

Gyroscope Review

Fine poetry to turn your world around.



Crone Power Issue

19.4 Fall 2019



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Issue 19-4
Fall 2019

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Constance Brewer & Kathleen Cassen Mickelson

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"Crone Woman" original painted clay sculpture © 2019 Constance Brewer

FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the Crone Power Issue, which marks our second issue in which we honor women poets over the age of 50. Last year, we made a special section for poets in this category within a regular issue. At that time, we received more interest in this idea than we ever dreamed we would, and heard from women everywhere how much they appreciated our invitation for their work. This year, we suspended regular submissions and dedicated the entire issue to women poets over 50. The response was just as we'd hoped: mature women poets sent us strong, thoughtful, pointed, poignant, and not-to-be-ignored poems. These women come from all kinds of backgrounds, are bound together in their hard-won experiences and resulting wisdom, with the chops to distill some of that into the work we offer you here.

We cannot emphasize enough how older women poets have much to offer readers of any age. That there aren't enough markets for their poetry is clear, and we heard via many cover letters how some of these poems floated around for a very long time in search of a home. What readers might appreciate about the mature poet is the way her voice has grown into an unwavering storyteller, clear in vision, unashamed of her humanness and her tender heart, while also tough enough to call out injustices of any sort. Beginning poets, young poets, have much to offer, but the layers of events that a long life builds add a recognizable patina to any poetry, story, or artwork created by a mature artist. It's this patina, with all its grit and wrinkles and soft curves, that we honor.

There are those who did not care for our choice of the word "crone" for this issue. But we were clear that crones can be many things, that the strength of this one-syllable word can be wielded as an image of teacher, activist, caregiver, healer, visionary. It can be sexy in a way that only occurs after a lifetime of understanding that love and heartbreak live together, while the joy of sharing oneself with another is a gift.

And this is our gift to you. Fifty women over 50, each one with one poem that offers a piece of her story.

The mature woman poet stands before you, unwilling to be invisible. See her. Read her. Welcome her.

Kathleen Cassen Mickelson, Editor
Constance Brewer, Editor
October 2019

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THE POEMS

SECTION ONE

NAKED

BY CLAUDIA GEAGAN

Come to me old women of the world. I want to line you up on a beach, arm in arm, head on shoulder, hand on hip, naked, exposed, vulnerable and glorious. I want to push the shutter of my lens, capture your brave eyes, enshrine your Caesarean scars, and expose your soft inner flesh.

Come to me you grandmothers and great aunties, you women who have defined your lives by other people. Take off your hand-painted tee shirt. Show me your pancaked feet. Do not be shamed by your battle scars. I want to immortalize them in photos. Let me put my hand of love against the warmth of your rounded belly and point my fingers to your heart. Let those who have looked away so long feel the glow of your naked soul. Let them feel with their eyes your unfathomable worth.

Show off your skin and bone. Let the indifferent, even the cruel, look at the v's of our womanhood and know the seat of all creation.

MARCONI BEACH
BY MARY BETH HINES

Atlantic's blue heaves
White caps, churns icy foam. Spray
Thrown in the air cleaves

On landing in the
Swimmer's silver hair, salt drops
Lit by August sun.

Head back, face to sky,
She drifts, untethered, winking
Light in ocean's eye,

Watches stray gulls ride
Through quickening lanes of wind,
Dart and wobble, rise.

Beneath her teal shifts
To black. Skates skim sea's bottom,
Paired fins shiver, lift.

A sleek fish brushes
Her skin - papery, thin - as
It careens through hush.

Weathered memory
Sparks, thunders through limbs, surges
Over reverie.

The woman turns, gropes
Through surf, hollowed hands syncing
Rote-remembered strokes,

Back to the shore where
Grandchildren crouch, stack smooth stones,
Building flinty piers,

Stepping stones through tide,
Deep moats gashed in sandy land,
Perfectly designed,

For waves that fade, flow –
A sea that calls everything
It touches its own.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN 14
BY SVEA BARRETT

1. I inherited my father's gentle anti-social tendencies, his leftist union politics, and his unconditional love of animals.
2. I don't mind doing dishes or laundry--folding clothes is meditative--but I hate the everyday drudge of planning and cooking meals. So I don't.
3. I'm not a morning person. I've been a high school teacher for thirty three years.
4. I have seen the deaths of five dogs, two cats, one marriage, one mom and one son. So far.
5. I'm large, meaning I'm tall and I weigh a lot, and more and more I don't care.
6. I love to read and to write and to walk, with or without a dog or my husband, and even in the cold.
7. I prefer ear muffs.
8. I fear my younger son's depression.
9. My favorite food changes almost every day. Today it's dumplings from Thai Jasmine.
10. I don't have one of those female, close like a sister, do everything with, tell everything to best friends. My best friend is my husband, and I'm totally serious about that.
11. Trees can make me cry, and stupid commercials where kids come home from college and hug their dogs, and movies like the X Men one where Wolverine dies.
12. I love them more than life, but my three sons exhaust me.
13. People think I'm patient, but often I am screaming inside.
14. I'm lazy, I love to sleep, and my favorite colors are blue and green and fall and winter.

SIGNIFIERS

BY ELIZABETH BURK

I fall face down on concrete
en route from a book fair, treasures
in hand, a day of grace until I stumble,

propelled through air thinking,
“I’m too old for this shit.” But
that’s what old people do –we fall.

As I tumble to the ground, I wonder
what will break –knee, hand, elbow,
face –the pavement greets them all.

My radius cracks, my middle finger
slips from its socket, swells so my ring
has to be cut off for X-rays –

turquoise and silver encircling
my finger for forty years, marking
the birth of my son. Talisman lost,

my finger wags naked in the world.
We were bound together, time
to cut him loose. And if the ring stays off,

who will fill the void?
Meanwhile I limp, arm in a sling,
middle finger pointing skywards.

GOD'S VERY LARGE TRACTORS
BY DIANE KENDIG

a golden shovel on a line by Robert Bly

God does what she wants. She has very large tractors. God is an omnipotent farmer trying to turn a profit. And does she ever want the best for her fields, for her crops. "What would be best for us all this year?" she asks before she asks herself what *she* wants. But still, as winter turns to spring, she has decided what we are going to get, she has figured for herself what she wants plowed, very determinedly, which acreage will bear grain, large swaths of land overturned. She hauls out her large tractors.

AMEN

BY ELISABETH HARRAHY

I want to write
a sex poem.
Maybe
a poem that starts with the slightest
touch
perhaps
a bare forearm
a brush that makes the face
flush
the heart
drop
the breath ever so
shallow
a smooth flow
and oh
the dangerous
undertow
that sucks and swells
drawing then rising
to undulating surge—

Or maybe
something on the awkward
fumbling for snaps and zippers
and buttons and hooks
torn threads
and banging heads
all drool and slobber
the swoosh
of an arm as dishes fly—

But then I worry
someone will read
the bio at the end of the book
figure my age
question my choice
of topic
and I think

Maybe
I could use a different name

But then that same
urge to defy
returns
and I think
I can do this
have done this

So maybe
an amalgam
of picnic table cliff edge rooftop and car
or perhaps just one truck
hilariously stuck to the vinyl
desperate to climb over the stick shift
or my favorite bed
beneath the tall pines
that sway and sigh
as something inside begins to rise —

Something so difficult to get right
on paper

Especially
knowing the critics
will debate
the exact order and choice
of each written word —
as will I —
as if
these words are more important
than those uttered in passion
words uttered like prayer
words whispered
like yes and yes and yes
and oh God oh God oh God —
and oh God
and oh —

RAGE, RAGE
BY ANNE MYLES

*For the Bryn Mawr class of 1984
A Golden Shovel poem after Dylan Thomas*

Was I, in those days, the only one afraid I was a prophet? What to do
when missiles not yet launched throbbed overhead, the world not
solid anymore but tattered scrim, in thin nostalgic colors, all about to go?
As if I paced some dusty fairgrounds, watching life rolled up, the gentle
hoisting of it all into the truck, out of our sight, while we prepare to crawl into
the cindered emptiness that is our bed. No way to explain, to say all that
at twenty-one. Maybe God, I thought. Or studying astronomy'd be good--
its cotillion of indifferent planets waltzing through the night.

We came of age, my classmates, into that day after, that nuclear rage.
It comes back, doesn't it, burning like truth. But, middle-aged, we know rage
turned inward, the ice on the windshield Monday mornings. Against
the end of things we wrote our scripts, and learned a different close -- the
last act of the mind's erosion, those bows our parents took before dying.
We hoped to settle then, breathe deep, learn finally what we were made of.
Still, not blazing, but in quiet creep, in steady respiration, that thing, the
extinction we were born to, nears us, to be cradled in our open hands like light.

BLUE MARBLE
BY NANCY MCCABE

This is not a poem about you or time or love or death,
because I'm not allowed to write about you,
you said, and no one said anything about love.
So this is just a poem about a blue marble.

That's all it is, about a perfect blue marble,
meaning I was wrong that weekend of leisurely talk,
away from children and obligations, when I said
that it's impossible to write anything that's not
about time or love or death or all of the above.
You didn't believe me anyway. You asked
what if you just wrote about a perfect blue marble?

What would the poem say? I asked, and you replied,
you'd say it's blue, and it's a marble.
Would there be metaphors? I asked. You said, sure.
The marble's like the earth viewed from space, I tried,
distance rendering our planet small, us specks of dust,
blown away by the slightest breeze. Small, untethered.
Time, death. No, you said. Too cliché.

I stared at your blue eyes, thought, no, too cliché.
The milky eyeball of an old woman with cataracts,
I said instead. Time, death. Nah, you said.
And I'm tired of this topic. It's boring me.
But later, you backtracked: the blue marble
is like my blue balls, to which I answered,
you don't have blue balls, and anyway,
even if you could compare a marble,
which is a ball, to another kind of ball,
even if you don't make the leap from sex
to love, it's still close to love.

