

# Gyroscope Review

*fine poetry to turn your world around*



Issue 15-3  
October 2015



## GYROSCOPE REVIEW

Issue 15-3

Fall 2015

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Constance Brewer & Kathleen Cassen Mickelson  
[gyroscopereview.com](http://gyroscopereview.com)

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Front cover photo: Detail of "Carroña (Carrion)" by Javier Perez (2011) from the Modern Collection at the Corning Museum of Glass. Photo by Constance Brewer, 2015.

Back cover photo: Detail of "Astarte" by Robert Carlson (1991) from the Modern Collection at the Corning Museum of Glass. Photo by Constance Brewer, 2015.

## From the Editors

I greatly enjoyed digging into the slush and finding this month's assortment of poems for you. From the lead off poem, where we imagine the horrors that wait when you probe the unknown, I found all kinds of poems with themes related to the body. Appropriate for the month that gives us Halloween. It wasn't only the concrete body part poems that engaged me, but also those poems that probed a bit deeper, that wanted us to look at the layers underneath the surface. These are some of my favorite types of poems, those that explore the unknown inside us. There were also several poems that probed the intricacies of place, how a location gets inside you, takes hold, and just won't let go. It's always interesting when poems in an issue begin to theme themselves along certain lines. Is it the collective unconscious at work? Or something more mundane? I believe in the collective, and having been working on a certain type of poem; I'm eager to see if the subject I'm working on appears in the slush pile like wisps over the water. So sit back and enjoy this quarter's collection of disturbing, decorous and downright delightful poems. We certainly did.

- Constance Brewer, Editor

As I sent out the PDF of our fall issue to authors for one last look before the issue went live, I thought about what an amazing collection of poets we have working with us. From the beginning, Gyroscope Review has been fortunate to receive submissions from poets who take their work seriously, who craft each line into a work of art. The words that spill across these pages, while specific and alive all on their own, allow our readers to form their own images in their heads. The words are what matter around here and that is why our pages hold nothing more - and nothing less - than the poems themselves. Artwork is what we save for covers because the poems are enough. They are the dialogue that engages our readers and, hopefully, spreads into a larger community. In this issue, while we did not set out to invite Halloween-themed poems, we did get some clearly creepy submissions and noticed several body parts as major players: heart, hair, teeth, hands, and even the lowly appendix. Our first hendecasyllabic sonnet showed up and we were impressed. Poets wrote about plane crashes, wind, rain, music, ghosts. They twisted fairy tales into social commentary, took a few jabs at mythical figures. They took refuge in wild places and drove with the windows down. And we read every single piece with the eagerness of someone who has stumbled upon the mother lode of verse. We hope you have as many swirling images after you read this issue of Gyroscope Review as you can handle. We don't want to lose you to Netflix, after all.

- Kathleen Cassen Mickelson, Editor

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# POEMS

**Painted Over Mass**  
**by M.A. Istvan Jr.**

A big uneven bump  
on the cupboard floor  
gives a little to my poke.  
My pen pierces through  
the shell of white Kem-tone  
applied for new tenants.

Purple jelly oozing,  
I lodge my putty knife  
underneath the mass  
and pry it off the floor.  
In this great moist pellet  
teeth and a wiry tail.

**The Wisteria Of Twilight**  
**by Akeith Walters**

Autumn,  
buckled by the east Texas wind,  
stomps its boots around the loose roots of your house,  
porch-pacing  
and push-peering through slump-back screens

trying to get in.

Twilight's buttered edge  
smears a greasy shade across slices of time-bleached boards.

I sit on bowed steps  
pulling your worn sweater closer

and inhale the smell of talc that lingers in the threads  
the way your ghost lingers near the threshold of the door.

An exhale from my cigarette drifts to lift and caress your face.

I wish the pale smoke was my hand instead,  
at least one last time,  
but you can not be touched anymore.

You wait, wearing the outline of a housedress,  
a grey shadow against grey shadows  
that does not billow in the coarse breeze

while a silent smile catches your lips  
in a glance overhead at the dance of yellow sweet gums leaves.

There, the early moonlight perches  
to watch me sip from a cup of ice  
melting in bourbon,

that mother's milk for an old man

whose beady eyes reflect the way one day,  
like one season,  
or even one life,

can melt in a single exhale  
to become the ghost of another.

**Sweetheart**  
**by Jennifer Peedin**

There ain't no place to hide down here.  
These mountains got no place to hide here.  
Your hand is gettin' like ice and I'm tired of you, my dear.

They are a'splashin' through the river like Moses, and I'm losin' the light  
All them dogs, too, a'splashin' through the river and I'm losing light.  
"If you fall," I can hear 'em chant, "If you fall, we'll hang you tonight."

It's a long way down; it's a long way down to the holler.  
You're getting heavy and it's a long way down to the holler.  
I've got to hurry 'cause I don't fancy myself in a rope collar.

They didn't see you with sweet Omie down by the crick.  
They didn't see you with no clothes by the crick.  
But I did, sweetheart, I did, and it made me sick.

Oh sweetheart, it's a long way down in the dark deep.  
I'm sorry it's such a long way down to the deep,  
But I've got nothin' here that I care to keep.

The good Lord spoke at your restin' place.  
The good Lord visited me at your restin' place,  
And, oh sweetheart, I saw His lovin' face.

My troubles are finished and the chase is over.  
The oak is tall and the chase is over.  
They put me in my place 'cause I killed you, my lover.

They sent me to the Lord 'cause I killed you.  
They sent me to the Lord for what I done to you.  
But, oh sweetheart, they don't know that I killed two.

**The Old Man of the Mountain**  
**by W.S. Brewbaker**

Fell, after centuries. The hard forehead  
and squared nose. The chin. All of him.  
Crumbled. Created by gravity and wind  
and shattered by the same. His stone face  
an accident of erosion, nothing more. But clung  
to like a promise. For these are the things we do  
to survive: find wrinkles in the barks of oaks.  
Call branches arms. Frown at our own sagging  
 chests and name them trunks. Refusing to level  
or admit. Shouting down the whisper  
that we, too, must then be accidents.

**Memorizing Rain**  
**by KB Ballentine**

Fog ghosts edges the yard, house silent  
save the rain. Banished, you return on gray days  
to flirt around memories of a life I used to know.  
Tomorrow fades, today a pale shade of yesterday.  
Sometimes the truth is too much – like a blue heron  
on a blue lake, an excruciating blue sky above.

Emily had it right – truth must dazzle gradually.  
Monarchs and mourning cloaks flicker the butterfly bush,  
wings trembling in the dew.  
Black walnuts drop through leaves,  
a rustle and thud scattering the squirrels, my thoughts.

Stepping into the drizzle, I remember waiting  
for your phone call to end, for you to welcome me  
as I sat in another rain. How you beckoned me inside,  
and your eyes told me what our bodies refused.  
My body burns from that final time,  
embarrassed – still wanting you.

