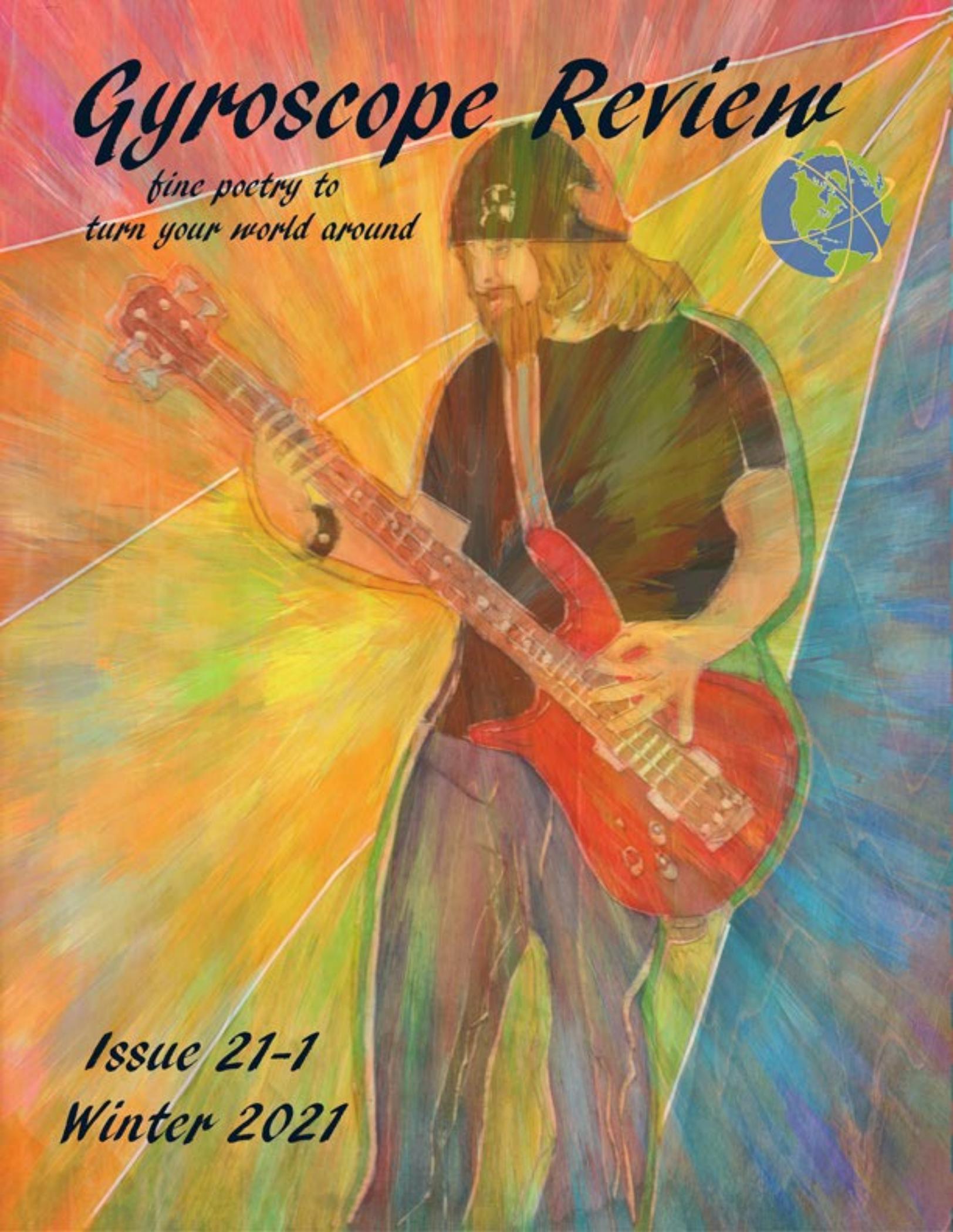


Gyroscope Review

*fine poetry to
turn your world around*



*Issue 21-1
Winter 2021*





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Winter 2021

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Constance Brewer

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Submissions: *Gyroscope Review* accepts previously unpublished contemporary poetry submissions through our online submissions system, gyroscopereview.submittable.com/submit.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

For further information, visit our website: gyroscopereview.com.

Editor:

Constance Brewer

Assistant Editors:

Elya Braden

Hanna Pachman

Logo design, interior design, layout, copyediting:

Constance Brewer

Social Media:

Constance Brewer

This issue's cover art:

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From the Editor

It's 2021 and we all feel as if we've been in a marathon wearing hip waders full of water. Yet we have hope this year is going to be better. Last year at this time Gyroscope Review added a new logo and a new Assistant Editor. While change is good, there have been enough upheavals in the world for the past 12 months. We aren't changing anything major at the moment. Let's just ease into the New Year and see how things go. But nothing is going to stop us from writing poems or doing the creative things that fuel the imagination. That kind of change we need. That change we depend on.

