

Gyroscope Review

fine poetry to turn your world around



LAKESUMMER

Issue 18-3 Summer 2018

John 2018



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Issue 18-3
Summer 2018

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Constance Brewer & Kathleen Cassen Mickelson

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Edition of 5

FROM THE EDITORS

As summer hits its stride, with lush gardens and dinners outdoors, long walks with our dogs and the comfort of shorts, it's hard to stay focused on work that requires a desk inside. Laptops are a marvelous thing, but editing a journal is better done without sunshine hitting the computer screen.

Lucky for us, many of the poems in this issue bring that summer feeling with them. They evoke such things as those aforementioned gardens, summer dresses, heading out on the water, and skinny dipping. These poems offer that sometimes-elusive summer escape. And how we need that escape, how we long for it as we work through our to-do lists, worry over bills, fret about the state of the world, anguish over whether we are loved.

Those things we worry about have not been left completely out of this issue's work. Even as summer casts its spell, our poets know that there are still stories of love, resistance, resilience, and grief to share, to turn over and inspect, to reshape into works of poetry art. Poet Daryl Muranaka expresses this idea beautifully in his poem, *Waterlilies*, on page 16:

My little girl wants
to fold paper so much
you'd think it would
save the whole world...

Poets and children folding paper absolutely contribute to saving the world. They give us moments of sanity in an insane time. They give us moments of love when we feel most unloved. And they give us summer enough to take us through our work days and other obligations until we can sit in a sunny spot outside somewhere, content.

*Kathleen Cassen Mickelson
Constance Brewer
Editors
July 2018*

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POEMS

SECTION 1

SUMMER DRESSES
BY JOAN MORITZ

It's nearly summer
and the I've-got-nothing-
to-hide girls are
wearing their not-

quite-sheer dresses,
gauzy yellow
fabric stitched
with eyelet daisies,

those if-the-light-
shines-just-right
dresses ending
above the knee,

those if-the-breeze-
sneaks-up-while-
she's-shading-
her-eyes dresses,

those tantalize
dresses, filmy
clouds barely
veiling the sun.

BROOCH BELONGING TO
BY OONAH V JOSLIN

I seldom
wear you out. I'm afraid
of losing you.
So afraid of losing.

No pin is so secure I can be
absolutely sure.

It's happened before.
Something precious
forever lost.

It's not the cost
that makes a coward of me.
It's the thought
that all through ages yet to come
a day, a week, a century from now
you will belong to someone else and

I can never
wear you
out.

In the end it's you who will lose me.
You who can feel no fond memory
or retain even the engraving of my name;
will endure beyond,
while every sorrow past or future
becomes cold-etched in me
in synapse first and then
in bone.

MEASURING THE VOLUME OF MY ABSENCE
BY ELYA BRADEN

It's cool here under the earth,
 darkness blessing the stars.
 I am coal crushed into diamonds.

Dusk now the doorway
 to my satisfaction. Between lake
and garden, stage lights beckon.

Earthworms unravel after a storm;
death, in heels, sudden and concrete.

 I am changing faster
than a sequence of locks,
 stairs and sand.

The compass spins, True North spreading
 in Puget Sound, each wave:
 Surrender, love, surrender.

 I empty the stones
 from my pockets,
swallow the moon.

THE CDC REPORT SAYS
BY CRAIG HEYNE

US suicide rates increased more than 25% since 1999

your worst mistake was not this
they'll say you made a mistake

you didn't, we know that
no matter it, you're gone

& i wish you weren't
you are bigger than you

used to be, dressed in
different clothes & always

rotting & decomposing
& nesting in my stuffy brain

you've sat in my veins
i've done everything to

free you. you've grown so
large, you were only

so privately devastating

now you accompany
the greats make me think

that i am, too
i am not. you make me

ill. i am mourning.
there are so many nights

you will not get back.
we are mourning.

but you are being remembered
we are rebuilding our cities

for you because of you
look at all the stars in the night

how they were dead before
we saw them yet we mapped

them & walked in
right paths because of them.

BOOK ENDS
BY TODD HELDT

Buildings eclipse the sun, we kick at
the sidewalk and search for words.
She wonders out loud what happened
to the sophomore art class necklace
she made me--*Did you throw it away
or look for it one day and not find it?*--
and I about the fishnet stockings
we bought tittering in line at the store.
--Did you ever wear them for anyone else?--
We stare at nothing, the sky, buildings,
the people wending around us,
two monuments stuck dead
center in the path of the living
in front of the library, where
we chance to meet after a decade.
We are brick and movement, a catalog
of syllables and bodies that push them,
returning to a shelf of old favorites,
blowing off the dust and wondering
if the words inside will still move us.
Because still the firm of her body,
her favorite shirt lighting the tide
of her eyes, the words that fit
in the soft home of her mouth,
those stockings, and the everything
that strays into memory and cannot be
forced into stories that make sense
to anyone else. There is nothing to be
done with the past, and I imagine
behind me an old man pushing a cart
of books that fall to the floor, no order
can be restored, and these two things
are unrelated except for a graveyard
of pages staring open-faced at the sky.

RIDING THE BUFFALO
BY BARBARA LAWHORN

The fiberglass canoe felt fragile
when one paddle got hooked in tree roots
and we turned and rode the rapids backwards, hitting
the flipped canoe, hard. Two men clinging, hard.

My son was screaming for help, convinced we were dying.
My daughter, pathetically hunched in her cling
wrap poncho, sobbed. We are fine, we are fine, ride
it out, I called. Later, they would be fine,
thrilled with all the toads they could catch
at the sodden camp, but in the now, they were dying.
Deep inside, it was elating to come so close
to something nearly awful, but not. The rain was ethereal.
I tried to tell them this. Look, look, look at the waterfalls.
At the fog. At my beloved friend riding her kayak
like some Amazon warrior, saving my life once again
and promising hot chocolate and popcorn, Southern lullaby
of a voice, until my kids were calm. Jesus, she was like
Jesus in her plastic kayak and fearlessness.