Lichen-dappled bark looms beyond the porch  
in the mist, bells echo the hour –  
this last day of summer dissolving into night.

**The Starving Wind**  
**by Steve Klepetar**

“She could feel  
the breeze in her ears like water...”

Rita Dove

Sounds burst as water in a blue swirl of gnats,  
ghost parade wading out beyond the dunes.

“Go get her mama!” Cries echoed that night, as rain  
danced across the river to a slash of silver light.

She came, rushing in a rage storm, flailing  
hands and black hair on fire. Rings melted

along her finger bones. The child’s shadow  
flickered on the fence line, breaking in spaces

between slats, as if her thin body were squeezed  
flat, her face stripped of those acid pool eyes.

Someone saw small hands waving beneath clouds.  
Then nothing, a blankness more transparent

than glass or air. We called her name, calling  
and calling her back, but the starving wind

swallowed all sounds. Her mama hurled stones  
into the invisible deep, leapt across protruding

rocks on wings of ice and steel. All night she wept  
the river’s song, pouring hunger’s flood on meager soil.



**De Bow's Review 2666**  
**by Jeffrey H. MacLachlan**

It is of the opinion of this writer that space is no place for Left Behinds. These are people who never chose education and loiter below storm mines. If they still reside there when Other Rain falls, that's the Lord's work. I remember a time when my grandfather was poor, but knew the black sea as the future and sold pills to planet-fit his only boat for his family's fresh start. He took a risk. But if we now spend money to rescue Left Behinds, it is the opinion of this writer that we punish visionaries. Can we trust alien diseases after last year's galaxy breach?

**Appendectomy**  
*or the cannula speaks*  
by Mckendy Fils-Aime

its never about the human,  
the day or so it takes them  
to surrender. your necrotic song  
filling the hollows of small intestine.  
the body two stepping to fever  
sweat rhythm, but you: a derailed  
ruby train abandoned on the outskirts  
of town. purpose gone  
millennia ago. now patience is an ache  
settled in your gears. I know this pain  
spreading from below nerve & terror  
towards the human's throat  
is just you squirming for death  
or freedom. Sometimes I dream  
that you are not an appendage  
at all, but a cowboy; procaine  
horse looping around the body  
like a circuit until the town goes quiet  
enough for me to sneak in, my metal  
silhouette bursting with light: aluminum  
angel descending. I grab your hand & pull.

**When The Music Stops**  
**by Erin Fristad**

I'm unsure if I put my hand  
on the respiratory therapist's shoulder  
or just leaned against him.  
Debbie was on my other side,  
next to her, the ICU nurse  
assigned the morning shift.  
Touching or not, we braced  
and together they pulled out  
the ventilator tube, he quickly  
disappeared it from sight, she  
wiped your chin clean.  
Their performance perfectly  
orchestrated, sadly, well-practiced.

You didn't move. Had you been able  
you would have mentioned those  
famed Russian pairs skaters, Alexander  
and Irina, so perfectly trained they skated  
even when their music stopped  
and won the 1973 World Championships.  
Nurse Irina's final move, a lift  
of the white cotton blanket  
drizzled with the green and brown fluid  
filling your lungs.

Did I squeeze his shoulder in thanks?  
Or just mutter a small gratitude  
when he caught my eye, our mutual  
recognition that this attempt at mercy  
could have gone a lot worse.  
You sputtered only slightly,  
shrunk smaller into your bed.  
Soon the deep gurgle arrived  
just like the instructional handout  
from the nurse said it would.  
All afternoon we sat by it,  
the creek in your woods  
growing louder as light  
faded to dark.

This morning on the radio,  
experts spoke of the sound  
stars make when devoured  
by a black hole. Scientists tell us  
it's a music the human ear  
can't yet hear. I disagree.

**Mourning The Loss Of Ghosts**  
**by Akeith Walters**

A summer's toe-scraped afternoon  
trips and falls on urban cement,

raising radiant dust,  
dry ripples lifting off gritty sidewalks.

They distort the view  
like looking through ghosts.

I search among them for yours  
because you loved this city  
and I,  
who loved you,  
don't know what else to do.

The patchwork pavements  
stretch farther away in the heat of the moment.

Already I've crossed so many of them,  
those spots where others have stood  
stained and collared  
in the sweat of their efforts to move forward.

It doesn't help that my feeble feet stumble  
and I often stub my toe

but I'm sweating here without you  
among stonewalls  
bricks and glass.

And yet I can not help but wonder  
what I, too, will do  
when my winter days arrive  
cold and wet

and these ghosts on the sidewalks  
no longer rise to walk beside me.

**Lost Teeth**  
**by Susan White**

My young, autistic friend  
names people by their teeth:  
*woman with yellow bottom teeth,*  
*boy with crisscrossed teeth,*  
*pointy-toothed man,*  
*girl with the space in the middle.*  
She reads enameled codes.

Animals show teeth  
as a threat--  
except humans,  
who flash their bones  
in friendly gesture.  
The ambiguity  
is terrifying.

skeletal exposure  
rooted to the nervous circuit  
of electric translation

A loss buried beneath pillow  
compensated with  
a dollar, five.  
Parents take and leave,  
making maturation magical.

Decomposed victims are  
identified by dental records.  
Teeth survive  
and they don't lie.

No wonder I dreamed  
my teeth crumbled  
like crushed chalk,  
littered my sweater,  
as I begged you to stay  
with all the wrong words—  
my mouth defying my mind.

I lick the edges of my teeth  
And watch you sleep,  
Your hand between jaw and pillow.

I gingerly lift your lip with my pinkie,  
glimpsing the tiny chip.

**Mescalito**  
**by John Oliver Simon**

Jan was mourning Berenice's recent death  
I was fighting with my dad not my father  
starting to write him the rattlesnake poems  
so we ate peyote and stayed up all night

singing and telling stories round the fire  
that seemed to be burning on a mountaintop  
when we got cold we'd get up and hike around  
on starlit hillsides luminescent with song

as the Dipper prowled counter-clockwise above  
we almost just about got to sleep at dawn  
when Mescalito sauntered into our camp

wearing the semblance of a white coyote  
only way I could get him to leave was play  
my flute, the song about the little horses.



**After Happily Ever After**  
**by Isabella David McCaffrey**

Eventually Princess  
Has to grow up. Then what?  
Either she bears his children, grows fat,

A double chin, skin tags,  
Varicose veins like lines in blue cheese.  
The catafalque of too-fragrant flesh

She must carry around,  
Betting on his gratitude  
A memory of once lustrous eyes,

Cheeks velvet as peonies, lips dipped  
In blood, though she has learned  
To dread scarlet, gushing as it did

Until she prayed to die,  
Cut open like a melon  
So he might have his princey,

But only another useless bint  
Upon the lacy sheet, congeries of shes, condemned  
By birth to play the princess again. Again.