Reading the submissions for this issue, it struck me how many of the poems were anticipative, thoughtful, and attentive. Equally powerful were the poems that reflected on the year we had in 2020. We can't forget what happened over the year, nor should we, if only to try to make things better going forward. Sharp-edged or reflective, listen to the wisdom these poems communicate. I think 2021 will be a great year for poets, a continuation of the fantastic work we saw emerge in 2020.

We're gaining perspective on an awful year now, looking ahead, and mining words for futures to explore. What do you have to say? Your poetry is important. Don't believe no one listens. We're out here, waiting, wanting, and longing to experience your words. As you read the poems in the Winter 2021 Issue, let them sweep you up and carry you away. Some are gentle, some are fierce. All have something important to give and hope you pause to listen.

Rereading last year's Winter 2020 editorial, I found a line that sums up 2020, a bit prophetic, but none of the staff have taken up fortunetelling. Yet. "*Something is amiss, but we still have options.*" We have the option of a brighter future in 2021 if we have the courage to take it. Poets, continue to turn our world around, and as always, we hope you stay safe and healthy in the coming year.

Constance Brewer, Editor

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Winter 2021

Section One

SOLDIER

BY WILL NEUENFELDT

Man in folding chair
sits next to brother's headstone —
two beers, one empty.

BREAKING AND MENDING
BY DALE COTTINGHAM

Thank you local TV for reminding us
we live in a hell hole. But we've got
our own experience to tweeze out.
Does that make any sense? Don't things
sometimes swell and swell to a gargantuan point?

Once she read the text she couldn't go back to her place.
She called someone she knew. Then departed
town altogether without leaving a word.
We miss her, but silence after a while gets normal,
even becomes friendly as if a warm ocean
to bathe in, swim, even play around.
Aren't we all on our own time
no matter what the clock says.

Say I keep weaving language in my own messy way
for just these affairs, small advances
in specialized uses to bring out during the party
where no one will remember or care.
What essential difference will it make
except to me in the thrill of each crossing over?

They come at us from the oddest corners, these moments
when the sky seems familiar, when we think
we are mending and all will be well.
Other than that, it's the usual tens and fours.

ONSLAUGHT

BY LOIS LEVINSON

There's a red-tailed hawk perched on the tallest cottonwood,
silhouetted against the wind-scrubbed sky,
his roost exposed, the leaves torn off like tatters
of lives upended.

Once, we'd greet one another with laughter and hugs,
sit around the table drinking tea, sharing poems,
such simple joys as out of reach as a last leaf blown high
on a blast of winter.

Unworn clothes decompose in the closet.
Makeup dries up in its tiny containers.
Packages pile up on the doorstep.
No one's invited inside.

Pixelated surrogates materialize onscreen masquerading as us,
trapped in little Zoom boxes, flattened, dulled,
withered by isolation.

Pummeled without mercy by the onslaught of news,
we've weathered like winter trees
braced against the wind.

SINNER'S PRAYER

BY MARISSA GLOVER

God, grant me the resilience
of a wild squirrel who steals seed
from the squirrel-proof bird feeder,
hanging upside down on a wire
by only his toes as both hands shovel
food to mouth. Give me the audacity
of the sandhill crane stopping four
lanes of traffic, sauntering from golf
course to neighborhood, where he pecks
the parked car until the paint chips.

God, grant me the energy of ants
invading my kitchen, the endless work
of a thousand female bodies, constant
movement as they avoid traps
I've set by the stove, on the floor
at every door, and in the shower
where the caravans don't stop
their exercise from drain to window
from window to drain—even while
I'm washing—two lines in perpetual
motion nothing can exhaust.

Speaking of exhausted, God,
give me the patience of Mary,
mother of Jesus—the teenage boy
who intentionally got lost on family
vacation and wouldn't give his mom
a straight answer when she asked
why he would do such a thing. Yes,
make me patient like Mary, who managed
not to knock her son into the middle
of next week. Sweet Baby Jesus,

grant me the confidence
of a middle-aged man who read
half a Wikipedia article and watched
a video on YouTube and is now
preaching on Facebook, screeching
about free speech and wondering
why his posts keep getting flagged.
May I be as sure as he who knows
more than the rest of us—mere sheep
to the slaughter, we who are not hell-
bent but already burning.

QUEST

BY SHANNON CUTHBERT

There is a path you must follow
on your brother's borrowed bike.
It opens along the wide mouth of train tracks
passing through the dusty filter of this town.
It catches on the spikes of a fence
peeled back like junkyard jaws,
just wide enough to let in one so small.
You must pack no more than
a tuna fish sandwich, crusts trimmed off,
a soft peach to melt in your palm,
canteen of sweet tea and ice
that jingles a fistful of gems as you ride.
You will enter an unnatural wood,
full of strung lights, discarded lawn statues.
Faces to peer in your own,
search it like a lamp lit against sky.
You will not see the ogre until you are ready.
First, pass the graveyard, clogged with weeds
that tear at your wheels.
Here the spirits throw up pocks of chewed stone.
Here you dismount,
glide like a minnow through these waters,
strange and afraid, till you pause, whisper.
These the ones your mother read you,
sounding you to sleep of.
Through your voice feel the turning below you
of bodies like wheels,
of your grandma who once hummed
Countless bird calls into being.
She is here who hums through the earth,
hums with the thrush that calls ahead.
Pass the bridge beneath the highway,
older boys overhead, dangling arms down
like stalactites, their words
and darkness swallow the sound of you,
swallow your small legs speeding through,
carrying wind in one hand
You are gliding out the other side.
Safe, you must follow this path
till it crosses the spectacle of broken things,
tentacled sheds and spattered metal,
a small constellation of the lost.
Here, where men once bent their backs,
arched machines into gracious shapes,