What does it matter? What does it mean?
Beyond the animal smell of the tent--
the three of us like some den of wolves, banding together.
They know I'd fuck up anyone who tried
to harm them. Use my new fishing knife, my teeth,
my dirty, cracked nails. But the deep fear, the deepest cave
is that I've been the harbinger of harm. All of these trips
and experiences? Proof I'd drive anywhere for them, blood
of my blood and flesh of my flesh. Stop time, hard
and meet them. But I won't ever be able

to carry them home. Right now, I am building a new
one. So is their father/not-my-husband-anymore. My son,
in the front seat, the next morning, asks how babies
are made, tearing at paper thin beef jerky I bought
when I went to pay for the lost oar. I began to explain,
until I caught his forlorn face. He ripped at his meat with the teeth
he's still losing. The night before he kissed my hand.
"You're the sweetest mother," he said and I held on
because cruelty comes in all sizes. It's like weather.
Like a river. Like a fiberglass canoe. It takes over
like a seizure, but when it's gone, it's gone. A fist

unclenching. Oar deep in water so the current carries
and carries, away and away and away.

LAPSE

BY LAUREL SZYMKOWIAK

We clear out our parents' house
after they've died, find gnarled-signed
birthday cards addressed, never mailed;
corroded batteries, a latex glove
in a desk drawer next to socks
and an unpaid utility bill 2 months overdue.

We watched our parents fail, the slow, loosening
grasp of the everyday, their meds crushed
under kitchen chairs, dishes put away unwashed,
how they ignored the urine cloud around them,
refusing our offers of meatloaf – and to clean,
smiling to redirect our attention from
the cereal boxes smoking in the hot oven.

We walk through our parents' house,
the air stale, drapes drawn, windows painted shut, expecting
to see them wrapped in holey sweaters,
sitting in plastic slipcovered chairs,
offering us decaf, damp cookies, afraid
of cold, afraid of dirt,
afraid of the 6:00 news,
afraid we would deprive them
their suffocated freedom.

WATERLILIES

BY DARYL MURANAKA

My little girl wants
to fold paper so much
you'd think it would
save the whole world,
and so I make flowers
with the tips of my fingers,
each an echo of the one
before, in a chain so dense
you could walk from here
to Japan to the years past
when others with our face
passed the time in silent
concentration, making petals
that brighten our way.

UNANSWERED
BY MICKI BLENKUSH

In the dream, a guy who'd died
driving himself into a guardrail
thirty-two years ago sits next to me.
But do you feel? he asks
and each time I try to move
further down the bench,
he lifts a blanket over us both
as though to protect from rain.
He's sober now, strange without
the Jack Daniels tipping back
to the gravity of empty.
Only you can say, he says,
shifting the blanket around.
What I've always wanted to know,
but still don't ask,
is whether he'd meant to die.
I know silence, he says,
then nothing more
as we huddle together
at the far end of the bench.

WAKING UP BEFORE YOU
BY JENNIFER JUDGE

The soft edges of morning
droop over everything in the distance.

My breath turns to fog, a puff of steam.
Nothing retains its shape.

The dog runs, becomes that
time-lapse photo of things in motion.

Inside, red chrysanthemums pulse
in a vase, on-off, speak-be still.

It is the quietest time of morning,
the empty hour. You sleep

in the heavy cotton batting
of dreams. I wait on the stairs.

HOLES

BY NICOLE MASON

Hear me out—

not all lesions are fit
for this kind of treatment
they can't be dry
or closed up
the skin almost healed
the wound has to be open
objective

I imagine when
the maggots close around
the crust of dead tissue
it will feel like worship
like a dug well
like when you woke up
to the feeling of your baby teeth
rattling around in your mouth

I once had a black snake
I let it drift
I let it move and wind
through my fingers
through my hair
eventually it lost itself
among my piles
it never learned its names
trap jaw
water pilot
black snake
I tried to call to it—
forgetful and nameless snake
I found it in my vagina
never noticing it creep in

I left it there
to wend its brackish chemistry
to whistle through the complicated
wiring of my body
sometimes I can feel it
the scuff and pare
of the inverted scales

as it backs out of another
dead end

INDIGESTION

BY DEBORAH L. DAVITT

She's got a mouth as lined
with complaints
as a shark's with teeth--
they pave the way from maw
to gullet, and any idea
that gives her indignation indigestion
gets another chewing across her serrations
as it rises back up;

it must be nice to
dine on so many imagined slights
and so much adopted guilt--
see what a fine table
she's laid for herself,
so full of dainties for
others to admire, yet so
tasteless on her lips—
quick, get a picture of that morsel
for Instagram.

How quick she is, too,
to scorn what's on
another's plate;
how shrill she becomes,
to defend her bulimic diet
of outrage,
as she vomits up
the same stale ideas
just to swallow them whole again.

ESCAPE VELOCITY
BY SCOTT NOREMBERG

Drunks often float and that's fine by me—
moths do the same, and algae, and Styrofoam;
so I'm not surprised to see half a dozen hounds

glide into the bar, six inches off the ground.
Their paws don't even claw at air, they

just kind of dangle there in the same way
the limp wrist of a dead woman might hang off a steel table.
They hover this way, through the stench of cologne,
that way above the puke-stained floor. Dogs, there

are flying dogs in the bar. The bartender

lights a shot on fire, and slobber drips off a fang.
I lift my drink, take a sip. I'm somewhere

in between. First one, then all the dogs

start to howl—not surprisingly. At least I have beer,
a tolerable numbness. Soon everyone is howling

with the dogs. I fight the urge to join the pack,
but soon I notice I'm floating.