Is it any wonder Stepmother  
From her oriel window  
Was made distraught by sight of that eternal  
She in the pleasaunce with her gold ball:

Insensate, disordered, so unkind—  
Who's to say who the true villain is?  
No wonder that Other lost her mind,

That basket of apples ripe at her feet.  
Oh the mocking fountains—  
A diuturnity of plashing tears.

Silver as that mirror she gazes into  
Now. It would be well to be a witch,

Free of this sinister envy

In the subfusc forest, shadows dance,  
Twirl about as once she did on those  
Slipperd feet until they were shreds,

Ribbons and toes alike.  
What did she care hearing the  
Shawms play contrapuntal harmony?

Another song keens forth now,  
Not so jocund as the gold day  
Echoed in the clear blue bowl of sky,

Muted by the arch of Palladian elm, oak,  
And the wild eglantine. A sea mist  
Before her obscures the field of asphodel

She climbs,  
Panting, not so lissome as once was  
Upon that time,

Circling the tarn on the mountaintop,  
Gazing into serene pools,  
Worn, wrinkled, but sure-footed still

She grins. The simple relief. The daws  
Croak, cackle in wicked companionship,  
The day goes down,

Now at last,  
In the obscurity of starlight,  
She can tap, sing, live, croon, wreathing reveries

Into a soul less sinister  
Than that painted sheet they  
Adorned with pearls and called a person.

**Singapore**  
**by Will Nixon**

No one would cast you as a clerk, Orpheus,  
not when you've been filmed as a French poet  
slipping through mirrors for a liaison with death,  
or a samba dancer with trigger-happy feet carrying  
your shield like the sun down from your mile-high slum.  
But doesn't the most extravagant love grow in a dimly-  
lit basement like mushrooms the color of Venus or Mars?  
That's why I look for you, Orpheus, not among studly  
red carpet stars or scowling on stage with a phallic guitar,  
but at the post office, weighing packages for women  
of all ages, the guy with a faded sea anchor tattoo  
from a night in Singapore you don't even remember.

**Greasy hair and a thrift store shirt**  
**by Tanner Ballengee**

Here's a synonym for guilty:  
'everything looks like a cop car.'  
But they won't catch me  
with my guts in my lap  
in a car or in front of a screen.  
I smoke a cigarette in the rain  
until the flame touches  
the tip of its wings—  
throw it to the ground  
and wait for some more coupons  
to come in the mail.  
I swear on this last one  
that the old me won't return,  
but my friends are bad influences:  
they make me do things  
that I wanna do. I remember  
a day in court, being the only  
one able to afford my fines;  
it was nice having  
disposable income  
to support my habits.  
And that woman  
on her 3<sup>rd</sup> crack charge  
pleading with the judge  
that it 'wasn't that much'  
but I guess it was enough—  
for her, for him and  
for me.

**Having a Starbucks Coffee with You**  
**by David Colodney**

is even more fun than writing a poem based on poems by two of my favorite poets  
who wrote love poems to lovers both men who rescued them from flames  
and restored their faith in love and happiness and blah blah blah but my poem  
is about a woman who restored my faith that “the one”  
exists and the search for “the one” should never be abandoned  
which is something I always held close  
but never wanted to write about because love poems remind me of lame Hallmark cards  
on grocery store shelves, but I decided I wanted to try and write a love poem to you because  
the first time I kissed you we were walking too closely into a Starbucks and  
partly because kissing you is even more fun than today than it was that morning

partly because drinking coffee with you regardless of time of day is more socially  
acceptable than drinking gin and tonics in the backyard in the morning and coffee  
holds us over until it’s time to drink wine at night

partly because Lana Turner would have been discovered by a barista in Hollywood  
had there been Starbucks and ventis in the days she was alive marrying seven different  
men eight different times looking for the one and ultimately giving up  
but you can never doubt her chutzpah

partly because the black spaghetti-strap and jeans you wore this morning  
as I kissed you good-bye as we were leaving our house  
to go to work as we petted our dog good-bye as we dropped our kids off  
at school as we started our day with a kiss and a coffee

partly because I remember that first kiss even though it’s been years that kiss  
was a leap of faith and not at all premeditated I hoped you wouldn’t smack  
me or push me away but instead you kissed me back

partly because coffee has never tasted the same since that day and never  
tasted as sweet even if there are three Splendas or six Sugars in the Raw

partly because it wasn’t really your clothes  
I was interested in but what lay beneath them your olive skin  
your feel your smell your touch but really what was beneath even all that  
I really wanted

and it’s been years and I’m realizing now O’Hara’s lovers failed him  
and Frank never found real love before he died maybe that’s why he died

maybe he wanted to give up looking. By the way that period is the only punctuation  
in this poem and it's used to mark O'Hara's death and my tip of the hat  
to him for all of his words and love and when we are in New York  
next month walking up 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue towards MoMA I'll tell you what Frank O'Hara  
and Denise Duhamel mean to me when we stop at a Manhattan Starbucks  
and I suddenly say oh Frank O'Hara we love you get up

**Long Lost**  
**by Oonah Joslin**

My mother tugged and teased the gold  
holding tight at the roots;  
a long and tedious weekly ritual  
wash and dry and brush and brush to

tame the lion in its wild state,  
plait and bind in blue ribbons,  
restrain the exuberant  
excesses of tresses.  
Such crowns as are fitting  
only for princesses.

Once in a while we were allowed  
to swirl in wind, twirl and turn and tat;  
to find the fling of momentary freedom  
my hair and I  
but what's the point of that?  
Gold is for spending.

The child refusing to be tied  
severed her locks.  
Thus the scissored Samson saw  
his folly fall to the floor.  
Every tether and freedom is  
a parable of plaits.

**In the Age of Air Conditioning**  
**by Tim Kahl**

In the age of air conditioning I make  
my sons ride with the windows down.  
I am cruel, for sure, demanding they ride  
with me back to 1972, just the three of us  
*running down the road trying to loosen  
our load.* But instead of seven women on  
my mind, I am trying to negotiate our way  
past a deafening semi. A Harley proudly  
flashes by us in the fast lane. The road crew's  
jackhammers trill like militant jays.  
The world around us has erupted into  
threatening sounds, and I am their cruise  
director, Julie McCoy, steadily guiding  
this sweat boat into the thickening porridge  
of sonic abuse — one more angry  
Dodge Ramcharger horn honking at  
a Subaru's swift move. Already a thin layer  
of dew is growing on their skin, the adhesive  
that sticks their backs to their shirts.  
And I will hear about this soon,  
their complaints will barely edge out  
the persistent grumble of these highway  
machines and the wall of air that falls in  
through the gaps — the symphony  
I would have missed had we been  
sealed up in our glass and steel cocoon.  
I wonder: do we condition the air  
or does the air condition us?  
The kids insist that the air go back on,  
but I blast the Eagles at 15 watts  
*TAKE IT EASY, TAKE IT EASY.*  
I listen to the hum of the tires through it all  
the way the dog hangs out intent on  
picking up some strange scent,  
the hair on its head and snout waving  
like a freedom flag. Yes, I do believe  
the children are our future,  
but only the dog understands the past.