But this is not a love poem, and it's not about you,
and it's probably not really even about marbles,
and I'm tired of this topic anyway,
so it's about driving home on clear roads between
grass blades and knobby twigs and pine needles
softened under matching uniforms of snow,
bluish white in sunlight, the weekend over,
time running out, light glinting like the marbles
my daughter used to fracture in boiling water.

But this isn't a poem about marbles or love
or death or you or time or even hearts
that shatter like those boiled marbles
scattering into shards of glimmering glass.

MOLTING

BY CYNTHIA TRENshaw

Several times throughout her seasons
a snake withdraws,
her colors fading scale by scale.
Her outer shape grows numb and dry,
her eyes dull, pale and lifeless.
Vulnerable and weak,
uncertain this is not her death,
she must lie deathly still at first.
Then, restless, desperately she scrapes
against rough surfaces
to split and slowly disengage
her itchy too-small skin
from silky, sinuous
newly-decorated flesh
in which she slides away.

Eventually within her seasons
a woman comes to understand self-loss
and self-replenishment.
Giving up her essence for the sake of others
could not have been a virtue, if all that remains
is a fragile woman-husk, parchment-dry,
skittering over concrete in exhale of regret.

In the healing of her elder years,
a woman learns
to feed the needs and passions
of her growing serpent self,
understanding that from time to time
unconfined abundance will itch
until she scrapes against rough edges
of her world's adversity
then sends her ripened self
to serve without depletion.

LANDAY FOR THE WOMAN ON THE FLOOR
BY ANDRENA ZAWINSKI

Looming large over a hundred years
in brick and mortar, around the corner stood that house,

the one just across from the long weeds
skirting the railroad tracks in the flats. And in that house

was a woman, oak door swung wide open,
sunlight catching strands of her silver hair, jewel-eyed,

staring at me with my dog walking by.
Then in a sudden urgency she would belly crawl

closer to the splintered threshold,
using her thick forearms to lug her body along

the worn planked floor. She never spoke,
only stared up at us. I never spoke, never

could once muster the words: "How are you?"
"Can I help you?" "What do you need?" Empty questions

like promises would not be proffered
to the woman on the floor rubbing her ashen face

with calloused palms, routine of days
crawling on her stomach across the boards to the door,

she so resolute in memory
and my persistent wondering: "Who opens the door?"

Author's Note: The 9/13 syllabic couplet form of the Landay was invented and used (often anonymously or collectively) by Pastu women lacking freedom of speech and was used for uncomfortable subjects.

WHICH WITCHES IS WITCH
BY BARBARA TURNEY WIELAND

There's no such things as a bad witches
or a good witches, just a witch, which
is to say, a woman what's in touch
with the bloody pulse of what's what and which is which

Witch is the ticket they's put on us
to shuts us up, hunt us down
shuts us down or drowns us out
Which is to say, down right literally, as well

Bad witch is what we is when we gets too feisty for 'em
when we scares the *Bejeesus* out of 'em
Good witch is what we is when they's want to fuck us

For they's is frightened of us alrighty, and mighty so
Our power *possibly* mockeries them, and intolerably so
They's needs to sew us closed up quick for the sake of they's dicks

For they's is a-feared of child-birthing things, moon bloods and stinging things
sharing of secrets, ingredients, intuitions and women's pleasuring they'sselves

We don't do do no cackling, right. We laughs and we hopes
Our stomachs ain't flat and we ain't made to fit in the clothes
we's supposed to wear for they's pleasure, for sure, we talk back
and we ain't they's whores and we ain't they's wives

'Watch out for Witches,' says them. 'Them's trouble double and strife
Watch out for them's wiles them's cunninglingus smiles'
And tho they's lusts for ours breasts and ours soft sweet bits
They's bites us, they's sets traps for us, trips us up, bashes and smashes us
They's connive to divide and conquers us
They's covets us, and strive to possess us all, alright!?
Alright matey!?! You geddit? We *knows* what they's does
They's try to make us wenches, but we is *Witches!*

AGRARIAN LANDSCAPE WITH FAN BRUSH
BY ERIN WILSON

Walking along between
the parcelled farm fields,
the windows of heaven
keep passing over me,
squares of light
with painted casings
and finishing nails.
The wind sounds far off,
always arriving.
And is far off,
unless it is near.

Another winter has passed,
and I haven't learned to speak
another language
or paint as I had planned to.
No matter.
Even on this bland day
with its brittle wind,
the spruce that line one drive
are bristling light
amongst the birches
(no matter how dull
their glow,
it's breathtaking)
and keeping it.

One crow makes off
over a frozen field
of rawboned snow crust;
the other waits and plays
roadside, in the March mud.
I am thinking of Mahler's
Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen.
I wonder how much was accident
that I wasn't born a crow.
Or that I was born at all.

Wind cups the hemisphere,
howls.
Wind racks and tugs my hair.

THEY'S FIRST RODEO: TRANSITIONING
BY KAREN OSTROV

I.
We stare straight up at you in the museum's gallery
Young MFA grad student artist person.
Your taut skin on slim frame.
We are old women docents
Corralled as your audience
We wear sensible shoes.

II.
You begin with informing us of the importance of
Our acknowledging your recent transition to They.
It is They who muster all the finesse of a
Concrete-busting jack hammer
To assault our common sense
With your art rant about sexual identity.

You fill an entire gallery wall with
Black and white photos of your face.
You seem fascinated with
Examining the contours of its structure.
Like Anish Kapoor,
You capitalize on creating art for
The Selfie-snapping youth market.
We look at you
As you look at your looks
Through a gender transitioning lens.

III.
Your voice starts shaky
Like a newborn foal
Struggling to stand on
Spindly legs.
Gradually, you take hold of the reins of your presentation.
Then, like Donatello's David,
You settle into a contrapposto pose.
Willowy, zesty, agile.
Your fingers and wrists flutter around your body
Like butterfly wings
Fanning the stale air in
This windowless gallery.

IV.

Just have a good look at us sitting here.
Some sixty odd Elders.
Volunteer museum educators.
Our wide bodies crammed into narrow
Saddle-shaped camp stools
Arranged in two concentric horseshoes.
Our butts sagging over the seats' edges
Like a Dali limp clock
With its hands locked in time.

V.

You inform us that your art photo images reflect
Your exploration of the parameters of the unseen border
That divides the space
Between what is manly and what is womanly.
You tell us that this invented binary system
Places harsh constraints on
A person's freedom to match up
Their inner felt identity
With their outward appearance.

VI.

You explore this imagined division through
Crafting a visual form that manipulates
Facial characteristics of the two sexes.
Separate photographs are arranged in
Four columns and four rows.
The installation is 10 feet by 10 feet.

VII.

In the row running across the top,
Are the individual faces of your actual family members.
Mother, Father, Little Sister, Big Brother.
The photo of your own face
Is repeated four times across the bottom row.
In vertical columns starting on the left,
Your face flows up like lava lamp blobs
Changing shape as it ascends.
Along the top row,
Each of your family's faces descends to meet yours.
Your face blends with each
Of the faces of your kin.

VIII.

We oldsters squint to bring into focus
The blurred composite images
You describe before us.
Over here, on the left, your face has merged
With the arched brow of your startled Mother.
Next, the soulful eyes of your wounded Father.
There, the delicate jaw of your svelte Sister.
On the far right, the prominent nose of your stalwart Brother.

We think, Clever you.
Rather, Clever They.

IX.

We shield our eyes from the harsh track lighting
As we look through hooded eyelids, cataracts, prescription bifocals.
Our sore hips and knees cry out
To stretch. Move.
Be surgically repaired.
Your shrill voice
Reverberates like alarm bells
In our hearing aids.
We are immobile
Lassoed to the stools.
Stoic educators, servants to fine art.

X.

We slump in this room with no breeze.
The rickety slings foreshorten
Our thighs and torsos.
Our posture collapses
We hunch forward.
Pain shoots through our broad backs.
Our bra'd breasts merge with our fleshy bellies
Like Francis Bacon's models.
We ache to be set free to roam like fillies
In a pasture of dewy daffodils.

XI.

You keep it up.
You preen and prance, to and fro, before your artwork.
We notice how effortlessly your elastic limbs float.
Your tongue floors the accelerator of your banter
As the dark roast kicks your brain.
Your hands unconsciously sweep back your
Full head of lustrous hair.

You bind your tresses with an elastic band
Into a neat ponytail.
Precisely mimicking your sister's grooming gestures.
Then you deftly slip the band on off your hair and onto your bony wrist.
You shake out your glossy mane.
Impersonating a seductive babe.

XII.

Just like you, we disguise ourselves as young women.
We've had years of practice playing Barbies.
Swirls of pink blush on our sallow cheeks.
Smears of deep red lipstick on our wrinkled lips.
Dark pencil outline our crooked brows.
Concealer dabbed on puffy lower lids.
Permed and dyed hair, cropped or bobbed.
Cracked nails painted coral.
Gaudy patterned tops
To hide fleshy rolls.

Our wrinkled, sagging faces,
Like Agamemnon's golden death mask,
Shield us from
The salacious male gaze.
Yet our inner worlds brim with memories of lust.

XIII.

Do we appear to They as exhausted old performers
Collapsed in our seats
After dancing en travesti in
Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo?
It's They's first rodeo.
But it's our final round up.

XVI.

We stare straight up at you
We are silent, invisible.
We are in collusion with They to be excluded from
The circle of Diversity and Inclusion.

For in our various stages of dignified decrepitude
And decay
It is we who are, without fanfare
Transitioning.