A little yowl falls out. The floor

and ground and earth—not a place for me. I rise

out of the bar, into the tree tops—to float, to die,
to drink until the moon cradles me.

But I do not get to nuzzle into the arms of the sky; dogs

at my heels pull me back, snarl over my flesh,
and eventually each of them drifts in one direction

or another, hauling what's left of me,
searching for a place to bury my bones.

PHOTOTROPIC MOVEMENT
BY BONNIE THIBODEAU

My house nests itself in the hillside with windows
I look up to—watching mint green walls glow
and dim when shadows recede, when shadows return—
reminding me of the rule: tidewaters in follow tidewaters out.

The leaves of plants bordering my living room grow up for light.
And I am cradled in the ground. Making home of what was only ever
meant to be a foundation: some kind of end in a beginning. I keep the door
open for wren, who made her mudroom nests long before I made my bed
here. I help her see the windows, so I may watch her come and go.

I walk the woods nearly every night, bathing in the low light.
There's more room at dark, when bird calls sound
more like dissipating bubbles amid the quarter-mile trees.
Two trails differ from each other, but one trail differs from itself.

In this way I fall in love with the seasonal parades,
gathering rural reflections like scattered candy
when Alone and Silence march along my outskirts. My dog keeps quiet
with me when I pause for the frozen doe making her mind to flee.

My neighbors come down the lane to play games just before
springtime. Asking do I know when witching hour will pass. Trying to read
the colors of the dreams I send them. My dog's bark echoes
off the walls, the way my voice used to do when I was young and shouting
into a tin can pressed tight against my mouth. Testing the possibilities of sound.

I grab the ground with both muddy hands and crawl
under barbed wire each time I cross between forest and field.
My feet disappear in the black creek if the moon is gone.
We might like to watch these things happen when we grapple
with notions of enough. Too much not-enough. Not enough too-much.

I was made small by a man
again and again. Now I am
made smiling in being
made small by the sea,
made small by the river,
made small by the sky,
made small by the mountain.
In this way I am grown.

An emptiness might be something.
A woodpecker is making warm home of a hole in an old oak tower.

BIHOKETMAKI
(bee.SHOW.khet.MAH.kee)
BY KOBINA WRIGHT

He regards me intently
and I don't have to explain myself when he's gone.
He used to act hurt
that I was wind
life was sky
and he was rock
I ignored.

I let him sit in all his hurt without
consolation or assurance of my attention or my love.
I did plenty when we were tangled limbs on
my sagging mattress or while his brows were
scrunched in concentration
as he teased details out
of a painted leaf of canvas.

Monday nights, while the plants in the house whispered
for him unanswered, I did not approve of his absence
and wouldn't make him
feel better about it.
It's how we were
at first.

When I grew stronger and happier and he showed signs of distress
whenever I left the house I gave him jigsawed pieces of my heart
(not the whole thing)
to help him breathe and slow his heart.
It made him love me
for reasons I didn't want.

He dawdled comfortably and my arms and voice
grew tender and raw from all the jostling and nudging
and I had to take a break and look around to see if
there was an easier way
or an easier one.

He sensed the suspension and studied me while I was not looking
and cobbled a mosaic of gratitudes for me to consider
and rub my arms and voice against
to work out the soreness.

IMPRINTING
BY PEGGY LANDSMAN

All day long,
all around town,
I can't escape
nasturtiums.

Like gaggles of geese,
they follow...

I'm no Konrad Lorenz!

Suddenly stopping
dead in my tracks,
"Quit trumpeting,"
I command.

Their delicate petals
do not melt my heart.

They flutter
their green leaves
like fans.

To serve them right,
to make an example,
I pull up whole bunches,
several loose handfuls;
toss them straight into my salad.

True to their nature,
they will not learn.
It is I who get taught
a lesson.

All night long,
like essence of onion,
strangely determined,
nasturtiums
burn.

SECTION 2

BARGE TRIP – CANAL DU MIDI
BY ROBERTA FEINS

Gnarled roots of plane trees
grope down the bank for water.
Leaves worship summer

*

On the canal, moored
under cicada song.
Later, a thunderstorm.

*

Red flag, stone church.
Tractors hum the vineyard rows.
Bats hunt the twilight.

*

Butterflies of dry country
light on our barge to sip
from pink geranium.

*

Day of waking dream:
slipping from tree to tree,
from one breath to the next

*

Plane trees in full leaf
line up to guard the canal.
We float, still, we float

**TO THE HIGH SCHOOL FRIEND WHO MESSAGES ME ON FACEBOOK
THEN TAKES SO LONG TO RESPOND**
BY MICKI BLENKUSH

This is how I've kept myself here
since you last saw me two decades ago
at our ten-year reunion. That night
when I smoked again so long past quitting,
woke the next day on my parent's couch,
returned to my partner who steered
my hungover canoe around the pond
all afternoon. At first I can think of nothing
more to say. For almost a week
I wonder what you'd see
in my garden's daily weeds. I want to tell you
how the first surprise of line-dried towels
plays rough against my skin as I step
outside the fresh steam of my shower.
I still imagine your seventeen-year-old self
walking alongside me. Doing things
we'd not have imagined as we rode
the gravel roads, watched for cops,
tossed empty cans into ditches.
I want to speak for you some word
like trowel as I lift one from the tangle
of my garage. Show the way
I kneel and dig.