**Red vs. Blue**  
**by Lita Kurth**

Red, the ink of reprimand  
Blue, the calm assignment  
Red spills  
Blue smooths  
how it lasts  
lingers in a day-long sky  
heavy-light  
heaven of anxious eternity

Red was a flame-blood-flag  
Red is not tired  
It cuts, suffuses, stands  
explodes, falls down, and kisses

Purple doesn't unite them  
They are wrong who say so  
No, purple walks out alone  
in velvet, gems, and crown

**Grand Unified Theory**  
**by Ed Werstein**

Isn't it strange that light  
can also be heavy,  
can exhibit properties  
of gravity,  
attracting things  
like a black hole?

I'm caught by the gravity  
of your light,  
circling. Circling,  
like a planet  
tethered to a sun,  
seeking the light,  
the photosynthesis  
you cause in me.

Isn't it strange that what attracts  
can also repel?  
I'm circling, yet held at this distance.  
How? By my own motion around you?  
By opposing magnetic fields?  
By fear of falling into fire?

That I perceive you rising  
each day to warm me,  
is an illusion,  
caused by my ignorance  
of the forces at work.

**The Day She Knows Who She Is**  
**by Glenna Cook**

I'm a clay pot,  
she whispers,  
then twirls in a crazy dance,  
stumbles,  
laughs.  
I'm not afraid of falling.

I'm a clay pot!  
she shouts.  
Her voice wings freely  
above the heads of those  
who tried to suppress it.

I'm a clay pot,  
she muses,  
and feels proud ambitions,  
burdensome expectations, melt,  
flow like rivers down a mountainside,  
rest as pure lakes in a valley.

She kneels to see her face reflected,  
plain as earth, wise as sky.

I'm a clay pot,  
formed from eons of decay,  
stones coughed from earth's bowels  
and ground down—stardust.  
Drawn from necessity's kiln,  
I can hold water, wine,  
or tears.

My task is simply  
to be.

**Going Steady**  
**by Sarah Marchant**

You sidle up behind me,  
reaching to fix my ponytail  
like the sound of the ice caps melting,  
and everything about you is tenderness.  
I'm talking burnt pasta and sinking  
into the couch. The yellow embers  
of cigarette ends and your hand  
at the small of my back.  
My toes curling over yours,  
I'm humming my heartbeats to the tune  
of that rickety fan whirring.  
As the snow seeps into the earth,  
your mouth is the apex of my enchantment  
and even in the dark we keep blooming.

**Wanted: New Heart**  
**by KB Ballentine**

Dawn's breath pinks the sky,  
a delicate yawn of gold and orange  
as fog shifts the valley.  
Yesterday's rain wrinkled the lake,  
clouds veiling the mountain,  
sailboats, kayaks shored  
as last leaves fall. Sun slants lower,  
spring as far away as those we forget.  
These sharp days pierce my skin,  
memories of flaming maples  
haunting the honeycombs.

## **Shed**

**by Alan D. Harris**

Shakespeare said we shuffle off  
or at the very least shed  
unmatched socks  
worn-out shoes  
faded suits  
fit for neither weddings  
nor the funeral dance

using the Bard's metaphoric  
boiler-plated  
bullet-pointed boxes  
stacked in the cellars  
stuffed with stuff  
real and surreal  
crowding the corners  
of our basements  
our foundations  
clogging our attics  
our minds  
we check off each item  
until the only mortal coil  
we have left to shed  
is the last breath we take  
to say  
sayonara, baby

**Orpheus Intervention**  
**by Will Nixon**

Only Orpheus believed that Charon cared more  
for his music than for the coin warm in his hand  
but as good as cold on the tongue. Poor Eurydice,  
the wood nymph hatched from her tree by his lyre,  
she had no intention of following him into the light,  
not this cocky star who'd charmed his way into Hades.  
Oh, Orpheus, can't you see? Had she come back,  
she would have disappointed the rest of your days.  
The living are never as fine as the dead. They fart,  
and they don't understand why you believe poetry  
will solve anything, why you're not harvesting hay.  
Looking back was the first smart thing you've done.  
Now, young man, pull your soggy severed head out  
of the sea, put it back on, preferably with a haircut,  
and quit whispering *Eurydice Eurydice*, a name  
no one has used in centuries. Your lyre is broken.  
The future is here. Your credit card is ready.

**Minnesota Flashback**  
**by Oonah Joslin**

Sweet memory;

wide skies  
prairie grasses  
surround scent

burning rubber  
sickly smoky  
pungent acrid

gravolent bog  
foetid musk  
cruciferous cabbage

high rancid  
flatulent miasma  
stinking mephitis

putrefaction clinging  
halituous cloying  
gustatory olfactory

road-kill skunk.



**July: Saint Cloud**  
**by Steve Klepetar**

This evening at six, heat falls away,  
a curtain tearing from its metal rod.  
A cold front sweeps in from Canada  
as wind dances through leaf-thick oaks.  
To the west you can already see black  
fists of cloud, shadowy tentacles of rain  
stretching toward rows of houses  
in various shades of Minnesota beige.

Two crows leap from the tree above  
my head, swing out into darkening  
sky. My mind follows as they sail  
through doors to a world of feathers  
and eyes. They are winter birds with  
beaks like ice, feathers brittle as January  
air. Already they feel the summer gone,  
its moist grip slipping past the tree line  
down into leaves and needles and loam.

**Helium**  
**by Ed Werstein**

Your parents were a couple of hot heads  
blew up at the drop of a match  
that nasty Hindenburg incident  
the most famous of the many times  
they lost control.

But they found their matchmaker  
in the sun god, your namesake.

When hydrogen atoms get close  
and start feeling good about each other  
things heat up in a hurry.

The hotter it gets, the closer they get.  
They fuck, they fuse,  
and are destroyed by their own passion.  
Passing on all of their parts and none  
of their traits, they become something  
completely different: you.

You lead a long lineage of nobility,  
a calm inertia is your greatest asset.

You are uplifting, rising  
to every occasion,  
great fun at parties.

People lift their voices  
and speak very highly  
of you.

**On the Train to Hampton Court**  
**by W.S. Brewbaker**

So this is our birthright.  
These trains. The graffiti.  
Laughter reflected in the window.  
These advertisements. Coca-Cola.

Chimneys for miles as if copied  
and pasted. The drunk man  
in the square last night claiming  
to be a street dancer. A British woman

in a blue button-down. Explaining  
how Henry VIII married Anne Boleyn.  
Two American women nodding

as if thirsty. A bald man on the platform.  
Swinging a plastic sack and waiting  
for the train. Umbrella in the other hand.  
As if out of habit or penitence.

