole in the ground.
Be a throat to hell. Bloat. Hover.
Spin. When you're alive,
it's easy to have a smell,
to glisten and stink and
post online what you had
for dinner. But you're in the afterlife,
Darren, if the screen goes dim, turns
gray, if the monitor pops
and fizzles, they will say
virus, malware.
Let us remember you IRL,
like an ear hole
or hair or open mouth.

WHEN MEMORY GOES FROM THE HANDS
by Sarah Carey

They pass the silver, the ruby and the golden
anniversaries without comment
like a bowl of peas while we wait

time zones away, like we always did,
to be told. *Children, this is a milestone.*
Celebrate. They grow old

with wounds that won't be dressed
by hands that, having once memorized
a lover's entire geography

can't place the fester. *Which foot,*
one asks the other. *Which toe?*
When memory goes from the hands

we are on our way out of this world,
I tell young girls who ask me for advice.
This is what happens —give and take—

capitulation being a shadow of compromise.
The girls think I've lost my mind
but I face the future cold

braced to forget my husband's rock-hard calves,
his clean-shaven face against my cheek
when we make love.

In his small apartment, my father
can be anyplace. He conjures gondolas
in Venice, the Duomo in Florence.

His day fades early; he forgets why.
A flashback of some holiday captures of all of us
at table: someone ready to carve,

another to pray. We hold hands. On tiptoe,
my stepmother forks the cake
in the oven for doneness.

RAG BAG BAGGAGE
by Oonah V Joslin

I should throw it away.
It's a rag,
a favourite skirt for years
like a dress I had as a child
navy blue with off-white spots
large and small
becoming
towards the end
elastic versatile
like another skin
stretched with me as I
once stretched in you and like you

wore well,
washed well
over the years went from
formal to work to casual

frayed and thinned
but still loved
worn

that day too
the last time I saw you.

SHE WHO EATS ALONE HAS MORE DUMPLINGS
by Cheryl Kutcher

Last night, I sang in the shower for the first time,
reclaiming the steam, letting it saturate my throat,
hesitantly unafraid to be heard. It took me years
to train myself to hold back my garbled syllables,
years to remind myself he was no longer waiting
just outside. It's the little victories. Even then, I am afraid
to edit that old poem because I know I will change
the listed emotions—from when I was freshly bruised—
and I buy enough groceries for two, unused to cooking
for only myself. Even then, I package what's left, stand
in front of the open freezer, full with forgotten
dinners. Even then, I keep breathing in the steam.

**DEAR ANNIE,
by Lauren Bender**

"Annie was reading a four-page note from Minda, two pages of which were a sestina that used the repeating words Fang, blossom, locomotive, tongue, movie, and bi-curious."

- *The Family Fang*, Kevin Wilson

It seems much darker in the movie
theater than it is and my tongue
takes off like a rushing locomotive
through your lips. We make a blossom
of mouth. You have a tooth half fang
that has me feeling bi-curious.

I can't not be bi-curious.
If I glance up at the movie
(a vampire flick, flashing fang
over the bloody lips and tongue)
everything is sexual, the blossom
between my legs a violent locomotive

vibration, a sparking locomotive
beast. It's a wild ride, being bi-curious.
Adults will tell you how you'll blossom
as a teen as if you're part of a movie
about the normalcy of puberty. A tongue
is normal, I think now, what about a fang?

They never give specifics. But the fang
would bother them less than the locomotive
force of gay-ness, I'm sure. Every tongue
wagging, God did not make the bi-curious.
Transgression is acceptable in a movie;
in reality, no one is meant to blossom

this way. I tuck you into the blossom
of my legs, swinging on top, your fang
lit from behind me by the flashing movie
screen. Now I can feel our locomotive
speed as we bear down on the bi-curious
black hole and its who-knows-what, my tongue

too busy in your mouth to do its tongue
job of explaining that feeling. A blossom
of color on the screen paints our bi-curious
necking red, and we glance up at a fang
bite swimming in blood, the vampire locomotive
on bat wings, the only villain a movie

will crown victor. His tongue and each fang
show as his lips blossom to snarl. Your locomotive
fingers explore bi-curiously, distract from the movie.