MAGIC LAMP SEMANTICS
BY PAUL EDWARD COSTA

You'll never hear sentences
 so elaborately
 and carefully constructed
as the wishes now made to genies,
so airtight
 (filled with dashes and semi-colons)
that they're immune to any cruel,
 ironic,
 "Twilight Zone" interpretations,
leaving the occupants of magic lamps
 brooding behind folded arms,
nostalgic for an era
 when well-wishers spoke carelessly,
 so genies could openly engage
 in the malevolent manipulations
 reserved for the gods.

HITOGATA

BY DEBORAH L. DAVITT

The world needs scapegoats and sin-eaters;
through which we might cast
our culpability into a doll,
a piece of bread, a slice of godly flesh,

washing them away in running water,
through which no evil spirit can pass,
or watch our sins slide,
sleekly buttered like a crumpet
past someone's kindly lips,

erased and absolved,
taken on someone else's shoulders —
oh, if only if guilt could be absolved
instead of perpetuated endlessly
in an endless cacophony online.

I swallowed my opinions,
buried them deep in my own gullet
where no one could hear my
confession and condemn me —
made my own flesh
my *hitogata*,

until I opened my eyes one night
to find myself surrounded
by a swarm of paper dolls
all wearing my face,
shuffling *shiff-shiff*, each to each,
as each flattened body slithered
under the door
to seek new homes.

I should have drowned them first.

BACKYARD GRAPES IN AUGUST
BY SARAH BROWN WEITZMAN

At first in green concord
with vines and leaves
and Japanese beetles
then fountain pen ink clusters
coated as though frosted
with sugar.

I loved to burst them then
one by one
when I was ten
to see the glistening
cat's eye pop out whole
and oozing.

A bite of vinegar
just before wine goes bad
so tart a taste
and sharp.
So sweet preserved
now in memory.

SUMMER CLOUD
BY EILEEN MALONE

Not quite asleep, almost dozing
in the bee-buzzing garden
I felt a premonition

it wasn't a summer cloud
crawling over the grass
snuffing the light of buttercups
like candles

making them raspberry velveteed
slow-growing embers
roused me, made me sit up

it wasn't a sudden breeze
of cold roselight

had me gasp air shot with fired
silken amethyst, burning like ice
flushing with what surrounded me

it was the shadow of you standing
there, over me, bringing your shade

with you to hover like a swarm
of midges and cover me and the skin
of all things between us with a
mangled and wrung darkness.

TRELLIS / 20110923
BY KIMBOL SOQUES

serpentine
pea shoots
green cotton light

wrap around bare
bulb of the sun
for an instant grotto

waving like crepe paper with the
wind's lightest push
tiny curling hooks shift benign
fronds to stealthy menace
until they cling enough to

catch
hold
grow steadily over
until nothing is left but

green serpentine?

SUNDIALS
BY CLARA POWER

I could drive this valley handcuffed and blindfolded and still find myself standing in some familiar graveyard, bathing suit off, lukewarm water and the close nakedness of friends. The current covering us in red clover and pollen powder, my thoughts down around my thighs, blending into a murky bottom.

And I'd be perfectly at home yet perfectly insane, a full set of emotions without any reference to the setting sun. Skinny-dipping in shadows, around and around, each angle the same as the day before. When I go, I will pack up all these boxes and flee, like a poetic seizure or a cup on the roof of a car.

Her memory plays catch with an invisible ball. I remember how her shirts would fit, mostly flatlined across except for the two points her chest bones make poking through the fabric. When she wears leggings they are baggy at the knees and puckered at the waist, no matter what size they are. She always sits impossibly straight, and if you look in profile, she's just a longhaired skull with boots on.

At that time I am used to inhabiting a sort of lavish adult

poverty, with big sunglasses and a red leather throat and the windows rolled down. I smoke cigarettes forever and ever and don't get cancer or sadness or lines around my mouth. She wants to exist here too, so I let her.

One day I come home early and that's how I find her, on the kitchen island on acid alone, gripped to her seat like a fridge magnet, watching the wall pass by. When she sees me come in her gaze shifts, sticking me up against the refrigerator door and holding me there.

I take three tabs that day to match her one, my sanity a vanishing point on the horizon. We walk out to the flower garden behind our apartment building. Our shadows bend to match one another, sundials charting our slow slant to the bottom of the sky. She silently rips apart each flower, shredded petals molting in the grass.

I never tell her about everything I steal from her, while she thinks she is heaving me dry. But I am always pulling at the wool threads of her loosely knitted head. What a way to come undone.

We take turns in the bathroom, not talking in between, a cycle of sweet and savory. She always

says carrots are the worst, that coarse orange choke in her throat. But I hate the sweet cement of cookies, cakes, muffin paste. Saliva chalk sticking to the insides of my esophagus.

When we are finished we have a nightcap, smoke a bowl, sit back and wait for the drugs to take hold. A nightcap could be an apple, or an empty napkin or a trap. She gives me an aching hunger, and I give her a chemical cure. She falls in love with a drug dealer, and I never eat frosting again.

A ROUTINE OPERATION, THEY SAID
BY KATE GARRETT

When you're flat on your back, looking up is looking straight ahead — baby in another room, in your husband's arms, for the moment, safe. In the light fixture above, reflective silver sun, you secretly watch the surgeon clamp one fallopian tube as pain returns, aches from the skin down. You think about not feeling the outside air hit your inside world, the ovarian road your children first travelled held in a doctor's hands. You think about how sometimes, over the centuries, people survived surgeries without anaesthetic. You thank your obsession with history for this meditation. You find an unsettling calm in the sight of your split skin, red-edged; in the thought of, at least, not feeling the first cut. She tells you it will be over soon, halfway through the sterilisation.