JE SUIS FEMME 2020

BY CHARLENE LANGFUR

Are we discreet and plain and femme today
or do we try to be inspired by our own truths
like Sappho and Millay, tell of our own truth whether
it twists or turns in the midday sun or, finds us
where we did not mean to be, powerless or
powerful, takes us places at night where pain
is acute, right or wrong, where we dive into the wreck
to find out more because we must know all of it. And maybe
you or I grow older, aging palpably, in the here and now.
Or we are women who dye our hair purple and
win awards and stand up out in the open for who we are.
Women standing up no matter what pushes back.
Contemporary life on earth has always been
about money and power, about token this, token that,
the pretense of good from self- declared like minded
men, or so they tell us, with their collegial nonsense and
big old smiles. But only truth brings change,
the real stuff pushing back centuries of
culture working against us, all the people who love
their historical identities more than equality or living
in tune with the present time, no matter how much
they need to be themselves as they are and not as
some script from history says they must be.
Always the idea of women bemuses some
women, the idea of the complete self of a woman
has been in a box for so long, how do we know
the way out again without digging for our own truth,
drawing some clear map of the way things are in a journal
or on a pad or in the back of the mind, finding the way things
are and not the way men view us or say we are,
gay or straight, mother or child, old or young,
intelligent or wise. Where I am now I try never
to forget, ready to begin again, with my own truth,
a lesbian woman growing older, staying strong,
one truth at a time, one step after another and then another,
everyone of us all in.

MEDUSA
BY ALISON STONE

It beats invisibility,
the hell of insignificance
most women are dismissed to
when their prettiness fades.
Evil has its own loveliness.

Though I'm lonely,
life is not without pleasure –
wine by the fire, a cat
in my lap. Outside, on my neat
lawn, stone men line up like suitors.

SECTION TWO

EMANCIPATION NOTICE:
BY BJ HELMER

Earth Mother has resigned. Quit.
Gone out of business.
Her all nurturing-teat is flat and dry.
Cow-faced males who bleat pathetically while
butting her atrophying orifices
will receive a well-deserved kick in the head.

MODERN GODDESS
BY KIM JACOBS-BECK

Hike the concrete path
in search of my bones
buried under weight
too recent to be blamed
on postpartum shifts.

After dinner, the river
valley's vapor thins.
March up and down hills
to burn these thighs.

Find flower buds
strewn in my path: Aphrodite
or an ancient bride.
Carry a blossom on my palm
on the dark walk home.

THE WET DISAPPEARING

BY LINDA NEAL

An egg becomes a life
from splattered viscous liquid
cum stain and summer rain
 distant and small, dressed in meconium, a mere mehndi
 on the sky's forehead, a tale for a soothsayer to tell.

A reluctant god or malevolent force
sets you down on shore, naked, strong, whole
beautiful as Aphrodite,
 like the pearl that resides within the shell, lovely as a continental shelf,
 a Socratic argument of water and flesh.

Sand castle and shell, totems yet unknown, yet untried,
written in star-plumed script as true
as tall grass and cowgirl birthday piñatas hanging,
 real as the cracked sidewalk that slid down the hill
 behind your mother's back, in front of your father's face.

A voice whispers gold and mustard in the garden
while soldiers deploy in other lands,
ancient unknown women smile from photos in an album.
 Their faces grab your hem-stitched jacket, set you down,
 tell you nothing. Everything about them is only what you imagine.

The fountain in your grandmother's garden thrums
amidst vines and nearby blooming roses, yellow and pink,
but black moss at the bottom
 says all that purity of water falling is temporary, symptom and symbol
 of impermanence flowing out and down, out and down.

Peanut butter and stalk of celery in your mother's kitchen, dreams
of star glide, moon ride. Chewing is a sacred art.
Swallow the lump that mimics her voice
 while gnats gather on a peach, and slippery peanuts escape
 from your plate like babies' hearts.

Long days and the late setting sun
breed hope — even reverence — but what do you revere?
A strange and glorious land in the distance
 where sin is dead and grace swings its fist from
 a cloud full of flowers and pepper.

Red apple, little ripe peach — you don't know what sweet is
until you've tasted them straight from the tree, or placed seeds
underneath the rampant soil where disease and birth begin,
 shredding all the answers to your prayer for no end,
 no beginning, seamless as a flannel coverlet over a wet sod bed.

Tonight, the glass in the bookcase reflects your face
in a room lit by an August super moon, diluted
by the flickering street light on the curb.
 Your dog sleeps on the sofa back,
 her ear a small flag draped across the cushion.

You'll sing and dance until you round the curve
so many miles from where you set you down, all wet as river mouth.
Now dry as driftwood in the wind,
 you want nothing more than dog
 and sons who've gone and grown away.

In the bones of your dreams
everything pulls away from the collar that tames you
tries to convince you you'll live forever.
 The back of the mirror doesn't know its own beveled face,
 reaches outward toward, then beyond, its shiny edges.

Standing by the autumn ocean, you know you belong to no one.
With your edges painted in white foam you walk, carrying a bucket,
bloody with the detritus of your life, shored up by an intimate sea
 as if the infinite waves and familiar songs of pelicans
 could wash away the year or make you other than a transient sequin on the sand.

You guard the treasured melaleuca on the perimeter of your garden
praise its bark, rough and white and dropping in the breeze,
like angel clouds at dawn.
 The neighbor children chant, *My Spidey Senses tingle*,
 make statues of each other, swing high to other lands.

Maybe magic is all that lives for sure.
All this flapdoodle and pissing in the dark
leads to nothing, nowhere. If heaven exists, it's for others to discover.
 Your expedition leads you to questions, more like bookish grenades
 than golden boughs and pearl-encrusted gates where the dead meet up.

You will be your brother's bamboo cane,
your son's silver-edged sword to swallow,
become a wandering catechism of love,
 nothing as grand as a cathedral or a rose, but a simple daisy,
 redeemable as a useful coupon or an almost sacred stamp that's pasted in a book.

You see what you see. Old dog, young dog,
each with her own tag, tiny metal disc around her neck
as necessary as your babies' hospital wrist bands, lost so long ago,
 somewhere between wiping mud from boots
 and touching a weariness that came with divorce papers served in a rose bouquet.

Wandering in this bardo place, you wait for thunder to tell you
what is real or next or after that. Wait and wait, wait and wait —
things are what they seem, complicated, raw and ripe,
 no matter how many hikes you take on rocky shores,
 no matter how many lives you think you'll live.

STILL LIFE WITH RAMSHACKLE BONES

BY PAMELA AHLEN

Last blood
trickles down our thighs
graffitiing the ground, memory's
cannibals lapping the remainder,
sucking us colorless
as blood-orange sun
sucked into a darkening sea.

Visiting day at the necropolis:
pointing a crooked finger
to silence the birds,
raise dead bones for company,
machete the last flower down
beside the unmarked stone.
Tree limbs tongue the air,
licking barbs of what no longer lives,
calculating the number of blood-
letting times.

But Crones, we are still a life.
Make a broom: handle of ash, twigs of birch
and sweep the path of autumn's last red leaf.
The broom's our tree of desire—
slip it between our still-woman legs
and ride it like a horse, wielding magic
into next spring's green.
Show how high a Pegasus can fly.

ABSENCE IN FIVE PARTS

BY LOIS ROMA-DEELEY

i.

After a week of radiation, I'm a goddess.
I'm cleaning closets and cabinets, decluttering my life,
kicking the habit of holding onto useless things.
I am creating a universe of perfect order.
So into the trash I toss
"Owl Drink to That" and "Sip Me Baby One More Time,"
wine glasses bought by a younger self.

ii.

Make room for the new, my mother always said,
and then
throw out what doesn't belong.
Now I'm cramming mismatched socks and crusty flowers
into the mouths of plastic sacks
like baby birds demanding to be fed.

iii.

She'd be proud I haven't flinched
while organizing my life into piles of yes and no.
So picture books from the Uffizi, a poster of the first Star Wars movie,
an "I Heart You" stuffed bear I once held, gently,
against my mutilated breast—each and all
get pitched into the box marked *Savers Thrift*.
I take a cleansing breath.
I've done good work tonight.

iv.

But I'm wondering what can't be reused with a little more care?
Like the cashmere sweater with tiny moth holes,
the one I mended with invisible thread,
the one she thought I'd never own.
Then suddenly, and without warning,

v.

there's a tenderness underneath my ribs;
Pulling up my shirt, I look at blotches on my skin and—
though I know I'm lucky to be alive—right now it seems
my soul is pushing through my chest, and
it will leave behind nothing
but these broken blood rosettes.

BITING

BY PATRICIA BOLLIN

Each am/pm brings a ritual rundown.
Review of weak entry ports.
Check of body signals for aging-invasion.
Count of scars, moles, thinning hair.

But all these filters and she'd forgotten *teeth!*
She'd taken for granted the roots and enamel.
Assumed their free delivery of caramel,
their grand hall management under curtains of lips,
the chamber for lilting songs and language pedals.

She should have been more grateful.
Too late now she acknowledges
tastes they squeeze from food,
how they remove splinters,
advise her smile, sit mostly silent in the dark.

As of today she must give up popcorn.
Fresh crusty bread. Avoid fruit
embedded with little seeds. Etc.
(She stopped listening after the dentist
said "...people of your age.")

Tonight as she brushes in front of the mirror,
she talks to the teeth. Reminds them
she only smoked two cigarettes and that was high school,
how they ate her paychecks with their caps, root canals.
And how still, in good faith, she
supported them with a vote for fluoride.

That makes her laugh. And the mirror laughs too.
Morning and evening the toothpaste on her lips,
the unbrushed hair and new wrinkles, the teeth
call her to the mirror and she must face herself.