BACKING DOWN
by Claire Scott

the driveway of our marriage
a suitcase of slimsy skirts/silk scarves &

dark shapes of sorrow
running on a tank of curdled trust since

I heard/I saw/I knew
my wipers powerless against drizzle & despair

I weep through my skin
my mouth tastes of you

how could you with my closest friend
Amy of lilting steps/light & laughter

Amy there when/our child/was not to be
staunching my tears/spooning chicken soup

she was mine to love not yours
& now I must go

driving the Mazda you bought for my birthday
the red of spring cherries & plums

but no GPS
the fog is dense, ten foot visibility

I can go forever ten feet at a time
winter chilling my bones

I suck Wint-O-Green candy & chew Trident gum
but some tastes/remain/a long time/on the tongue

DAD. DAD.
by Louise Robertson

For the summertime contest,
I read 568 poems, 328 about fathers.
They counted out deaths
--lots of loose skin and fat sweat.
They marked injustices--
Captain Queeg's metal balls.
They ran up the hill getting further
away, calling out: Dad! Dad!

Was I supposed to measure the heft
of these confessions?
I don't know how to weigh that. My dad
suffocated.

And if I'm running away
from him, I promise I am not yelling,
not whispering, not speaking into
my hat saying dad, dad,
where are you? I swear.
How's that for a prayer?

I WAS BORN
by Steve Klepetar

an exile, in an inner room.
My father the king declared me lost,
my mother the queen bolted the door.

Over the ocean I wailed my song.
Air swelled with butterflies
and bees searching for a flower's nest.

It was easy to be alone, easy to breathe
in that iron boat. How long I waited
for fragrant night and moon-shaped

balloon. In the stars I made out serpentine
patterns of my life, its uneasy contours
and all the ways my words seemed out

of place, the American way I said "dynasty"
and "taste," how trees bent sadly as I
wandered by, distracted by mist and hair

and glass. In my mouth, I tasted marbles
and stones, the language of another
land. Its weather nearly made me blind.

In the rain I talked about crows, who knew
my sorrow in the depths of black coats, and
drummed rhythm in the tender bark of pines.

IN MY FATHER'S STUDY
by Sally Evans

In this one room, the study,
I could never write.
It belonged to my father
who looked out on these trees
considering his parish
and the life that led him here.

Did it surprise him to be here,
again to engage and study
his new country parish
of which he planned to write
when jobs grew on trees
but he could go no farther?

I couldn't do it, Father,
pin nor nail you here
among your marvellous trees
in your soul or your study,
nor would I grow to write
while you possessed this parish,

for it was mine too, the parish
of the world, where you, Father,
inhibited my writing.
There was something I did not hear
when you occupied this study
guarded by many trees.

How I loved the trees,
great green parishioners
whose ways I studied,
accustomed to my father
lording it here
as though he was always right.

But now, with my writing
I wish to tame the trees,
in which I still overhear
his response to the parish
where I and my father
tried to share our studies.

Every writer needs a parish
full of trees. At last my father
hands me mine here in his study.

CONTRIBUTORS

Sandra Anfang is an award-winning teacher, poet and visual artist. She is the author of four poetry collections and several chapbooks. Sandra has won several writing contests and awards, including a first and second place. Her poems have appeared in numerous journals including *Poetalk*, *San Francisco Peace and Hope*, *West Trestle Review*, *Clementine Poetry Journal*, *The Tower Journal*, *Unbroken Literary Journal*, *Porkbelly*, and *Spillway*. Sandra's new chapbook, *Looking Glass Heart*, was just published by Finishing Line Press. She is the creator and host of the monthly poetry series, Rivertown Poets, in Petaluma. To write, for her, is to breathe.

Lauren Bender is a graduate of Green Mountain College where she earned her BFA in Writing and served as co-editor of the literary magazine *Reverie*. Her work has appeared in *IDK Magazine*, *Tulane Review*, *The Broken Plate*, *The Collapsar*, and others. She lives in Burlington, VT.

Sarah Carey is an award-winning veterinary public relations specialist, science writer and poet. She holds a master's degree in English with a creative writing concentration from Florida State University. Her work has appeared in *Rattle*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, *Portland Review* and other literary journals. *The Heart Contracts*, a chapbook forthcoming from Finishing Line Press (2016), is her debut collection of poems. She works for the University of Florida and lives in Gainesville. Visit her at sarahkcarey.com.