Sterilisation, all the right decision, she mutters. This baby alone could have killed you. Your womb was stretched transparent; in the moment before delivery, before scalpel touched flesh, she could see an elbow twitch, toes wriggle through amniotic fluid, the baby nearly two feet long and coiled atop your bladder. *I thought I nicked your bladder, casually, as if saying it might rain, luckily a false alarm.* You see blue dye, just pushed through your body, splashed on your hospital gown, confirming all is as it should be. But of course things have changed. The pain is returning to your centre. She ends your child-growing years for good, for life and death reasons, and you feel the pinch and pressure as she cuts off this handful of possibilities.

Then you feel the sutures run back and forth, their sting and glide — the anaesthetist offers to put you under, but you refuse. You'd rather be awake for the sealing of your fate.

KANDINSKY

BY ALEXANDRA DONOVAN

the salamander is a cheek
the planet is an eye and an ear
 and the third eye
the triangle is nighttime
 is everything
 and moves through everything
 and is unseen
there is no border except
 where the eye stops
turn around and
 the lamp is a cheekbone
 the cat curled like a comma
 is a comma
 daylight is a column that slices
 dividing even unto spirit and soul
the salamander looks so happy
 being not a salamander
my hand finds that curve, becomes its echo

AT HOME AT THE MET
BY ROBERTA FEINS

Mom doesn't like the nursing home.
The food is bland. In the hall outside her room
hangs a poster of two nuzzling puppies
that says "Together, we can lick anything."

Though she instantly knows all of the answers
to the word games the aides play every morning,
she has to keep quiet to give the others a chance.

She is planning her move to the Metropolitan Museum of Art;
They have special programs for seniors. Docents
in pearls and winged caps will smoothly push

her wheelchair through salons of watered silk.
Greek slaves will offer wine from urns
upheld in slim white arms. At night, she'll bathe

in the pool under Pan's statue.
She's got a bone to pick with two thousand
years of Christian art, docile women,

warty Jews. She'll argue aesthetics with the Virgin
Mary herself, weigh Rembrandt's gold,
litter the lawn at La Grande Jatté

with the Sunday New York Times.
Over tea, she and Van Gogh's landlady
will shake their heads over the price of apples.

She will argue about eternity with Gudea.
She will sleep surrounded by treasure,
in the tomb of Mekhet-ra.

HOLD

BY CHRISTY WISE

“There’s a 48-hour hold on those funds.”
Mind scrolls through possible emergencies.

“Please don’t hold my puppy so tight.”
I couldn’t help myself. Squiggling so much. Soft.

“You can’t put those books on hold.”
These aren’t reference volumes.

“Hold this nail while I hammer it into the wall.”
And get my fingers smashed?

“Do you mind if I put you on hold?”
Do I have a choice? Of course, I mind.

“I want to hold you forever.”
Yes.

MATTRESS ETIQUETTE
BY REMI RECCHIA

1. Your skin will stick with sweat. It will not smell good. If you're good enough friends, you and she will laugh when your rough elbow patch scratches her ribcage. No one's ribcage is perfect. Hers will be marked with the following: stretch marks, soft hair, no visible bones. Do not underestimate the beauty of fat alone.

2. White warmth can melt into the woman as many times as you'd like, but they must melt into the woman. A mattress, soft or hard or adorned in feathers, is not a woman.

3. If a man asks you if you have Done It, you may tell him. If the same man asks her if she has Done It, you'd better hope she lies. This is different than if he asks her if you have Done Her.

4. Stained mattress pad caving in, off-brand pillows flattening thin—her pink and your slick will coat everything. Don't let the duvet get too heavy.

5. Leave everything pink, rubber, or silicone on the internet. If you are a true man, you will not need any supplements.

6. If you find yourself writing poetry into her bones, resist and desist. This isn't the Thought Police, exactly, but there is a time and place for poetry, and high undulations under a loud groan should take precedence. Your body is utilitarian; her womb is black and wanting.

7. And if you do: kiss her ears. Make sure no inch of her face, beautiful cheekbones, clever tongue goes un-worshipped. Her collarbone is only labeled as such because God couldn't think of a word for smooth, delicate, felt, and naked all at once. Her deepness will cling to you. Her soft hips will rely on you for firm protection. Her eyes will change color in the light, but do not be deceived: you are staring in to the face of a woman. Her heart is no chameleon. You are golden in her shadow.

PAPER MOON
BY BONNIE THIBODEAU

I.

*Even the largest earthquakes can be traced to relatively small stresses
and their effects on tiny flaws in rocks...*

--*Marcia Bjornerud*, Reading the Rocks: The Autobiography of the Earth

There's a Paper Moon in Baltimore

full of red velvet pancakes
and mutilated baby dolls
riding bikes along steel beams and
crouching behind cakes in the cooler.

You can smell the basil
overflowing in the bathtubs.

The bell is always ringing
on Sunday morning,
but there's room enough to hear

a man say he wants a woman
whose tectonic plates will never shift.

an awkward silence.
the crack of a smile.

a woman's bare thighs
peeling away
from hot sticky vinyl

when she stands
to split the check.

II.

"...Rocks are almost infinitely strong if they experience uniform pressures in all directions."

--*Marcia Bjornerud*, Reading the Rocks: The Autobiography of the Earth

There's a German Church in Baltimore

where a cast iron gate shadows
a garden of dogwood trees

in blossom, plotted squares of red
tulips, and mini maple donuts
in a paper basket between two laps.

The end of summer sun spills across them
on the single stone bench in the center
while a congregation crouches behind walls
together in prayer, aligned on dark pews.

One mile away, but you can smell mussels pulled
from the harbor and smoked behind
the cherry jubilee stand for girls in salmon
colored shorts, buying flowers from buckets.

Stained glass saints oversee
a service ending in two languages.

The bell tolls twenty in the tower.
A man laughs then asks a woman
if her plates have finished shifting.

There's too much light to hide
her disbelief
of his same refrain
in different frames.