**Squirrel**  
**by Jeff Jeppesen**

After two days the chattering from the trees has stopped.  
There, in the grass: what looks like a pile of rags  
beneath the utility pole outside my home.  
I don't understand what changed.  
When did this little body, once a proud, albeit fuzzy  
warrior willing to battle to the death the humming power transformer,  
lose its essential squirrelness?  
Zapped all to hell in an instant, for two days its comrades mourned,  
called for it to flit back to the branches  
up away from the all too wide open ground.  
The mighty fighter eked out a small victory considering  
the block lost power for a few hours, my clothes only halfway through the wash cycle.  
But whatever its brothers and sisters once recognized,  
has departed and now they ignore the small body.  
Winter creeps close and there are food stocks to hide;  
mind-maps of these lawns and yards, hedges and trees, to carefully remember,  
carefully remember.

**The Book Club Devotee**  
**by Isabella David McCaffrey**

We read the Pisan Cantos LXXIV-LXXXIV  
aloud between surplus paper napkins and  
folding metal chairs, squeezed into a corner  
like some 12-step poetry group.

A circle of frail human beings  
with bad haircuts and pilled sweaters,  
taking turns with each stanza diffidently as if  
on the verge of composing a love sonnet or  
confessing to lifelong sins of flesh and spirit.

Deconstructing passages of sadistic  
opaque splendor, speaking in tongues  
about fallen heroes, skipping the Chinese  
altogether but admiring on the page the symbols  
as exquisite as Tanagra figurines.

*“J’ai eu pitié des autres.”*

An old man reads, his Bronx  
accent laying the vowels like underground subway  
tracks deep inside his nostrils, sprouting white hair  
and syllables.

He pushes his glasses up a beautifully bulbous nose,  
pausing to squint:

*“Probablement pas assez.”*

No, never enough pity.  
I’m thinking of Pound, mad and lonely and nostalgic.  
I’m thinking of myself back then, young and loving poetry alone,  
I’m thinking of the doomed days of the Poetry Club.  
I’m thinking of the man reading French, never understanding a word

in the basement of the Bowery Poetry Club,  
now replaced by another burlesque joint—  
how the hip do inherit the Earth! And like locusts  
will end by devouring us all.

*“Tard, très tard je t’ai connue la tristesse.”*

The air smelling of sadness and plumbing,  
reading our happy doom  
beneath a stark halo of fluorescent lights  
in the basement of the Bowery Poetry Club  
now a burlesque joint, serving up tits with \$80 steaks.

And who’s to say which is better? Breasts or odes to them.

*“O so white, O so soft, O so sweet is she!”*

Although never again shall there be found such beautiful  
talk of pity deep in the bowels and such hope to understand  
handfuls of gathered words, illuminated by study and pain.

**Rest for the Restless**  
**by Sarah Marchant**

Sometimes, I forget to keep the things that are precious. Should be nuzzling your stubble but I've got five questions weighing my tongue and currents shimmering in my fingers that don't know the meaning of peace and quiet. I see us crossing the street home before we've even stopped to kiss at the first stoplight.

Had one cup of tea with sugar today and two without, yet I still don't know what's good for me, spilling granules across fickle daydreams and notebooks rich with white pages. Burying the pearls beneath my bedroom window like they'll make the vines grow any thicker.

So next time I'll concentrate more on your hand gripping mine under the table at Chinese and the squeezes spelling love letters that bookshelves couldn't contain. I'll shut my eyes and soak in the muffled morning light, your limbs folding us into a sacred space, your mouth the most exquisite magic.

**Judgment**  
**by Ken Poyner**

Of the infinite number of monkeys  
Typing on an infinite number of typewriters  
I am monkey number 37.  
Being that I am number 37  
And knowing that infinity  
Can have no ordinal beginning -  
If it is actually 'infinity' -  
I should feel dejected,  
But I do not. In fact,  
I feel today might be my day,  
Even though there are no days  
In infinite time; and I type  
Endlessly away, my faith being the element  
That keeps this Universe  
Even keeled with its units of mechanical purpose:  
And with this sheet,  
Though, in an infinity there can be  
No distinct sheets, out  
Comes the perfect page of  
Marlowe. I am so close  
I can understand the fate  
Of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.  
I am so close I can feel  
The blind love of Lear.  
Before timelessness is done with me,  
This proud monkey will have  
His one perfect page of Shakespeare,  
His fixed point in the swirl of conjecture.  
And I, monkey number 37, will be  
The exclamation that excites each sentence.



**Talking To Myself**  
**by Akeith Walters**

Lightening,  
the amber tarnish of an evening sky,  
flashes.

I watch through the front room window,  
and remember when life was a hot summer night after rain,

when bar hopping  
meant strutting across the blast of a neon dance floor,  
not sitting in a neighborhood tavern.

But the dance of course did not last.

Like shoes,  
people wear out after they've been used a lot,  
graying around the edges  
from the scuff of finally having to stand still.

And lightening stops being the fireworks of someone new,  
some stranger whose stronger hands know how to touch,  
to push,  
to bring a callused distraction to head,

and becomes instead just the upshot of restless thunderclouds  
seen through a dusky window  
by a tired, tarnished heart waiting for a surge of youth to return,  
if only for a little while,  
even though it never will.

Still, like an old erotic memory,  
bourbon burns both throat and gut,  
swallowed straight or not,

and comes in handy when waiting for a stranger  
to stop snoring in the backroom bed.

## **Island of Glass**

Glastonbury, Somerset, England

**by KB Ballentine**

The Tor towers over the hedgerows, the hazel,  
cottage lights stippling the hill.  
White bites my skin, ice shrouding the path.  
Gray sweeps the horizon,  
no distinguishing east from west,  
up from down — meadow and peak topsy-turvy,  
a monochrome model for the eye.

Frost floats like butterfly wings, pinks cheeks.  
Yews stoop, layers of snow cracking,  
sliding into piles that puff into chilled air.  
Somewhere in the boxwoods a robin  
whistles, reminds me I am not alone.  
Not here where snow erases the horizon,  
my promises. You.

**Wanney Wilds**  
**by Oonah Joslin**

Sweethope  
and sweet the waters flow  
down from the lough by Wanney's Crag  
they tumble through Kirkwhelpington  
and Font joins in  
making the Wanney wild.

Wallington's trout silver her stream.  
Wansbeck skitters over steps  
snakes through meadows  
seeps through brackish woods,  
bluebells Hartburn, Mitford downward wends  
past where the Minster once stood new,  
erect by her side.

She reckons centuries as days  
witnesses ebb and flow  
wattle and daub and stone along her way;  
history, not of her making,  
scum, not of her making  
runs off from fields and ever gathering streams.

She cuts a path 'Inter Sylvas et Caementi',  
lends her back to bridges, boats,  
shaggy dogs and children paddling,  
duck and swan nests and a crossing stoat.  
Gentle favours done to mortal kind.