Darren C. Demaree is the author of five poetry collections, most recently *The Nineteen Steps Between Us* (2016, After the Pause). He is the Managing Editor of *The Best of the Net Anthology* and *Ovenbird Poetry*. Currently, he is living in Columbus, Ohio, with his wife and children.

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Sally Evans has been published widely in print and on the internet. Her poetry books include *Bewick Walks to Scotland* (2006), *The Bees* (2008), *The Grecian Urn* (2015) and *Poetic Adventures in Scotland* (2014) (also available as an e-book). She lives in Callander, Scotland.

Robert Ford lives on the east coast of Scotland, and writes poetry, short stories and non-fiction. His poetry has appeared recently in *Scrittura*, *Clear Poetry* and *Wildflower Muse*. More of his poetry can be found at <https://wezzlehead.wordpress.com/>

Edward G. Gauthier prefers to write short stories, flash fiction, poetry and essays. After many years of teaching English and computer science, he now maintains a four to six hour daily writing schedule.

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in *New Plains Review*, *South Carolina Review*, *Gargoyle* and *Silkworm*; work upcoming in *Big Muddy Review*, *Cape Rock* and *Spoon River Poetry Review*.

Michael Harmon holds a B.A. in English Literature from Long Island University and a B.S. in Computer Information Systems from Arizona State University. Some of his work has appeared in *North American Review*, *The Raintown Review*, *The Adirondack Review*, *Gravel Literary Journal*, and other publications.

Gloria Heffernan's poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Icarus*, *Pleiades*, *The Columbia Review*, *The Comstock Review*, *Parody*, *Grey Sparrow Journal*, *Lost Coast Review*, *Stone Canoe*, *The Healing Muse*, *The Wayfarer: A Journal of Contemplative Literary*, *Two Words For*, and *The New York Times Metropolitan Diary*. Her articles and essays have appeared in numerous magazines and journals including *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Radiance Magazine*, *Syracuse Post-Standard*, *The Eugene O'Neill Review*, *The Dramatist's Guild Quarterly* and an upcoming issue of *Talking Writing*. Gloria teaches part-time at Le Moyne College in Syracuse and holds a Master's Degree in English from New York University.

Ann Howells' poetry has recently appeared in *Crannog* (Ire), *San Pedro River Review*, and *Spillway* among others. She serves on the board of Dallas Poets Community, a 501-c-3 non-profit, and has edited *Illya's Honey* since 1999, recently going digital and taking on a co-editor. Her publications are: *Black Crow in Flight* (Main Street Rag, 2007), *Under a Lone Star* (Village Books Press, 2016), *Letters for My Daughter* (Flutter Press, 2016) and the upcoming *Cattlemen and Cadillacs*, an anthology of DFW poets which she is editing (Dallas Poets Community, 2016).

Andrea Jackson's fiction and poetry have appeared in various journals, most recently in *Alligator Juniper* (contest finalist; reprinted in Phone-Fiction.com), *Meadowland Review*, and *A Quiet Courage* and forthcoming in *Star 82 Review*. She has received two Pushcart nominations and one nomination for the *Best of the Net Anthology*, and has an MFA from the University of Missouri-St. Louis. She is working on a biography/memoir based on her mother's letters.

Jeff Jeppesen is a Pushcart-nominated, Georgia-based writer. His work can be found in *Space and Time*, *Every Day Poets*, *Strange Horizons*, *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* and blogs at oovj.wordpress.com. You can find her on Facebook and Twitter.

Steve Klepetar's work has received several nominations for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. The latest of his nine collections include *My Son Writes a Report on the Warsaw Ghetto* and *The Li Bo Poems*, both from Flutter Press.

Cheryl Kutcher is an MFA Poetry student at Oklahoma State University. Her work has appeared in *Toad, Life and Legends, The Tower Journal, and Postcard Poems and Prose*.

Mercedes Lawry has published poetry in such journals as *Poetry, Nimrod, Prairie Schooner, Poetry East, Natural Bridge*, and others. Thrice-nominated for a Pushcart Prize, she's published two chapbooks, most recently *Happy Darkness*. She's also published short fiction, essays and stories and poems for children and lives in Seattle.

Poet and filmmaker **Dave Malone** hides out in the Missouri Ozarks. He is the author of six books of poetry, the most recent *O: Love Poems from the Ozarks* (TS Poetry Press). His interests include the philosophy of Alan Watts, vegetarian fare, and small-batch bourbon.