NOW, FROZEN
BY SUSAN WISMER

Created for springtime,

walking dogs my shoulder wants
 joyful leash tugging
forest paths

 games of catch balls
low leather mitts graceful
 lofted
 into hands
 of small children

 seeds turned
 into sharp scented wet earth
peas beans radish lettuce green grass rhubarb shoot
 water and hoe
fork edger rake trowel

This year's shoulder refuses
 to lift hold embrace
whirl twirl in circles the size of the moon
 seized into throb knife-blades of pain
 frozen immobile

Common, say doctors
 in athletes and women
 years of strain overreach
 all we have carried
 through so many seasons

 now wintered in.

MOLLY RINGWALD HERSELF CUTS AND COLORS MY HAIR
BY MICKI BLENKUSH

I'm surprised to find her working the salon.
Her lipsticked pout just the same
as in all those 1980's movies
when we both traversed high school.
Though I have no mirror,
in the strange confidence of dreams
I see she foils my graying hair
into auburn waves to match her own.
She doesn't talk at all. Doesn't tell me
her struggles or ask after mine.
She doesn't speak of menopause,
its precarious, encompassing ebb.
She doesn't coax in metaphor --
how we walk over rutted ground,
small flashlight casting faint beam
just ahead of faltering steps.
Instead, she studies my face
through expertly-lined eyes
then shapes my brows into arcs.
Brushes and wands splayed at her elbow
like tools for any surgeon.
She has no pores that I can see.
Still so flawless. Still so young.
Even before I wake, I know
I'll never see her again.

UNCUT HAIR
BY TRICIA KNOLL

Grow a lifetime's, washed, brushed
and let loose in waves relaxed
to swing in spring winds.

Or held together on your neck
twined in plaits for parents
and ribbons for brothers and sisters.

Growth spurts coded with what you
breathed, ate, loved, dreaded,
sweated over and under, what you knew

to be true, until a time comes
for unbraiding the ends, when the moon
tips your widow's peak or bald spot

with stark white light and you get it
through your head how much
you have grown.

BAD BOYS
BY GAIL TYSON

It took me years to give up bad boys, whose rough
hands took what they wanted, who didn't take long.
Friends thought I craved risk, the whiff of danger.

No. I yearned for time alone the world
could respect. Women on their own were suspect
for so long —only abrupt departures

gained us space to breathe. I hid the fact I saw
each bad boy coming, reeled him between the sheets
with sweet relief, knowing he'd soon be gone,

only now fathom the years I wasted.

THERE WAS A DANCE PARTY

BY MARE HERON HAKE

I feel it and the bass is loud, moving every inch of my muscle, moving thin bone, moving the blood vessel that might break because I know now is the way through. Now of my mother, my father, my children, all people. I flick a wrist and ignore the arthritis because a friend has developed MS. I lift a foot and rotate an ankle because three have diabetes. I wave both arms in the wind, the wind of my tune, the breath of newborns gently snoring, the riffling tree canopy I can always see for all those who've suffered and survived it, or died. I swing my hips under fragile shoulders, a burden side-to-side, grateful for the ache that opens the bone shape and I flash open my fist once tightly closed, a failed boxer's grip, because the strobe light hurts the cell, but this bright colorful flashing of youth is a traffic light on the dance floor, the pulsing of ignorance and easy joy, an endless repetition. *Jazz hands*, I think. *Jazz hands*. Splay my fingers, match their pounding music with my rays. Someone says, *you're a good dancer* when what they meant was, *you're brave*. I'm brave to keep dancing in public, in front of their eyes, finding my swerves, my splinters, my once hormonal rhythms, leaking out of the open wounds.

COUNTER MAGIC
BY TERESA SUTTON

First, I set my mask beside the stove
to let the devil and anyone else see
the body of a mother, which becomes

my mother's body, the leaky self,
engulfed again by the endless,
lacking an ending, boundless body

of mother, the formless flow seeping
between home and grave. I burn
a piece of thatch from her roof

to bring her to the spot, to call her
back from the dark or the light, her body
still flowing with things that might get out

of hand, mine too, our bodies still
connected, our separation still incomplete.
Spells are just recipes, certain words

written on paper. They are markers
at the border, instructions for the dispersal
of dirt, the recovery of a child,

the bewitching of butter by applying heat,
the shifting of shapes, all too liquid,
a crow, a cat, a wolf, a pig, a frog.

I say them. I write them down.
I weigh the aftermath of the scissor's snip,
something that would separate us finally,

a fast chop with a cleaver, the sound
it would provoke like a pistol shot, if I hold
the frog over flames with tongs

until it makes a great noise. Just say the words.
Write them down. Snip. Chop. Explode.
Or the mask is mine to keep for a bit longer.

DREAM WATCH

BY PATRICIA FROLANDER

I softly call your name as I slip into the stand of wheat,
fifty-five acres of gold.
Careful not to shell the seed, my aged hands
push ripened stems aside.

You must be here for you love the fullness of a crop.
Yards further, I call again.
The hawk above must wonder
at the trails through the field.

Did you leave to miss the winnowing scythe,
the burning heat of August?
For some good reason, I cannot find you here,
amid the nightly dreams and tear-damp pillow.

CRONES HAVE REWRITTEN THE COMMANDMENTS AND NOW THERE ARE 5
BY KIT KENNEDY

Vote.

Your body is yours, full stop.

Love whomever you wish.

Mute all devices to advertisements sexist, racist, ageist, and/or sponsored by pharmaceutical & beauty industries.

Sweep daily.

SIGHTINGS OF AN UNIDENTIFIABLE SOMETHING FLOATING BY ON LAKE FREE AT LAST
BY LYNDI WATERS

And now,
when the whole messy thing is almost over,
I will look down on the feminine
from above my own head,
and for once, define it for myself,
and all the little bull calves can run around
and butt their heads together like Ferdinand's friends,
but I won't hear their bellows
because the real fun begins,
when the smooth skin and narrow waist are gone.

When your face is lined, the breasts long,
and the gazes of the young begin to look past you,
watch for this shift in your frequency,
as if the eyes of your heart have grabbed another gear,
and you might find yourself searching for a river.
There will be unsubstantiated reports from onlookers
of something buoyant floating by,

*It would look like driftwood
if it wasn't floating against the current, they'll say.*

The seasons were hard,
but they are piled now, bonfires lit with bone,
and I am not sweet
in this galaxy of carrion and milk.
The pouch on my back carries
petals of peony and sharp weapons.
I have washed the tangled hair of the dead,
combed it out smooth, dried it in the sun.
I have inhaled the rancid breeze
off a hundred stagnant years,
exhaled it as nectarines and passion flowers.

SECTION THREE

THE YEAR THEY DRAFTED THE GRANDMOTHERS
BY PENELOPE SCAMBLBY SCHOTT

The process began with the government letter
excerpted at length in the following paragraphs:

Under Article 36, Section 24, Paragraph 37 of the Selective Service System, your number was submitted by your local board to fulfill this quarter's draft quota for two years military service.

You are hereby notified to appear at the Induction Center for processing into the United States Army. Meal vouchers will be furnished at the Center during the two day process. Following a physical and mental examination, aptitude tests, haircut, and government-issued clothing, you and other inductees will be transported for eight weeks of basic training.

Please get your personal affairs in order.

This letter was sent to selected grandmothers
seventy and older because it took that long

to be sure those grandmothers were fit to be drafted.
It took carrying and birthing and nursing and loving

a fragile new human until that human
survived the long vicissitudes

of growing up. It took years of service
carrying that hard knot in the gut

because it's your kid and you care too much.
Live through all that to become a soldier.

Now follow the Matriarch with her stars and bars.
She will not shoot. You will not shoot.

You will stroke the cheek of the enemy soldier,
that almost beardless cheek. You will say

*Honey, go home. This isn't your fight.
Some rich old men are making you do this.*

*Go kiss your girl. She's waiting for you.
Go make a grandkid for your loving mother.*

And the boys will go home alive and undamaged.
The girls and the mothers will hug them so hard

that the rich old men will have to give up.
Let this be the story the grandmothers tell.

CURVE, WAVE

BY JESSICA BARKSDALE

I was never built of edges but curves and waves,
nothing clean about my fleshy form, but I lived anyway, pummeling forward.

Fat is my history, no knobby spine, gangly knee, pointy elbow.
My sisters were built of corners and angles, sharp of jaw, strong of line,

me cobbled of ancient, sturdy DNA scrapped from creatures still scared of dinosaurs
haunted by ice and magma, built to survive the earth's tumult.

Back then, women needed flesh. Wobbly bellies. Fatty layers. Jiggly juices.
Otherwise, they stayed empty, barren. Sex was survival for the messy tribe.

Glop, my caveman, protected me from every roar and venomous bite.
Sure, I had a mind, but to exist, I needed his hairy body and stone club.

Perhaps, my genetic mother self danced around a crackling fire without shame.
Mirrors hadn't been invented yet. She thrived in the garden, a golden

age, where the good glow came from the inside. Happiness
came from the sun and being alive in the first place.

Too bad I need this literary device, this flashback backstory
to feel okay about my arms, my chin. My feelings live in different households.

The older smarter feeling loves the fact that I am alive at all.
My unhinged self still thinks I could look like Christie Brinkley if I only tried.

Overhead, the full white moon, huge, drifting in her enormous way.
Nothing in space gives one shit she's round, white, and pock-marked.

She beams. I reveal myself, craving her safe shine.

EBBTIDE

BY L. SHAPLEY BASSEN

Ebbed, empty, unweighted of ocean,
open to the feeling and breathing air;
a dry basin, a cracked bowl, a concavity
fitting the curve of rising *premier* moon,
unfitted for feeding the multitudes;
alone only me unmasked, featureless,
a deep pacific beatitude.

AFTER THE BUDDHA PLAY
BY SANDRA KOHLER

i.

The white orchid in this room,
the newest one, is down to its last bloom,
which is wilting, but has a new stalk.
The violet-veined green orchid is
dormant, the purple has one stalk
soon to bud, blossom. In the other
room, a white orchid's in full bloom,
only one bud left to open on its
blossoming stalks.