Her curvations contours corseted by Morpeth's steep banks;  
High Stanner's calculi, the mott, the weir,  
the heron angle-poised to catch light fish flipping down  
under arches great and small, past defences, bridges, viaduct  
to Bothal castle.

Build what they will;  
the Wansbeck, accustomed to grandeur,  
defers to none.  
Do not mistake her rages for caprice.  
Untamed, untamable, she heeds no prayer

that seeps between chantry stones,  
takes on no airs,  
graces no one's table,  
but froths, swirls, swills from rivulets and rills  
to riot and uproot trees along her length.  
She defies construction  
all the way from Wallington's Roman view  
to Cambois' open mouth.

There she hears the call of gulls,  
tastes salt and heads out to sea  
as did Collingwood;  
admirable admiral he  
who once captained by her banks.

And she too will prevail  
because the heart of Northumberland  
beats within her.  
She is a river formed from crags  
and carries with her the sweet  
hope of larger waters.  
Her song is siren. Her bed is hard.  
Her destiny remains  
unmapped.

**The Wiser Hand**  
**by Jessica Fordham Kidd**

I'm lying in bed  
watching my fingers in the mirror.  
They are long, animal  
appendages and completely  
unfamiliar to me.  
I move them in and out of shadow.  
They become angled, flipper-like,  
twigs of trees, paws,  
and a creature independent of my body.

This body. My illusion of unity  
so charming. My fingers  
smile a thin smile  
at my naivety.

In the night, my strange hand  
with its unexpected edges  
flits around the universe  
picking at the seams that hold me  
to one place.  
They worry the straight hems,  
and in the morning I see  
a galaxy of possibility  
in my palm.

**Plane Crash, Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17**  
**by Michael Maul**

*Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers,  
for some who have done this have entertained angels  
without realizing it.*

**Hebrews 13: 1-2**

Angels dressed as passengers wearing blankets,  
having overcome the broken wings,  
are the ones still ascending.  
While below, all the insides of their earthbound lives  
have exploded like a fumbled melon,  
open and giving back seeds  
of ambition and troubled love  
mixed with ash and dust of bone  
still floating to earth without urgency,  
in a measured sifting  
that slowly fills long earth gashes,  
under hushed cold-night stars.

**There Is No Place I Desire To See So Much As Jerusalem**  
**by W.S. Brewbaker**

Then laughter. Cut off by the unscripted  
blast. An improvised monologue at center  
stage. Cracked bone and victorious Latin.  
A child, seated on the front row, crying.  
Knowing tragedy is the departure  
from the predetermined.

**Currents**  
by **Beth Sherman**

*Almost an island, I balanced on my boat's sides  
Rapacious blond-eyed birds, their dung, their screams.  
I drifted on. Through fragile tangled lines  
Drowned men, still staring up, sank down to sleep.*  
-- Rimbaud

Almost a vision.  
But not really.  
The boat fills with water,  
    muddy brown, speckled with algae  
    and skeletons of forgotten starfish,  
    a flounder who stares at me with flat black eyes  
The hook still fixed in his mouth, which  
    opens and says: *Bail*

This far out, birds follow in the boat's wake,  
    loons, terns, once a pelican.  
They must be tired from flying so far, all that soaring and skimming.  
I wait for them to settle on the sides of the dinghy,  
    claws firmly gripping the weathered planks,  
    wait for the water to reach my earlobes,  
    for night to cover me like a soggy blanket.  
    I expect song.

The boat drifts on, spinning through currents.  
I lost the oars years ago. Incredible to realize you can  
    subsist on a diet of sunshine and air.  
    Salt clings to me like barnacles,  
    crystalline white, hardening, solid, all that's  
    left except for my shell.  
A toast to disappearing! To Shakespeare and green olives!  
To the last bitter rays of light fading as briskly as love.

Ophelia wore a crown of weeds  
    drowning 'neath the brook in her  
    white virgin's gown.  
Painterly . . . delicate. . . highly iconic.  
    This disappearing act is far less poetic.  
My skin shriveled, my bones exposed,



the cold lodged like a pick-axe in my heart.  
*Weep*, says the flounder.  
But even surrounded by all this water,  
my burning eyes are dry.

**The Age of Efficiency**  
**by Tim Kahl**

At the pep talk for the heart failure management group  
the clinician warns all of us about depression.  
She informs us that napping in the afternoon  
and overeating ice cream aren't surefire signs.  
*Beware of waning interest in things  
you've always had a fondness for.*  
But, I interject, couldn't this be a good thing  
if you've always had a keen attention  
for women who are too young for you?  
How do you know you haven't just matured?  
She noticeably sags out of exasperation.  
It seems I've missed the point again.  
Or once more I have willed myself against  
a caretaker's cautious construction  
of the way I should meet my days.  
What happened to the age when I could  
grab my ass with both hands and  
just jump in? Now I'm being carried  
out to deeper water, still treading comfortably,  
but a certain vague sense appears  
of someone on the shore expecting  
me to disappear beneath the surface.  
I won't go under. Is that refusal  
or my being ineffectual?  
There's no standard to which I can appeal  
that will help me sort out this question.  
There's no uncorrupted ideal either.  
If I want an answer to why I slow down the show  
of my own demise, whether I'm stubborn or  
just lazy, there's this husky voice  
clearly vested in the outcome that speaks:  
*Hey buddy, take a number. This ain't no place  
to contemplate values — ya' just get it done cheap.*

**Depress & Turn**  
**by Kevin Rabas**

My father's underwater;  
pills in his gullet  
turn him slow;  
ghost, zombie,  
he walks, haunts  
dream-man, shadow-man, messenger  
from the purple and the blue.

**An Untitled Reflection In Question**  
**by Akeith Walters**

When did I become these jowls and hooded lids  
hanging  
over the edge  
of the weathered ledge of life,

this lamp-lit image in evening's mirror  
of my mother's face and my father's  
taped together  
like a grainy snapshot on the glass  
double-exposed  
as if in error?

And have I stubbed the same spot on the barefoot floor  
as they did,  
as those who came before them,

with those stiff steps and wooden gestures  
that frame us?

Do I see what they saw,  
this reflection of looking back when looking forward,

and did they too gaze through a moon-glazed window  
as another sweat-wet day  
lays down to rest

soaked under a blanket  
of blue-collar fatigue,

that scratchy cover  
which keeps sleep,  
like a forgotten lover,  
standing hat-in-hand outside the door?

**Road Trip**  
**by Jeff Santosuosso**

It's a hard drive in the summer,  
    blind lane drops,  
    fourteen-wheelers bearing down,  
    suicidal commuters trying to cut 90 minutes to 80,  
and she did it in the glare of the snow,  
    lost sight lines over the filthy brown banks,  
    black ice, slicks, and potholes.

It's a hard visit for an occasion,  
    cramped house with no driveway,  
    tiny bathroom with pre-war tile,  
    rush and rumble of the backyard trolley line,  
and she did it for the funeral,  
    near strangers, the small talk,  
    handshakes, hushed voices, and casseroles.