No sound follows
her long shadow casting out
across the courtyard at last.

SHE WRITES HIS NAME
BY BABO KAMEL

the handsome, entitled teenage boy
mean as a blister, right smack
in the middle of a poem.
Both first and last, ensures no
confusion. Poetic justice?
Nothing slant about it. Just there
naked on the page.

I knew a boy like him
wild in high school, all sex and smirk
whom I half wanted, because although
he seemed hard, his mouth was beautiful
and though he seemed totally into
himself, he was smart. Did I say his mouth
was beautiful?

Trilingual, his lips would flirt words
Think *blueberry, bluet, or myrtilós*
such sounds of seduction, right there
in the classroom. Oh, what secrets
the tongue held in the cave of a mouth
what longings resided between the teeth.
How deeply we hid our crushes
blushing through our teens.

Now imagine you're 15 again. You don't want to
but you do. You should worry about a pimple
on your chin or plan your monologue
for drama auditions. Instead you wonder how
to explain for the rest of your life, the scars
on your arm, that no matter how many times
you cut the name of a shot boy into your skin
he's not coming back.

MEDITATION AT BABEL
BY STEVEN REESE

When was it ever *one*
tongue? We would read what carcasses'
organs, the muscular and digestive,
mean;
we'd read dream speech; what winds and cloud masses
predict; the advice rivers give!

And we'd begun to wean
ourselves from the soft caresses
of the mother speech. We learned *bye-bye* fif-
teen
different ways. Our ears channeled distances,
tuned out voices we'd grown tired of.

Truth was, we'd never seen
eye to eye on what progress is.
Still, some believe now that from the fictive
bean
of One Lost Past a magic stalk rises,
new tower where the old dreams thrive:

into the rifts between
languages, between purposes,
nostalgia vines its ivy's invasive
green —
in one tongue we will make good our losses,
in one tongue be told how to live.

SECTION 3

BLOMBOS CAVE, SOUTH AFRICA, 75,000 BCE: OCHRE STONE
BY ALEXANDRA DONOVAN

No bird.
No antelope with red line leap.
No mastodon.
No sloth bear.
No hunt, no hand
missing index finger of offering.
No blood. No rite.

Just three points
and three lines, between.
The sun tied to two stars.
Call this: shape.
Call language: the lip of shape, the edge
by which something can be carried.

Inside, invisible:
bird, antelope, arrow, hand, blood.

Three more points.
Three more lines.
And more. And more.
These, not just touching:
consuming each other
in each other's sliced parts
where lines cross.
Suns jut past stars.
Skies upon skies.
Trees cross trees and are not trees.
No birds cross
from slice to slice of sky.

These together: what is understood.
What is understood: tomorrow. A handing-off.
This stone.

Imagined: others like us.
Invisible: everything known.

ECLIPSED
BY DONNA PUCCIANI

for Charlottesville

One August day in St. Louis,
the moon crept over the sun.

Crowds watched its movement
turn noon into midnight.

Days earlier, the forces of darkness
took over a small southern town.

But all around,
holding hands, not guns,

a corona of humanity
crowned the dark

with flares brighter
than Nazi torches,

ringing the world
with invisible light.

M-THEORY SET TO ELEVEN
BY DEBORAH L. DAVITT

Length, breadth, depth, and time;
 we know them intimately,
But if we compact
 ourselves between atoms, we'll
 race to infinity's edge.

We'd first touch the worlds
 that share the conditions of
our Big Bang birthday,
 set our start parameters
 for light-speed and gravity.

Then we'd travel time
 through any parallel world—
chart universes
 unfamiliar to our own,
 then wander time's track through them.

In dimension ten
 we'd find the instructions for
all of space and time—
 eleven's where God hides,
 tugging on cosmic strings.

MORE SKY PLEASE

BY JOHN SIBLEY WILLIAMS

Hole in the ozone. In a body that cannot have another body push through it. In the proximity of tiny lips, still a set of stains. Gone pink through the sweater. Moon-white, & as intimate, open-ended as the moon, beneath. The body burns brightest in those unasked-for places. Prayers burn, unanswered. As if reading a sealed letter by holding it up to the light. All those highways & dirt roads & grassed-over rail tracks that rush blood toward & away from the heart. All those stars. Over an empty bottom bunk, my mother explains the lessons hidden in old stories. & I'm above her, feet dangling down, listening. A parable myself. An oddity. A hole in the fabric of the possible. You should be satisfied, the doctors had said, sewing her up. Back when they called me a miracle.

CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT
BY ROBERTA FEINS

Willapa Bay
Empty of birds – look –
A single great blue heron.

Miles and miles of marsh,
Banded clays drying at low tide.

Roadside Sitka Spruce
Saplings heavy with the year's
Dimpled velvet cones.

Glittering empty water
Draped silk – slight of mourning.

Behind a fence, staring down
Stench of cormorant guano
From the cliff's below.

Home improvement – all
Tent lines pegged and taut.

Late afternoon sun
Glints on each blade
Of tough beach grass.

Must we know what kind of tern
Is squawking constantly?

Tuna off the boat
A forklift, plastic ice box
Quickly, quickly into the truck.

Summer dreams – a seaside house
For three hundred thousand.

Half-moon rises
At one am, outshines
A skyful of stars.

Wandering to the camp bathroom
The moon is my bright headlamp.

Stay up and listen
To the roaring of the surf
Or go back to sleep?

How can haze be both
A barrier and a guide?

Lying in the tent
Breathing it all out
In Ordered Array.

I want to be brought back,
A touch on my cheek

Once, stumbling, through June woods
A fallen tree's root mass
Etched a message

In my Acid-soaked brain.
Not 'til now have I felt so lost.