Which am I, wilting, dormant,
in bloom? Do I have one bud
still to open?

ii.

Life's no uniform
trajectory from youth and
health to decrepitude, age.
All along the way I've lived
renewals, changes, the surprise
of new flowerings.

A cardinal high up in an oak tree
two yards away is a flash of color,
a percussive noise, gone
before I can name it.

Can we love our evenings
as our mornings, our goings
as our comings?

I am coming
and going, like that
cardinal, I am wanderer,
I am stone,
immovable.

iii.

Where do we come from?
What are we? Where are we going?
Gauguin paints his answer.
A painter, a poet, a child,
a Zen master,
ask the questions,
answer them
or don't.

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE'S *DEAD COTTONWOOD TREE, ABIQUIU, 1943*
BY KAREN GEORGE

Sky suffused lilac-blue.
Behind the dead tree
a line of live ones,
curry-yellow foliage
feverish as flames.

Smooth, bone-white trunk
picked-clean, desert-baked.
Wide base, an onion bulb
peeling layers charred by lightning,
black thorn in its side.

Long wounds,
a hollow core.
One branch remains,
split open lengthwise,
reaching beyond the frame.

O, tribal elder,
risen goddess,
may we embrace
our scars,
may we all be
as dazzling,
nude.

EXPOSURE

BY ANDREA JACKSON

As if I were a tree in the center of town
in the common where woolly sheep graze
in view of surrounding brownstones.

As if incised on my trunk
for passers-by to see
were all the stages of my life

The worried baby, wanting to please
The homely teen, frightened, tense
The earnest young woman, studying,
equipping herself for the big world;

The mother, frazzled, ashamed,
awed by worldly professionals;
Then the professional herself,
agonizing over her adequacy,
competing with the men.

As if the tree had a visitor,
some adolescent hoodlum
with pocket knife and grimy fingernails,
who tore away the grizzled bark
to reveal me now, almost old,
at peace with so much about myself
and willing to strip to the skin
in a tiny room with four fully dressed people,
and lie on a gurney, and discuss options.

THE LAST BOX OF TAMPONS

BY JINN BUG

I am of the generation and a class
who blush to see cool blue liquid
super-absorbed by pure white dazzle on TV;
for thirty-one years I hid my monthly box
in a clutter of flowers, produce and meat
hoping no one would glimpse it.

If nothing else, I could play this for comedy:
I— who never cared to shop —
I— who never could do a thing with my hair —
stand paralyzed and exposed between
infant formula and adult briefs wondering
should I buy a last box of tampons.

Not “the” last box, oh no.
I have every confidence bounty continues to flow,
checked or unchecked, as it always has
but maybe elsewhere, maybe not here.

My membership to any group
belonging in this passageway has been revoked without warning,
just as my invitation arrived once, long ago,
with no fanfare and no comment.

And now, in the first week of my fiftieth year,
my hand hesitates again and again before the top shelf.
Money’s tight and \$7.79’s a meal. I should. I shouldn’t.
I’ll bleed. I won’t. Just-in-case vs. another-thing-you’ll-never-use.

Did you see me Wednesday, striding to the check-out lane,
my basket abandoned empty in the makeup aisle,
my hands stretched out before me bearing a sudden-holy relic,
this last box of tampons?

To hell with silence and shamefaced chuckling;
if I’m a crone now I will claim it.
I will make an altar of this package.
I will bow before it and I will spill my heart.
I will open as wide as I can. I will let it all flow out.
Do you see what I have here? It is my last box of tampons.

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS CURTSY

BY JANE EDBERG

At 62 invisible
my hips padded
knees leathered
I can roll my breasts up like a sleeping bag
photograph a section of my wrinkled hands next to fallen leaves
and no one can tell the difference
I might not recognize that face in the mirror
but I also don't care to
menopause is not a sad or funny hot flash
it is a ferocious inner muse
not a clamber to preserve youth
that loosing battle to smooth skin
I'd rather hold space for being
harness the authentic self
so I can sing however I want
improve my improv
part my long dried labia lips and curtsy.

MEDITATIONS ON MENOPAUSE

BY ALLENE NICHOLS

Meditation on Menopause I

I swing like a child from the wild blessing
to dislike,
adrift amid the boulders, once familiar,
now a distant mountain range
that bobs in and out of view
as my rough vessel nestles tight against the waves.
The moon, that steady friend
whose changing face has swayed my moods,
once commanded me, but now we end
our companionship, with great regard,
and the road I travel may bend
but the light is now within.

Meditation on Menopause II

I am more than the goddess,
that dear creature trapped
with her three faces, each one
immobilized by time.
My face shimmers
in a heat wave
and transforms moment
by moment
so that a butterfly net
can't capture me,
and neither can
your camera.
If you look closely, you'll see
that the heat wave is joy
and my body is the cocoon
for the butterfly.

Meditations on Menopause III

I'm not ready to be a teenager again,
to lose the steady ebb and flow

of thirty years of hormones,
to cry at coffee commercials
and despair over every outbreak
of my skin.

I'm not ready to lose
the predictable rhythm of my flow
and bear the sudden starts and stops
and the constant need to be prepared
like a good Girl Scout
following a river to its source.

But I've learned how to wait and watch,
how to put my heart on one side of the balance,
and my mind on the other,
and my hands firmly on the shoulders
of friends. The teenager couldn't see me
but I can still see her.

I believe I'm ready after all.

FOR THE YOUNG MAN UNIMPRESSED WITH THE SKY
BY KATHLEEN MCCLUNG

“It’s just the moon,” he shrugs, blasé, this teen.
His mother, stirred, like me, does not agree.
We strangers gaze, transfixed. The light turns green

as we step off the curb and walk between
these yellow lines. Familiar mystery:
it’s just the moon, of course, but full. We’ve seen

its sliver in the sky, known its routine
each month—a moving toward immensity.
We strangers gaze, in awe. The light turns green.

Sixth Avenue seems safe to cross—if screens
are off in every car. No guarantee.
It’s just the moon, just solstice. No machine

that waits for us to cross can ever mean
what full moon in a winter sky does: constancy.
We strangers gaze, grateful for light, for green,

for seasons, cycles, wheels that spin unseen
far longer than our brief mortality.
It’s just the moon. You’re right. You’re seventeen.
We strangers praise it, though. The light turns green.

WINTRY
BY KALI LIGHTFOOT

After "Snow" by Mary Ruefle

I have had neither snow nor sex in a very long time, though snow came more recently than the opportunity to be naked in another's arms; and I say *another* instead of woman because at this point it is silly to discriminate. Just as every snowflake is a different pattern and most are lovely, it seems that would also be true of a human wanting to have sex with me and me wanting to have sex with her or him but more with her. And birds, what about birds? Not to have sex with, but it has also been a very long time since I have seen any bird except a seagull scudding past my window or, when I'm in the car, occasionally a hawk making attentive circles above 95, hunting for less-than-obvious prey. Seeing a hawk makes me think of my vulnerable fleshy nakedness, even though at that moment of hurtling down the highway, I am surrounded by several thousand pounds of vehicle harder than a hawk's bill, and an appropriate amount of cotton. More than birds though, I would like there to be snow outside this third floor window flying on a northeast wind, and warm skin waiting in the next room to make love with me as soon as I finish typing these hard little letters.

RECIPE FOR CHANGE

BY LAURA TAYLOR

Take two over-ripe ovaries,
one weathered womb,
five consecutive nights of broken sleep
and enough perspiration to make a brand new ocean.
Congratulations – you are now a topographical feature
(or a gatefold concept prog-rock album).
Perhaps you could call that ocean The Sea of WhatTheActualHeck,
or for a more formal, though wildly optimistic, nomenclature:
The Sea of Opportunities.

Add The Sea of Opportunities to five loads of bedding
and mix well with an exhausted yawn.
Quickly add one ounce of oestrogen,
then remove from mixture.
Add another ounce of oestrogen
then extract double that amount.
You are now entering the Emotional Rollercoaster Zone.
Please do not fly off the handle or someone may get hurt.
Stew six pounds of self-esteem and set aside.
Pre-heat oven to Gas Mark Chernobyl.
Begin to wonder if it's hot in here or if it's just yo...
tear off top with all the elegance of a rampaging baby elephant.

Reapply apparel.
Dredge the flour of confusion over everyday tasks
and stare into middle distance.
Bring pan of baseless resentment to the boil
and simmer for one whole day.
If this process is disturbed, slam the door (repeatedly)
and sob one gallon of hot salt fury.
Check oven.
Is it hot in here?
Rip off frock in one demented dress-killing action.

Reapply attire.
If at this stage, the mixture seems a little dry,
and mortified, try not to cry.
Add water-based moisture.
Look for the self-esteem you set aside earlier.
Keep looking.
It must be *somewhere* for God's sake!
Check that bloody oven.

Wrestle aggressively with aggravating garb.
Open every single window. And door.
Ignore the cries of the weak.
They can put a bloody jumper on if they're *that* cold.

Consider giving up clothing once and for all.
Discard recipe.
Throw black cohosh, soy, red clover, sage, wild yam and St Johns Wort into the bin
and kick it hard to the corner for good measure.
Ring GP for HRT.

Delia can fuck off.

MY GENERATION'S SINS (A PENSÉE)
BY JOANNE KENNEDY FRAZER

Lament.
Gaia grieves death
of her one million species.
Don't bury findings of science
in your mind's hidden crypts.

APOTHEOSIS

BY KATE HUTCHINSON

Friends have finally forgotten to ask
if I'm seeing someone, letting go
their requirement that I must
pair off again or perish—
despite the times I've told them
that a night spent alone is not only
bearable but a joy – a peaceful
retreat from chaos and compromise.