It's a hard drive with her husband,  
    following too closely,  
    adjusting the seat and mirrors,  
    cell phone distractions,  
and she did alone  
    his inflexible boss,  
    year-end crunch time.

When she returned a week later,  
he took her bag from her shoulder,  
the others from the trunk.  
Her tea was already steeping,  
the couch laid out in blankets,  
her slippers just beneath.  
He joined her there moments later  
as she formed into his chest,  
closed her eyes and sighed.  
He steadied and soothed her shoulders,  
his breathing rhythmic  
as they reclined in silence,  
grieving.

**Remnants**  
**by Michael Maul**

Young or old, by the time they get to me  
these dogs have already travelled  
a long way.

Their path to my door passes first  
through adult daughters and sons,  
whose new circumstances  
(college, babies, careers, divorce)  
suddenly make life with dogs impossible.

In the air, they can smell the change.  
They trot to the cupboard where I keep boxed treats,  
while sneaking sideways peeks  
into corners where they could sleep,  
or glance down hallways toward unfamiliar rooms.

Then I lay a blanket on the floor and  
the new dog begins to scratch and bunch,  
dig and pile and adjust, lifting corners  
with its teeth or plowing furrows with its nose.

And lays down when complete, exhaling in relief,  
signaling the change is done:  
he has a space and found someone.

So on we live, in good-natured ways  
through happy-enough dog and people days,  
some touched by sickness, some by age.  
But at the door each day begins  
when all stretch out,  
then leash in hand,  
one by one come out again.

**A Writer's Prayer**  
**by Bret Norwood**

May no editor,  
widow,  
ex,  
alleged descendant put  
my juvenilia in posthumous print,  
amen.

## Contributors

**Tanner Ballengee** is an artist and skateboarder from Topeka, Kansas, currently residing in Tempe, Arizona. He is a graduate of Washburn University and has been published in *Inscape Literary Journal*, *VLP Magazine*, *Damfino Press*, and *South Florida Arts Journal*, along with many self-publications.

**KB Ballentine**'s work has appeared in numerous journals and publications, including *Alehouse*, *Tidal Basin Review*, and *Haight Ashbury Literary Journal*. A finalist for the 2014 Ron Rash Poetry Award, she was also a 2006 finalist for the Joy Harjo Poetry Award and was awarded the Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Prize in 2006 and 2007. *Fragments of Light* (2009) and *Gathering Stones* (2008) were published by Celtic Cat Publishing. Her third collection, *What Comes of Waiting*, won the 2013 Blue Light Press Book Award.

**W.S. Brewbaker** was born and raised in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He currently attends the University of Virginia, where he studies Political & Social Thought and Poetry Writing. His work is forthcoming in *Lost Coast Review*, *Bird's Thumb*, *After Happy Hour Review*, and *Stepping Stones Magazine*.

**David Colodney** studies poetry in the MFA program at Converse College, and served as Poetry Editor of the *South85* literary magazine. He holds a Master's degree from Nova Southeastern University, and has written for *The Miami Herald* and *The Tampa Tribune*. David has recently been nominated for Best New Poets 2015, and his poetry has appeared in *Shot Glass Journal*, *Night Owl*, *Egg*, and in the New York School and Diaspora issue of *Valley Voices*. David lives in Boynton Beach, Florida, with his wife, three sons, and golden retriever.

**Glenna Cook** is great-grandmother approaching eighty. She graduated from University of Puget Sound with a BA in English Literature at age 58, has been published in a variety of journals and anthologies, mostly in the Northwest, and is a resident alumna of Hedgebrook. Besides writing, her time is occupied with family, church, reading, yoga, meditation and biking.

**Isabella David McCaffrey** is a writer and poet. Her award-winning chapbook, *THE VOICES OF WOMEN*, is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press in 2016. She's also a staff writer at *Easy Street Magazine*, a literary off-shoot of *The Lascaux Review*. Isabella lives in Philadelphia with an ever-expanding menagerie of animals and children. For more on her work, please see [www.IsabellaDavid.com](http://www.IsabellaDavid.com)

**Mckendy Fils-Aime** is a Haitian-American poet and educator living in Manchester, New Hampshire, where he is a co-organizer for the wildly popular poetry reading, Slam Free or Die. He is an eight-time veteran of the National Poetry Slam and a perennial semi-finalist. Mckendy is a Callaloo Fellow who has been published in *Freezeray*, *Word Riot*, *Drunk in a Midnight Choir*, and elsewhere. The only thing Mckendy likes as much as poetry is his sneaker collection.



**Erin Fristad** is of the Northwest. She's from a family of miners, loggers, commercial fishermen and teachers. She talks to strangers. She picks up hitchhikers. Her poetry has been published in journals and anthologies including: *Rosebud*, *Americas Review*, *The Blue Collar Review*, *Hanging Loose*, *The Seattle Review*, *Floating Bridge Review*, *Working the Woods*, *Working the Sea: An Anthology of Northwest Writing*, *New Poets of the American West*, and *Raising Lily Ledbetter: Women Poets Occupy The Workspace*. You can learn more at [www.erinfristad.com](http://www.erinfristad.com).

**Alan D. Harris** is a 60-year-old graduate student who writes short stories, plays, and poetry based primarily upon the life-stories of friends, family and total strangers. Harris is the 2011 recipient of the Stephen H. Tudor Scholarship in Creative Writing, the 2014 John Clare Poetry Prize, and the 2015 Tompkins Poetry Award from Wayne State University. In addition, he is the father of seven, grandfather of seven, as well as a Pushcart Prize nominee in both 2013 and 2014.

Born in the psychic hub of North America (New York's Hudson Valley), **M.A. Istvan, Jr.**, is a complete disgrace to his people when it comes to tapping into lunar energies, bending keys, communing with archangels, employing healing crystals to cure cancers, sensing cold spots in the most haunted of cemeteries, wilting garden weeds with a mere dogged stare in their direction, understanding the chiromantic significance of a triple-line girdle of Venus, and distinguishing a blank ceramic tile to be cast off with the cigarette butts in an ashtray from what is the very rune of Odin to be cast for divination!

**Jeff Jeppesen** lives and writes in Warner Robins Georgia. His work can be found in *Every Day Poets*, *Strange Horizons*, *The Linnet's Wings* and *Every Day Fiction*. For several years, he was an associate editor at *Every Day Poets*.

**Oonah Joslin** has now spent most of her life in Northumberland and so feels entitled to write about it.

**Tim Kahl** [<http://www.timkahl.com>] is the author of *Possessing Yourself* (CW Books 2009) and *The Century of Travel* (CW Books, 2012). His work has been published in *Prairie Schooner*, *Indiana Review*, *Ninth Letter*, *Notre Dame Review*, *The Journal*, *Parthenon West Review*, and many other journals in the U.S. He appears as Victor Schnickelfritz at the poetry and poetics blog *The Great American Pinup* (<http://greatamericanpinup.wordpress.com/>) and the poetry video blog *Linebreak Studios* [<http://linebreakstudios.blogspot.com/>]. He is also editor of *Bald Trickster Press* and *Clade Song* [<http://www.cladesong.com>]. He is the vice president and events coordinator of The Sacramento Poetry Center.