Carolyn Martin is blissfully retired in Clackamas, Oregon, where she gardens, writes, and plays. Her poems and book reviews have appeared in journals throughout the US and UK, and her second collection, *The Way a Woman Knows*, was released in February 2015 (www.thewayawomanknows.com). Since the only poem she wrote in high school was red-penciled "extremely maudlin," she is amazed she has continued to write.

Karen Neuberg's most recent chapbook is *Myself Taking Stage* (Finishing Line Press). Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Hermeneutic Chaos, Really System, S/tick*, and elsewhere. She's associate editor of the on-line journal *First Literary Review-East* and lives in Brooklyn NY.

Jared Pearce teaches writing and literature at William Penn University. His poems have recently been or will soon be shared in *DIAGRAM, Dark Matter, East Coast Ink, and Convergence*.

A native New Yorker, **James Penha** has lived for the past quarter-century in Indonesia. He has been nominated for Pushcart Prizes in fiction and in poetry. His essay, "It's Been a Long Time Coming," was featured in *The New York Times* "Modern Love" column in April 2016. Penha edits *TheNewVerse.News*, an online journal of current-events poetry. [@JamesPenha](https://twitter.com/JamesPenha)

Ken Poyner's latest collection of short, wiry fiction, *Constant Animals*, can be obtained, digital or paperback, at www.amazon.com. He often serves as strange, bewildering eye-candy at his wife's power lifting affairs, where she is one of the most celebrated female power lifters of all time. His poetry of late has been sunning in *Analog, Asimov's, Poet Lore, The Kentucky Review*; and his fiction has yowled in *Spank the Carp, Red Truck, Café Irreal, Bellows American Review*. More to come.

Louise Robertson has completed the following checklist in no particular order: Slam teams. Journal publications – literary and journalistic. Poetry event organizer. College degree. MFA in poetry. Full-length book (*The Naming Of*, Brick Cave Media). Trouble sleeping. Tries to be nice. Loves biking and swimming. Hates running. Does it anyway. Good at word games. Loves her two kids all the time. All the time.

Claire Scott is an award winning poet who has been nominated twice for the Pushcart Prize. Her work has been accepted by the *Atlanta Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Healing Muse* and *Vine Leaves Literary Journal* among others. 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*.

Terry Severhill is a former combat Marine, former construction worker, former toddler and a four time college/university drop out. He resides in Vista, California, with his best friend Mary, who just happens to be his wife. Terry reads at several open mics around San Diego County each month.

Chuck Von Nordheim served in the US Air Force for 22 years as an F-4 radar mechanic. He can neither confirm nor deny the warehousing of alien technology on hidden desert bases, but can, as a result of his military experiences, attest to the mythically sweltering temperatures the Mojave can produce. Since 2007, Chuck has frequently sojourned to Lawrence, Kansas, to attend the fiction-writing workshops sponsored by the Center for the Study of Science Fiction. While he remains dubious that he learned anything useful about the craft of writing in Lawrence, he can verify receipt of excellent schooling in the appreciation of Kentucky whiskey and the work of shlock master Luigi Cozzi.

Mercedes Webb-Pullman started writing in 2007. She graduated from Victoria University Wellington with an MA in Creative Writing in 2011, the year she turned 60. Her poems and prose have appeared in *Turbine*, *4th Floor*, *Swamp*, *Reconfigurations*, *The Electronic Bridge*, *Otoliths*, *Connotations*, *The Red Room*, *Typewriter*, and *Cliterature*, among others, and in her books. She lives on the Kapiti Coast, New Zealand.

NOTICE: Call for Submissions Fall 2016

We invite you to submit to our first themed call for submissions for our fall 2016 issue. The theme is "honor". We are looking for poems that illustrate the many nuances of the idea of honor, far beyond what may spring to mind first (military service, for example). What are everyday examples of honor? When is it honorable to do something against the rules? When have you found your ideas of honor compromised? Take this theme and run with it. We will have a special category in submissions for poems aimed at this theme. We will also be accepting regular submissions, so if this theme is not for you, you can still send us something.

Our fall reading period will run from July 1 - September 15, 2016.

Please read our guidelines; they apply to all submissions.

<http://www.gyroskopereview.com/home/guidelines/>



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