I choose solitude because I can,
ever mindful of those who cannot—
for whom constant contact makes
jail cells of kitchens or bedrooms
and torture devices of TV remotes.
A quiet cup of coffee relished
with the daily paper brings to mind
past women who couldn't choose
to live alone without condemnation
to hovels, brothels, quarters for maids,
or the chaste blank walls of an abbey.

No, I'm not dating anyone this week
or next, or the whole coming year.
The petunias on the patio bloom
just for me. And when I view
the stars in the vast night sky,
they number into the thousands—
too many to suggest I must stay
inside any circle drawn by man.

SINGULARITY
BY OONAH V JOSLIN

They
give you
permission to
exist.

Identify
within the loop of their world
Function
within their arc of light

dissenters
infrared burned
ultraviolet black light
x-ray made bone

beyond
the rainbow
multitude of human kind
kindness ends

at
the
point
where band
width widens and
individuals dare to not give a damn
the spirit unshackled encompasses thoughts they cannot embrace

gifts
they will not
understand

BUFFALO NICKELS

BY KAREN WHITTINGTON NELSON

After They've all gone home,
her words grow sparse,
tarnish on the back of the tongue
like silver spoons put away damp.
Not so her thoughts, they flourish,
sprout like sunflower seeds
scattered beneath the bird feeder.

She tends them,
nurtures the wildings as they flower,
hoes between synapses,
harvests the most perfect and peculiar.
Pressed between hours,
stored in quiet, subdued moments
they mellow,
grow more precious-
like the buffalo nickels her father stashed away in mason jars.

When They telephone,
as They sometimes do, she feels unprepared,
as if a neighbor has knocked on her door at suppertime
and the only drumstick and potato lie upon her plate.

Her father was never caught up short.
In need of something special
he'd pull a rusted mason jar from the deep end of a cupboard,
line the kitchen table with yesterday's news,
fetch a hammer-
send silver buffalo stampeding from glass shards.

Now years puddle like worn stockings
around the dates on her kitchen calendar.
She and the elderly house breathe as one;
the curtains billow over the sills, back and forth,
her breath, in and out.
The grand wallpaper, faded to mellow, its loose strips
crinkled at the edges, like the corners of an aged smile.
The cellar's larder overflows with anticipation;
the damp walls signal it is time, lest the woman forgets-
time to peel away wax seals and tissue.

Unwrapped, exposed to light,
her thoughts are fresh as last night's gigged frog legs,
cleaned, left cooling in a pail of ice beside her mailbox,
waiting to jump down her throat and tickle her voice box-
a gift from the shy, half-wild neighbor boys who
keep their distance, wave from the lane should she be
slow to hear them coming- caught outside.

Surely you know? Thoughts don't keep forever.
She'll pull herself together, head out to the back porch steps,
rosin up her voice and holler into the woods, practice
what's been put off said. Satisfied, she'll wait and see
who comes 'round to decipher a crazy old lady's quaint tongue.

NEW YEAR'S
BY CHRISTINA LOVIN

I. Eve

I drive home from another dinner
alone, down roads whose twists
and turns I've learned by heart
over these unexpected single years.

But this year. This year has gutted me.
Sometimes an end like those ruined shells
cast along the two-lanes all summer long
would seem a blessing. When, turtle slow,
all you can do is close your eyes,
duck back into your own cave
of consciousness and fear, then keep on
clawing the rubble until you reach
the other side. Or you don't.

Now in the darkness I stop the car,
turn off the engine on this hardly more
than one lane country road. Where cars
and trucks pull far aside, tires caressing
grass, scraping by to pass with a rural wave
or a royal middle finger, I am alone.

Fence lines crowd the road with only
the narrowest of ditches between.
No room for buckets or trash, just gravel
that has washed clear in its uselessness.
No moon yet. Few stars. The closest
farm a mile away. Not a headlight in sight.
My car darker than the night around —
a darkness like the gentle shapes
of pastured animals, settled for impending
sleep, their restless breaths audible
in this otherwise silent night.

In the far distance a barnyard dog barks.
Another joins the clamor, but closer now.
Good or bad, something approaches.

II. Day

Black cows feed eagerly on hay
from past summers' fields, spread now
to appease their hunger. Where last night
they hunkered into their own bodies for warmth.
A newborn calf, out of season and
too far away from its mother bawls alone.

A flat wagon passes, laden late
with last harvest's tobacco stobs
fluttering those few worn out leaves
that still cling to the rough stems.
They will be cast in the fallow fields,
the last of their nutrients leaching
down into last year's sorry soil.

Down the road, a frozen farmer
bends again into his struggle
to rebuild and restore the old wall
that succumbs each winter to frost
heave and wind—stacking stones
unsteadily as an arthritic spine,
jagged rocks like broken teeth atop.

The sun hangs well above
the horizon at five this afternoon,
a fortnight beyond solstice.
Bare trees cast long shadows, it's true,
but our closest star still spreads her light,
although her rays slant sharply.

JAMMED
BY ANITA S. PULIER

I

Two blocks
 from the ocean,
vacant sidewalks,
 empty zebra crossings.
Growing old behind the wheel.

Jammed—
 so near the Pacific.
Idling metal
 spewing exhaust,
unable to reach you.

II

Consider abandoning
 the car, envious,
imagining you admiring
 the streaky sunset,
hearing the tides crash.

III

Texts appear, *where R U*,
 amid vibrations created by
basso drum beats escaping a neighboring car.

The sky darkens,
 I sway to the pulsing beat,
recall your awkwardness when we dance.

So many years together,
 still stepping on each others' toes.

VISITING THE HAG

BY KATHLEEN HAYES PHILLIPS

The creator deity, the old woman, the veiled one
of Celtic lore, lover of Manaan, god of the sea,

Hag of Beara, remembered as mother to generations
of kings. Legends say she challenged those who came
from afar, those who brought stories of a new god
and, mourning what was to be lost, stole their holy book,
running through dark-folded mountains
until reaching the sea where she was caught,
the book recovered . . . and she was turned to stone.

I knew of the legend and went to that place of bogs,
rocky shores, and mountains topped with mists rolling in
from the sea. I went to Beara to find the Hag,

found signs etched with her name, then a trail cut into
the side of a cliff. I wended my way around tumbled rock,
to a place so quiet you could hear only the waves
crashing below and the curlews crying above.

There she was, at the end of the trail, a pock-marked
outcropping covered with lichen. Some say they see her
long hair streaming in the wind as she watches for her lover.
Others find an old woman, enduring the harshness of life.
I saw the ending of a journey, one taken alone.

Atop the mottled surface were signs of others who came
to this remote place, tokens of remembrance and petition:
sea shells and paper hearts, pictures tied with ribbon,
and silver coins.

I placed my hand atop the hag's worn back and thought
of a life lived full, a story owned and honored,
and returned to the path,
my walking stick, now a pilgrim staff,
the way lined with golden gorse I had not seen before.

NEVER TOO LATE
BY AGNES VOJTA

Do not mock
the traveler who starts out late
on her journey. She carries
the burden of decades
and the weight of missed opportunities.

Her first step
is as significant as yours was,
but it costs her more courage
to challenge her beliefs
about who she is: it calls
her entire life into question,
and she wonders
whether it is already too late.

But do not pity her, either.
Cheer her on in her quest.
Tell her that growing
is brave and beautiful,
and that it is never
too late.

CONTRIBUTORS

Pamela Ahlen is program coordinator for Bookstock Literary Festival held each summer in Woodstock, Vermont. She organizes literary events for Osher (Lifelong Education at Dartmouth) and compiled and edited Osher's *Anthology of Poets and Writers: Celebrating Twenty-Five Years at Dartmouth*. Pam received an MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts and is the author of the chapbook, *Gather Every Little Thing* (Finishing Line Press).

Jessica Barksdale's fourteenth novel, *The Burning Hour*, was published in 2016. Her poetry collection *When We Almost Drowned* was published in March 2019 by Finishing Line Press. A Pushcart Prize and Best-of-the-Net nominee, her short stories, poems, and essays have appeared in or are forthcoming in the *Waccamaw Journal*, *Salt Hill Journal*, *Taboma Review*, and *So to Speak*. She is a Professor of English at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, California, and teaches novel writing online for UCLA Extension and in the online MFA program for Southern New Hampshire University.

Svea Barrett has taught English and Creative Writing at Northern Highlands Regional High School in New Jersey since 1986. Her chapbook, *Why I Collect Moose*, won the 2005 Poets Corner Press Poetry Chapbook Competition, and her book, *I Tell Random People About You*, won the Spire Press 2010 Poetry Book Award. Her work has appeared in *Samsara Quarterly*, *The Paterson Literary Review*, *The Journal of New Jersey Poets*, *LIPS*, *Caduceus*, *US 1 Worksheets*, *Ariel XXVII*, and other journals, and she tied for first place in the Allen Ginsberg Poetry contest in 2013.

A native New Yorker living in Rhode Island, **L. Shapley Bassen** was the First Place winner in the 2015 Austin Chronicle Short Story Contest for *Portrait of a Giant Squid*. She is a poetry/fiction reviewer for *The Rumpus*, Fiction Editor at craftliterary.com, four-time indie-published author of novel/story collections, and recently published the poetry collection, *What Suits a Nudist* (Clare Songbirds Publishing House). Find her on Facebook Author page: https://www.facebook.com/ShapleyLoisBassen/?modal=admin_todo_tour; LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lois-bassen-11482a5/>; or her website: <http://www.lsbassen.com/>.