WHAT WE CALL IT
BY SUSANNA LANG

Where the road crosses Peavine Creek, a different vine
wreathes the railing with small white flowers,

Confederate jasmine — not jasmine at all
though the flowers smell sweet and soapy,

and Confederate only in its aversion to cold.
I stop on the bridge to bury my face in its blossoms.

They have other names we could use, since this one
conjures so much suffering: Chinese ivy, angel wing,

windmill, pinwheel, shining jasmine. In Uzbekistan,
the name is trader's compass: they say the flowers

will point a trader toward the road he needs, but only
if he is of good character. That might be the name

to choose, reminder that those who break the ancient laws
of hospitality, and those who cast insults like stones,

will be lost. Here there are clearly marked roads to follow
with small white flowers blooming along the way,

leading us forward with their fragrance on cloudy nights
when the stars below do not reflect the stars above.

FIRE, FIRE, FIRE
BY HORIA POP

the vision of a red fox in the night
crossing the street
out my window
at 2.30AM
is
as glowing
as hell
and as beautiful
as a moving fire
in
the darkness
I dwell
in

he passed
and disappeared
yet
I have seen
the beauty
and will not
forget
this sparkle

HOW TO KNIT
BY AMY SCHMITZ

Cast on the city of your birth
woven from whippoorwills and long
gravestones tucked into shadows.
No rows are even here.
The pattern is lake effect,
seasonal forbs, semblance.
Join in the round,
work across kit houses, American
Foursquares, cottages until
you have desired distance.
Turn and repeat or lay flat
to finish. Use the slipped stitches
to your advantage. Bind off loosely.

CHAMBERED ETHNICITY
BY ELYSE THOMAS

Sister's hands have been cloaked
a dingy, cream white, combining
with the sagging kitchen floors.
Mama says it's the flour we use
to make patties that has softened
her ebony skin, but I know it's not true.

Ever since we came to America,
she's been robbed of her native fragrance.
She spills bland cologne on her skin now,
forgetting the vibrancies of culture;
Mama says she smells fine.

But I fear the coffee Sister drinks is too bitter,
yet she refuses to accept fresh sugar cane
when I threaten to spill it between the lips of her mug.

She begs Mama for the taste of tangy metal
wire in her mouth, complaining her teeth
are too crooked for the English language.
I don't remember her accent from Jamaica.

Mama tells her to tie patterned cloth
around her coiled coconut oil curls,
but Sister pays to damage ethnicity
with a flat iron's sprawling heat.

I'm afraid she's lost the love
of peeling mangoes in the back
and licking her tongue
through the inside fibers.
It was a ritual, juice staining
old clothes on the porch.

Mama told me one day to make the patties
because Sister was too gone
to roll the dough and heat the meat.
I hurriedly rolled it, scattering my toes
to the sink and letting the white dissolve
on my skin and into a rusty, metal mouth.
I reached my hands towards artificial light,
palms aching from momentary blindness.

And as I opened shut eyes, I was afraid
to see a piece of black flake off.

SILVER BIRCH
BY OONAH V JOSLIN

You did not paint the leafy canopy.
You didn't paint the tangled root and branch.
Rather you painted what trees do,

the swift sap rising toward a blue sky,
away from earth, that stretch,
tall and angular, never straight.

You painted individuality
within the wood. Trees making each
its own way toward the light.

I HOLD THE CHAINSAW...
BY JOAN GERSTEIN

knowing it's wrong
to go after the rose bush,
still fragrant with bloom,
but when I wield its weight,
its pressure-cooker power,

its forceful phallic chains
of chomping teeth vibrate,
the brum-brum-brrrrrr
blocks out my madness.

Is it a massacre if no one
sees it? The sky is quiet.
A ladybug lands on my machine,
tells me all is circular.

Did I use the wrong saw?
There are no vases left
for roses anyhow. It seems
I destroy everything.
I may slay the sunflowers too.

BENEATH THE WASH OF A DIFFERING ORB
BY CHARLOTTE OZMENT

I stand here, with the
house behind me, my car
and dog at attention,
children chasing pell-mell
and squealing down the street
between bumpers still
and mobile, my life as it should be,
always has been,
no mystery to be found here

But underneath the prism's shine,
when I lift the mirage away from my bones,
there is another reality entirely,
one only I have imagined,
for it is a product of my twelfth house aspect

The moon hangs, sliced as thin
as an onion ring can possibly imagine itself,
starlight glistening through and out,
with jewels strung between cloud and star,
cosmic pinwheels and gravitational sweeps

The landscape upon which I step
is strewn with colors
not known to you mortals
swimming in sunshine,
they are subdued yet deep, fading away
to long ago wells of primordial waters
that lapped against simple cells
scrambling to inch above the shore

And I am not hindered
by your unshakable physics,
for I make up the rules
as I step along, the tint
of my thoughts complete

ZUCCHINI
BY EILEEN MALONE

White-yellow zucchini blossoms wait to be plucked
stuffed with ricotta and herbs and baked by me

but I am at once stilled, stopped, stalled
as the day in the middle of summer ends

on a small hill of squash in a glitter
of fallen copper stars drenched in orange dusk.

DIPPERS

BY BONNIE THIBODEAU

Some kind of beauty is reborn in abandon,
stripping and jumping bare butt from bluffs
above the shore into untested waters proving
warm enough to break the surface still smiling.

Our hairy legs, our blemished skin, our chubby bellies,
and our swollen hearts—all welcome.

Birds we no longer see keep singing from boughs
of nearly ancient evergreens, while a great red sun
melts over North Sister's peak. Clouds seeping
with color like orange juice spilling across the sky.

Some kind of beauty is unshakable,
as night water clear and calm enough to show us
how some stars shine up from the bottom of the lake.