**Jessica Fordham Kidd** lives in Coker, Alabama with her husband, children, and dog. She is the associate director of first-year writing at the University of Alabama. Her poems have appeared in *Sliver of Stone*, *Waccamaw*, and *The Paris Review*, among others. She has work forthcoming in *Goblin Fruit* and *Ideomancer*.

**Steve Klepetar's** work has received several nominations for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. His latest collections include *Speaking to the Field Mice* (Sweatshoppe Publications), *Blue Season* (with Joseph Lisowski, mgv2>publishing), *My Son Writes a Report on the Warsaw Ghetto* (Flutter Press), and *Return of the Bride of Frankenstein* (Kind of a Hurricane Press).

**Lita Kurth** (MFA Pacific Lutheran University) has had work published in *Fjords Review*, *Brain, Child*, *Main Street Rag*, *Tikkun*, *NewVerseNews*, *Blast Furnace*, *ellipsis...literature and art*, *Compose*, *Redux*, *Raven Chronicles*, *Tattoo Highway*, *Composite Arts*, *Verbatim Poetry*, *the Santa Clara Review*, *Vermont Literary Review*, *DNA*, and others. Her CNF, "Pivot," was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her CNF "This is the Way We Wash the Clothes," presented at the Working Class Studies conference, 2012, won the 2014 Diana Woods Memorial Award (summer-fall 2014) and appeared in *Lunchticket 2014*. She contributes to *Tikkun.org/tikkundaily*, *TheReviewReview.net*, and *classism.org*. In 2013, she co-founded the Flash Fiction Forum, a reading series in San Jose.

**Jeffrey H. MacLachlan** also has recent or forthcoming work in *New Ohio Review*, *Eleven Eleven*, *Santa Clara Review*, among others. He teaches literature at Georgia College & State University. He can be followed on Twitter @jeffmack.

**Sarah Marchant** is a St. Louis poet. She enjoys baking and dressing colorfully, and lately she's finding it hard to sit still. See how her writing's going by following her on Twitter @apoetrybomb.

**Michael Maul** has worked as a dishwasher and an English professor, and many things in between. He is currently living on Florida's Gulf Coast, where in addition to writing he also plays bluegrass music. His work has appeared in various literary publications in the U.S., Europe and Australia, including *Vine Leaves Literary Journal* (October 2015), the *Boston Literary Magazine* (September 2015), *Gravel Literary Review* (March 2015), *Pentimento Magazine* (January 2015), *The Blue Lake Review*, *The Front Porch Review*, *The Montucky Review*, *Big River Poetry Review*, and *Bitterzoet Magazine*. He is also a past winner of the Mercantile Library Prize for Fiction.

**Will Nixon** is the author of *My Late Mother as a Ruffed Grouse* and *Love in the City of Grudges*. He sometimes collaborates with his friend and fellow author Mike Jurkovic. Will lives in Kingston, NY.

**Bret Norwood** lives in Sheridan, Wyoming. His stories and poetry have been published in the *Open Window Review*, *Owen Wister Review*, *Soundzine*, and other journals, and his poetry was recognized in the 2013 WyoPoets National and Members-Only contests. He is a staff blogger for the Sheridan Programmers Guild. Follow his work at [bretnorwood.com](http://bretnorwood.com).

**Jennifer Peedin** originates from North Carolina, but now teaches English in South Korea. However, she has been unable to leave her Southern ways behind, and has figured out how to make biscuits and sweet tea in the land of kimchi. She is currently a student at Northwestern State University earning her MA in English Literature with an emphasis in the Southern Gothic.

**Ken Poyner** has lately been seen in *Analog*, *Café Irreal*, *The Journal of Microliterature*, *Blue Collar Review*, and many wonderful places. His latest book of bizarre short fiction, *Constant Animals*, is available from his web, [www.kpoyner.com](http://www.kpoyner.com), and from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). He is married to Karen Poyner, one of the world's premier power lifters, and holder of more than a dozen current world power lifting records. They are the parents of four rescue cats, and two senseless fish.

**Kevin Rabas** teaches at Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas, and has six books, including *Lisa's Flying Electric Piano*.

**Jeff Santosuosso** is a business executive and prize-winning poet living in Pensacola, FL. A member of the Florida State Poets Society, he is co-editor of *panoplyzine.com*, an online journal dedicated to poetry and short prose. His poems have appeared in *Illya's Honey*, *Red River Review*, *Texas Poetry Calendar* (2012, 2014), *Avocet*, *Red Fez*, *Alalit*, *Extract(s)*, *Syzygy* and other online and print publications. You can find him on Facebook.

**Beth Sherman** received an MFA in creative writing from Queens College, where she teaches in the English department. Her poetry has been published in *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Hartskill Review*, *Synecdoche* and *Lime Hawk* and is forthcoming in *The Evansville Review*. Her fiction has been published in *Portland Review* and is forthcoming in *Joyce Quarterly*. Beth has also written five mystery novels, published by Avon Books, a division of HarperCollins.

**John Oliver Simon** is one of the legendary poets of the Berkeley Sixties who has grown by steady dedication to his calling. Published from *Abraxas* to *Zyzyyva*, he is a distinguished translator of contemporary Latin American poetry, and received an NEA fellowship for his work with the great Chilean surrealist Gonzalo Rojas (1917-2011). He is a board member of California Poets In The Schools, where he has worked since 1971, and was the River of Words 2013 Teacher of the Year. His ninth full collection of poems is *GRANDPA'S SYLLABLES* (White Violet Press, 2015). For his lifetime of service to poetry, the Mayor of Berkeley, California proclaimed January 20, 2015, as John Oliver Simon Day.

For **Akeith Walters**, words are the art of his heart and some of his have been published in a dozen anthologies and numerous literary magazines. He likes to sit at the end of the day with a cup of ice melting in bourbon while he contemplates the difference between poetry and prose. The latter is more difficult to pen down, but sometimes when the room quiet and still, the stories will hang around like cigarette smoke exhaled in frustration.

Despite being a life-long consumer of poetry, **Ed Werstein** spent 22 years in manufacturing and union activity before his muse awoke and dragged herself out of bed. His sympathies lie with poor and working people. He advocates for peace and against corporate power. A member of the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets and The Hartford Avenue Poets, his poetry has appeared in *Verse Wisconsin*, *Blue Collar Review*, *Mobius: Journal of Social Change*, *Stoneboat*, and a few other publications. His first chapbook, *Who Are We Then?*, was published in 2013 by Partisan Press.

**Susan White** teaches high school English in Asheville, North Carolina. She has published poetry, fiction, and nonfiction in many journals and anthologies.



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