Micki Blenkush lives in St. Cloud, Minnesota, and works as a social worker. She was selected as a 2017-2018 fellow in poetry for the Loft Literary Center's Mentor Series program and was a 2015 recipient of an Emerging Artist Grant awarded by the Central Minnesota Arts Board. Her writing has recently appeared in: *West Texas Review*, *The Fourth River*, *Postcard Poems and Prose*, *Metafore*, *The McNeese Review*, *Typishly*, *Cagibi*, and *Crab Creek Review*. More can be found here: mickiblenkush.com

Patricia Bollin's poetry has appeared in print and online publications including *Stirring: A Literary Collection*, *The Clackamas Review*, *The Fourth River*, *Tulane Review*, *Passager* and *Mezzo Cammin*. Her poems are included in the recently released anthology of Northwest Poets, *Footbridge Above the Falls*. She serves as board president of Soapstone, a small non-profit

dedicated to supporting women's writing. Patricia recently retired from working as Oregon State Program Officer with the national service program AmeriCorps.

Jinn Bug is a red-headed poet, visual artist and life-long dreamer. She was born in 1969 in Baltimore, Maryland and spent her childhood memorizing poems, testing the difference between lying and fiction. Her photography, vignettes and poems have appeared in *Appalachian Heritage*, *New Southerner*, *LEO Weekly*, *Fiolet e' Wing-- An Anthology of Domestic Fabulism*, *Aquillrelle*, *For Sale*, *Pure Uncut Candy*, *The Rooted Reader* and other print and virtual publications. She hopes her cronedom will bring silver hair, an even temper and kindness as her first response in every situation but, given the present state of affairs, she is doubtful.

Elizabeth Burk is a psychologist who divides her time between a practice in New York and a home in southwest Louisiana. She is the author of three collections: *Learning to Love Louisiana*, *Louisiana Purchase* and *Duet—Photographer and Poet*, a collaboration with her photographer husband. Her work has appeared in *Atlanta Review*, *Rattle*, *Calyx*, *The Southern Poetry Anthology*, *Spillway*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *New Madrid*, *Earth's Daughters*, *Nelle*, *Louisiana Literature*, *Passager* and elsewhere.

Jane Edberg is an exhibiting artist, photographer, jeweler, blogger, and retired art professor who has been teaching creatives for over 35 years. She currently leads creative writing groups, coaches writers, and is close to finishing her memoir, *The Fine Art of Grieving*, about processing loss through art-making.

Joanne Kennedy Frazer is a retired peace and justice director and educator for faith-based organizations. Penning poetry is the delight and vocation of her silvering years. Her work has appeared in several Old Mountain Press' anthologies, *Poetic Portions 2015* anthology, *Soul-lit Journal of Spiritual Poetry*, *Postcard Poems and Prose Magazine*, *Panoply Literary Zine*, *Snapdragon Journal*, *Whirlwind Magazine*, *Kakalak*, *Red Clay Review*, and her chapbook, *Being Kin* (2019). Five of her poems have been turned into a song cycle, titled *Resistance*, by composer Steven Luksan, and performed in Seattle and Durham. She lives in Durham, North Carolina.

Patricia Frolander, Wyoming's fifth Poet Laureate, lives in the Black Hills on her husband's fifth-generation ranch. She has garnered the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum's coveted Wrangler Award, Willa Cather Award and High Plains Book Awards among others. She is at work on her third collection of poems.

Claudia Geagan has aging degrees in English and Finance. She spent her working life in big corporations and big cities. She now lives, writes, enjoys golf, spinning and yoga on a leafy mountainside in South Carolina. Her work has appeared in *Adelaide Magazine*, *River Teeth's Beautiful Things*, *Persimmon Tree*, *The Louisville Review*, *The Lindenwood Review* and others.

Karen George is author of five chapbooks, and two poetry collections from Dos Madres Press: *Swim Your Way Back* (2014) and *A Map and One Year* (2018). She has appeared or is forthcoming in *South Dakota Review*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Adirondack Review*, *Louisville Review*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *SWWIM*, and *Still: The Journal*. She reviews poetry and interviews poets at Poetry Matters (<http://readwritepoetry.blogspot.com/>), is co-founder/fiction editor of

the online journal, *Waypoints* (<http://www.waypointsmag.com/>), and a Kentucky Foundation for Women and Kentucky Arts Council grant recipient. Visit her website, <https://karenlgeorge.blogspot.com/>.

Mare Heron Hake is an active poet and teacher in the Puget Sound Region of the Washington State. She is also the poetry editor, co-owner and co-publisher of *Tahoma Literary Review* and her work can be found in various venues.

Elisabeth Harrahy is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, where she teaches courses in ecology and conducts research on the effects of contaminants on aquatic ecosystems. In her spare time, she likes to drive her 1967 Plymouth Satellite hot rod and write poems and short stories. Her poems have appeared in *Journal of Gender and Cultural Critiques* (now called *Praxis: Journal of Gender and Cultural Critiques*), *Wisconsin People and Ideas*, *Bramble*, and *Blue Heron Review*.

B.J. (Jean) Helmer is a fourth-generation South Dakotan veteran of classrooms and pulpits. Her passion is preserving the daily-life experiences of folk from the Dakota foothills and high plains in verse and memoir. Thrice retired, she is a member of Belle Fourche Writers and Bearlodge Writers. She has been published most recently in *Oakwood 2019*, *Granite Island*, *Amber Sea*, and *Before the Amen*.

Mary Beth Hines is a writer following a long career as a project manager. An active participant in Boston-area workshops, her poetry has been published, or is forthcoming, in journals such as *Crab Orchard Review*, *Gyroscope Review*, *The Lake*, *Literary Mama*, and *Sky Island Journal*, among others.

Kate Hutchinson has just retired from a 34-year career of teaching English to high school students and has begun her next life's work as family caregiver and library volunteer. She's had two books of poetry published, *The Gray Limbo of Perhaps* in 2012 and *Map Making: Poems of Land and Identity* in 2015. Many of her poems and personal essays have also been published in journals and anthologies and won recognition, including two Pushcart nominations. PoetKateHutchinson.wordpress.com

Andrea Jackson's poetry and fiction recently appeared in *Star 82 (*82) Review*, *Eyedrum Periodically*, *Heron Tree*, *The Tishman Review*, *The Apple Valley Review*, *Gingerbread House*, and *Toe Good*. She has two Pushcart nominations and one nomination for the Best of the Net Anthology, and an MFA from the University of Missouri-St. Louis. She recently published, *Who Am I and Where Is Home? An American Woman in 1951 Palestine*, described by Small Press Bookwatch as, "an absolutely fascinating, deftly crafted read from cover to cover...an extraordinary, candid, engaging, account of an inherently interesting woman in an inherently interesting time."

Kim Jacobs-Beck is Professor of English at the University of Cincinnati Clermont College and is the publisher and editor-in-chief of Milk and Cake Press. Her poems have been published in *Apple Valley Review*, *SWWIM Every Day*, *roam literature*, *Peach Velvet Mag*, *Postcard Poems and Prose*, among others. She has reviewed poetry collections for *The Cortland Review*, *The*

Rumpus, Gigantic Sequins, Crab Creek Review, Los Angeles Review, VIDA, Drunk Monkeys, and drizzle review. A native of metro Detroit, she now lives in Ohio with her husband and three cats.

Born in Northern Ireland, **Oonah V Joslin** retired from teaching ten years ago. She writes mostly poetry and some micro-fiction and is widely published online. She is an editor at *The Linnet's Wings*. Her chapbook, *Three Pounds of Cells*, is available on Amazon. She was invited to read, "Almost on Brantwood Jetty," for the National Trust <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXkca9vcUyQ>

Diane Kendig's latest poetry collection is *Prison Terms*, and she recently co-edited the anthology, *In the Company of Russell Atkins*. The recipient of Ohio Arts Council Fellowships in Poetry and a Fulbright award in translation, she has published in journals such as *J Journal, Ekphrasis, and Under the Sun*. In 1984, she started the creative writing program at The University of Findlay, including a prison writing workshop. She currently lives in her childhood home in Ohio, blogging at *Home Again* and curating the Cuyahoga County Public Library website, *Read + Write: 50 Days of Poetry*, now in its sixth year.

Kit Kennedy serves as Poet in Residence at *San Francisco Bay Times* and Poet in Residence of her church. She has published six collections of poetry, and 2019 marks the tenth year of blogging (poetrybites.blogspot.com). She lives in Walnut Creek, California.

Tricia Knoll is 71 "and a half" as she started to tell some young men doing the heaviest work of gardening one August morning. Like four-year-olds, add the half as if it is an accomplishment. Her work appears widely in journals and anthologies, nationally and internationally. Her collection, *How I Learned To Be White*, received the 2018 Indie Book Award for Motivational Poetry. She recently moved to Vermont. Website: triciaknoll.com

Sandra Kohler's third collection of poems, *Improbable Music* (Word Press), appeared in May 2011. Earlier collections are *The Country of Women* (Calyx, 1995) and *The Ceremonies of Longing* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003). Her poems have appeared in journals, including *The New Republic, The Beloit Poetry Journal, Prairie Schooner*, and many others over the past 45 years. In 2018, a poem of hers was chosen to be part of Jenny Holzer's permanent installation at the new Comcast Technology Center in Philadelphia.

Charlene Langfur is an organic and a rescued dog advocate with many, many poems in print since the 1960s. She lives in the Sonora desert of California.

Kali Lightfoot lives in Salem, Massachusetts. Her poems and reviews of poetry books have appeared in several journals and anthologies, and been nominated twice for the Pushcart Prize. Her debut full-length collection is forthcoming from CavanKerry Press in 2021. Kali earned an MFA in Writing at Vermont College of Fine Arts. Find her at kali-lightfoot.com.

Christina Lovin's writing has appeared in over one hundred different literary journals and anthologies, as well as five volumes of poetry (*Echo, A Stirring in the Dark, Flesh, Little Fires, and What We Burned for Warmth*). She is the recipient of numerous poetry awards, writing residencies, fellowships, and grants, most notably the Al Smith Fellowship from Kentucky

Arts Council, Kentucky Foundation for Women Grant, and an Elizabeth George Foundation Grant.