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Horia Pop writes plays and poems. Travels every time he's saved a few dimes. When writing, he has a focus on bums, hobos and marginalized people because of his past.

Clara Power is a recent Mount Holyoke College graduate. She is currently working in the field of early childhood education, exploring poetry, and living life with her partner in Western Massachusetts.

Donna Pucciani, a Chicago based writer, has published poetry globally in *Shi Chao Poetry*, *Poetry Salzburg*, *Iota*, *Gradiva*, and other journals. Her seventh and most recent book of poetry is *Edges*.

Remi Recchia holds an MFA in Poetry from Bowling Green State University, where he served as Assistant Poetry Editor for the *Mid-American Review* and taught Creative Writing. He will begin his candidacy for a Ph.D. in English at Oklahoma State University in Fall 2018. His work has appeared in or will soon appear in *Construction Magazine*, *Barzakh Magazine*, *Pittsburgh Poetry Review*, *Front Porch*, *Gravel*, *Glass: A Journal of Poetry*, and *Haverthorn Press*, among others.

Steven Reese's third book of poems is *Excentrica: Notes on the Text* (BlazeVOX, 2017). He teaches at Youngstown State University in Ohio and in the Northeast Ohio Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program.

Amy Schmitz lives in San Diego, California. Her first poetry collection, *Border Crossing*, won the Stevens Manuscript contest and was published in 2018 by the National Foundation of State Poetry Societies. She has won awards from Poetry International, the Women's National Book Association and the CNY chapter of the National League of American Pen Women. She earned an MFA from George Mason University.

Kimbol Soques has been writing since before she got her first typewriter at age three. In poetry, she strives to pare down to the bone, using white space like breath. Her work has been included in *Non-Binary Review* #16 *Alphanumeric*, *Festival Writer 2:13*, *TWJ Newsletter*, *Texas Poetry Calendar*, and *di-vêrsé-city*.

Laurel Szymkowiak is a member of Madwomen in the Attic and resides in Ligonier, Pennsylvania. She has published in several journals, including *Peribolion*, *The Del Sol Review*, *US I Worksheets*, *Rune*, *Pretty Owl*, and *Voices from the Attic*.

Bonnie Thibodeau lives nestled in the hills of Southwestern Pennsylvania with her dog. Her love for wilderness and quiet feel inseparable from her identity as a person and a writer. The rivers and landscapes from traveling and her time as a whitewater rafting guide shape her perspective. She holds an MA in English from West Virginia University. Previous and forthcoming publications can be found in *Absence* and *Third Wednesday*. She currently oversees

technical and academic publishing for an engineering nonprofit organization, though her passion is for creative expression through language and photography.

Elyse Thomas is a ninth-grader enrolled in her school's creative writing program. Elyse has been published in several anthologies, including *The Odet*, *Poetry Matters*, *Jet Fuel Review*, and *Young American Poetry Digest*. She has also received several gold and silver keys and a national gold medal in the alliance with Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards. Elyse is allergic to her own cat.

Sarah Brown Weitzman, a past National Endowment for the Arts Fellow in Poetry and Pushcart Prize nominee, has had work in hundreds of journals and anthologies including *The New Ohio Review*, *The North American Review*, *The Bellingham Review*, *Rattle*, *Mid-American Review*, *Poet Lore*, and elsewhere. Pudding House published her chapbook, *The Forbidden*.

John Sibley Williams, literary agent and editor of *The Inflectionist Review*, edited two Northwest poetry anthologies and authored nine collections, including *Disinheritance* and *Controlled Hallucinations*. An eleven-time Pushcart nominee, John has numerous awards, including the Philip Booth Award, American Literary Review Poetry Contest, Phyllis Smart-Young Prize, Nancy D. Hargrove Editors' Prize, Confrontation Poetry Prize, and Vallum Award for Poetry. Publishing credits include *The Yale Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Sycamore Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Poet Lore*, *Saranac Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *TriQuarterly*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, and *Third Coast*. He lives in Portland, Oregon.

Christy Wise is a poet. Her writing is informed by deep California roots, love for nature, curiosity about ancient civilizations and intense pursuit of equality and justice. Her poems have appeared in *The Raven's Perch*, *The Anthem* and *Confluence*.

In 2003 **Kobina Wright** created the Hodaoa-Anibo language – a language she views as a work of art, dedicated to Africans who were forced to give up their native tongues once they were enslaved in the New World. In 2004 she published the first edition *Hodaoa-Anibo Dictionary*. This was followed up in 2006 with the *Hodaoa-Anibo Free Book* – a volume of essays and language samples of the Hodaoa-Anibo language.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our next reading period runs July 1 - September 15, 2018, **or until the issue is full**. If we receive enough poetry to fill the issue, we will close the reading period before September 15. This is a new way of doing submissions for us - necessitated by an overall increase in the number of submissions received here at *Gyroscope Review*.

Submissions accepted from this reading period will be published in our Fall 2018 specially-themed issue: The Crone Issue. For this issue, we seek poetry from women or those who identify as women and who are over the age of 50. Women over 50 are often underrepresented in poetry publications, so we are choosing to offer a space and a voice to the wise women out there. We want work that celebrates the ideas of crone, wise woman, matriarch, post-menopausal life, grandmother, elder, strength, experience. There will be a special category for submissions with this theme.

Our regular submissions category will be open as usual for un-themed submissions. Please keep in mind that we do pay attention to the seasonality of the poems we read.

All submissions must come to us through Submittable (gyroscopereview.submittable.com/submit). Please read our guidelines carefully.

Stay up-to-date with us at our website, gyroscopereview.com, or find us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. You may reach us by email at gyroscopereview@gmail.com.

Thank you for reading.



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fine poetry to turn your world around

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