Nancy McCabe's poetry, creative nonfiction, and fiction have appeared in many magazines and anthologies, most recently *Spillway*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *Southern Indiana Review*. She is the author of five books, including the novel *Following Disasters* (Outpost 19) and the hybrid memoir *From Little Houses to Little Women: Revisiting a Literary Childhood* (Missouri). Her work has received a Pushcart and made notable lists eight times in Best American anthologies.

Kathleen McClung's books include *The Typists Play Monopoly* (2018) and *Almost the Rowboat* (2013). A Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee whose poems have appeared widely, she is the winner of the Rita Dove, Morton Marr, Shirley McClure, and Maria W. Faust Poetry Prizes. McClung serves as sponsor-judge of the Soul-Making Keats literary competition sonnet category and teaches at Skyline College and The Writing Salon. In 2018-19 she is a writer-in-residence at Friends of the San Francisco Public Library. www.kathleenmcclung.com

Originally from New York, **Anne Myles** recently retired early from her position as an English professor at the University of Northern Iowa and has begun an MFA in poetry at the Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her work has appeared in *Lavender Review*, *Whale Road Review*, *Green Briar Review*, and a number of other journals. She lives alone with her cats and dog and is waiting to discover the rest of her life.

Linda Neal studied literature at Pomona College, married, had kids, then went on to earn a degree in linguistics and a master's degree in psychology. She's practiced psychotherapy and led meditation and writing groups for three decades. Her poems have appeared in numerous journals, including *Beecher's*, *LummoX*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Santa Fe Literary Journal*, *SLAB* and *Tampa Review*. Her first collection, *Dodge & Burn*, came out in 2014. She won third prize in Beyond Baroque foundation's poetry contest in 2016. Currently enrolled in an MFA Program in poetry at Pacific University, she expects to graduate while she's still in her 70's.

Karen Whittington Nelson graduated from Ohio University and has worked as both a registered nurse and public school educator. She has lived most of her life in Southeast Ohio. Karen performs her work with the juried Women of Appalachia Project, facilitates a writers' group and shares her work at venues throughout her rural community. Her fiction and poetry can be found in the *Women Speak* chapbooks, *Gyroscope Review*, *Pudding Magazine* and *Common Threads*. Karen is not quite ready to consider herself a crone in the truest sense of the title, but she's not above wielding its power to her advantage!

Allene Nichols lives in Dallas, Texas, where she works as the coordinator at a writing lab at Richland College and teaches writing at the University of Texas at Dallas. Her poetry has appeared in many journals and anthologies, including *Veils, Halos, and Shackles; Lifting the Sky, Southwestern Haiku and Haiga; and Impossible Archetype*. Her poem, "Queer Salt," was a 2017 winner of OUTSpoken's creative writing contest.

Karen Ostrov always knew she wanted to be a psychologist, art historian and a dancer. She's been doing all three. Then she got bitten by the poetry writing bug. Karen finds that writing gives her courage to keep on aging, knowing she has a friend in her own voice.

Kathleen Hayes Phillips started to write poetry 25 years ago. She lived in the country then. Now she lives and writes in a senior residence in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a great place for finding poetry. Katy is a member of Wisconsin Fellowship of Poetry, and Hartford Avenue Poets. Her work has been published in *Bards Against Hunger*, *Van Gogh Dreams*, *Ariel Anthology* and elsewhere. Her poetry has won the Gahagan Prize for Poetry at Irish Fest in Milwaukee. She is grateful for words . . . lots of words!

Anita S. Pulier is a graduate of New York University and New York Law School. After practicing law in New York and New Jersey, Anita served as a U. S. representative for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom at the United Nations. Anita's poems have appeared online, in anthologies and in print journals. Her book, *The Butcher's Diamond*, and her chapbooks *Perfect Diet*, *The Lovely Mundane*, and *Sounds of Morning* are published by Finishing Line Press.

Lois Roma-Deeley's fourth poetry collection, *The Short List of Certainties*, won the Jacopone da Todi Book Prize (2017). Her previous collections are *Rules of Hunger* (2004), *northSight* (2006) and *High Notes* (2010)--a Paterson Poetry Prize Finalist.. Her work is featured in numerous anthologies and journals including *Feminine Rising: Voices of Power e3 Invisibility*, *Quiddity*, *Zone 3*, *Spillway*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Water~Stone*, *Rust + Moth*, *Juke* (on line) and many more. Currently, Roma-Deeley is the Associate Editor of the international poetry journal *Presence*. www.loisroma-deeley.com

Penelope Scambly Schott is a past recipient of the Oregon Book Award for Poetry. Recent books include *House of the Cardamom Seed* and *November Quilt*.

Alison Stone has six full-length collections: *Caught in the Myth* (NYQ Books, 2019), *Dazzle* (Jacar Press, 2017), *Masterplan*, (collaborations with Eric Greinke) (Presa Press, 2018), *Ordinary Magic*, (NYQ Books, 2016), *Dangerous Enough* (Presa Press 2014), and *They Sing at Midnight*, which won the 2003 Many Mountains Moving Poetry Award. She also has three chapbooks. Her poems have appeared in *The Paris Review*, *Poetry*, *Ploughshares*, *Barrow Street*, *Poet Lore*, others. She was awarded Poetry's Frederick Bock Prize and New York Quarterly's Madeline Sadin Award. She also paints and created The Stone Tarot. www.stonepoetry.org
www.stonetarot.com

Teresa Sutton lives in Patterson, New York. Her third chapbook, *Breaking Newton's Laws*, won first place in the Encircle Publications 2017 Chapbook Contest. She has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Laura Taylor has published two full poetry collections with Flapjack Press, and is a regular performer at festivals, gigs and fundraisers. She is in her prime, but she's not exactly Miss Jean Brodie. <http://www.flapjackpress.co.uk/page32.htm>

Cynthia Trenshaw has served as a hospital chaplain and a midwife to the dying. For five years she provided skilled massage therapy and compassionate presence to homeless people in San Francisco. Her non-fiction book, *Meeting in the Margins* (She Writes Press, Berkeley), won the 2018 Independent Publisher Book Award gold medal in Social Issues. Her first book of poetry is *Mortal Beings* (Finishing Line Press, 2019). Her work has appeared in *Maine Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *Soundings Review*, and the 2016 anthology *In the Words of Womyn International*. She regularly posts essays at www.CynthiaTrenshaw.com.

Recent and upcoming journals that feature **Gail Tyson's** work include *Artemis*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *The Other Journal*, and *Still Point Arts Quarterly*. An alumna of Stanford's Creative Writing Program and the Dylan Thomas Summer School at the University of Wales, she has attended juried workshops at Colledgeville Institute, Looking Glass Rock Writers Conference, and Rivendell Writers Colony.

Agnes Vojta grew up in Germany and now lives in Rolla, Missouri, where she teaches physics at Missouri University of Science and Technology. She is the author of *Porous Land* (Spartan Press, 2019). Her poems recently appeared in *Nixes Mate Review*, *As It Ought To Be Magazine*, *Former People*, *Gasconade Review*, *Thimble Literary Magazine*, *Trailer Park Quarterly*, and elsewhere.

Lyndi Waters writes poetry. She is a Pushcart Prize nominee, winner of the 2019 Frank Nelson Doubleday Memorial Writing Award, the 2018 Eugene V. Shea National Poetry Contest, and the 2019 Wyoming Writers, Inc. free verse contest. Lyndi's poems have been published or are forthcoming in *The Owen Wister Review*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Picaroon Poetry*, *Unbroken Journal*, *Blood, Water, Wind*, and *Stone: An Anthology of Wyoming Writers* (Sastrugi Press, 2016,) *Troubadour* (Picaroon Poetry Press, U.K., 2017,) and others. She lives in Kaycee with a few chickens and an old bulldog.

Barbara Turney Wieland is a 50+ visual artist and poet who also dabbles in short story and began writing at 49, unable to put it off any longer. Her poems/stories have been published *Narrow Road*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *The Door is a Jar*, *Isacoustic*, *Petrichor*, *Crannòg*, *Lackingdon's Magazine* et al. She is a member of the Geneva Writer's Group. BTW is British, Australian and Swiss, currently traveling in search of a new vocation after successfully bringing up three fabulous children.

Erin Wilson's poems have appeared in or are forthcoming in *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Envoi*, *Kestrel*, *A Journal of Literature and Art*, *On the Seawall*, *The Honest Ulsterman*, *The Adirondack Review*, *Natural Bridge*, and elsewhere. She lives and writes in a small town in northern Ontario, Canada.

Susan Wismer is a poet who lives on the southern shore of Georgian Bay in Ontario, on Anishinaabe and Wendat traditional territories.

Andrena Zawinski's third and recently released full poetry collection is *Landings*. Her poems have received accolades for free verse, form, lyricism, spirituality, and social concern. She is Features Editor at PoetryMagazine.com and founded and runs the San Francisco Bay Area Women's Poetry Salon.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our next reading period begins on October 1, 2019, during which we will read submissions of previously unpublished contemporary poetry for our Winter 2020 issue. The winter issue comes out in January, so while we welcome wintry-themed pieces, please do not send winter holiday-themed (as in Christmas, Kwanzaa, etc.) poems.

All submissions must come through Submittable. Any submissions sent to us via email or any other method (don't even think about sending your work via drone, carrier pigeon, singing telegram, or other creative delivery systems) will not be considered. Please put your poems - no more than four - in one document, each poem on its own page.

More information is available in our guidelines (www.gyroskopereview.com/home/guidelines/). We also encourage you to look at past issues and become familiar with the kind of contemporary poetry we publish. New writers, old writers, established writers, and emerging writers all have a place among our pages.

Thank you for reading.