filled a place in themselves
that has come and gone a million times.
Here, beware. Time is lost. Your own voice
may be lost and scattered here like a mirror fragment,
thrown so far across the gap.
Dismount again and climb
to the top of the pile,
use everything in you all at once,
the hole in you your mother filled
with story and song and the small lamp of you
flashing its light a mile out,
and throw your yell to the princess across.
She who has been displaced, stolen,
snatched by the ogre, or maybe his horse,
or maybe the trees with their twisted bark arms.
Or maybe she has chosen this,
reading a book in the quiet,
in the space forgotten by a town,
a small world neglected by all but the weeds.
Maybe she hears you, your tiny voice
expanding. She catches it, nods,
and you toss her the peach,
sit with your bike folded over in half between your knees,
catch your breath and unwrap your sandwich,
straddling two sides of a smiling gulf.

PRUNING THE PEACH TREE

BY SUDASI CLEMENT

The midwife offered to freeze my placenta.
Delicious, she said, sautéed with butter and onion.

I buried it and planted a peach tree. Making peaches
in the desert isn't easy, but this tree has for thirty years.

We're in The Change. I eke out an egg every season
or so. She puts forth a few misshapen blossoms,

a couple of stunted fruits. I'm sorry, I say,
as I remove dead wood to prevent disease.

We sit together for a while afterwards,
remind each other how beautiful we still are.

BOTANICA

BY SUSAN NOTAR

My cottage lies at the village edge
roof masked in moss.
From the ceiling beams hangs mugwort
to promote dreaming and divination
bundles of rosemary
to banish burglars.

In morning young women arrive
seeking love and children.
For them I provide patchouli and basil oil
for sensuality
lavender for calm
and to quell their impatience.

To the old I proffer
sage smoke for wisdom
willow bark for aching knees
turmeric for inflammation or cancer.

In the late afternoon
Melancholia arrives, as she often does
particularly when the mist is thick.
To her I offer yarrow
to regain composure.

Night brings the fox.
See his glinting eyes
his burnt umber coat
as he sits by my hearth
tells me his exploits
before he vanishes
like the smoke from my chimney
talking to the trees.

WINTER APPLES
BY DS MAOLALAI

what was best, I've decided,
was taking your coat off
that very first time
on that late afternoon,
and seeing
the deep grey
of turtleneck,
skinny as pencil-lead
and the body,
skinny under that.

and we had met in winter
and been about a little,
but always
outside, always
in the cold.
winter in Ontario
was best when it surprised you.

waking up some mornings
and the world
quiet as broken pianos,
or especially like that,
by packing
such a person
inside a coat
padded with goosefeathers.

certainly,
I was surprised.

apples in winter
are so often sour;
you grab one in a store
and settle home,
slipping on ice
and kicking up snow-water.
squirrels shivering on trees,
dogs shaking
walking through the park.

but you still
get home,
and take off your coat,
drop your bag.

then you sit down
turn on the radio
and eat the apple;
it's delicious, red
and juicy sweet.

YOU BURN ME UP

BY SHERRE VERNON

1.

If my neck is a tree & its rings the folding
map of my age, then I am glad to wear them
like scented bark, your fingers brailleing
my ridges from chin to sternum. It has been
so long since the forest of this body burned.
Can you smell my oldsmoke incense? Do I
taste like ashes, sizzle out like embers
under your tongue? O husband, my latesummer love,
my *right here*—How I must remind you: I am
the tree of unknowing, of loss.

2.

Or perhaps you are the needle & I am
the spinning vinyl, your touch a heartskip
song. Do you remember the beat & wail
of our young bodies, the cacophony
of new music? O husband, my Morphine
sax, my *any place but here*—when
did I become the perforated paper
in a player piano, the raised-skin
cylinder in an antique music box?

3.

There was a time when we vowed
to lock ourselves in eternal rings; but this
skin is a rainsoaked reed. It will bleed
new ink. I have railed these many years
against any hold you had over me—
from tender to tinderbox. Tell me, please—
O husband, my kindling flame, my
crumbling altar—even as burnt offering I am
not gone. Though I sway, I am trying
to remember what it is to become
undone. If you leave me, I will
parch myself. If you stay—What
bloom may rise from this: green,
& humming, reaching for the sun.

LONDON: VALID FOR PEAK
BY PHILIP ST. CLAIR

A woman in a pinstriped business suit sits opposite me
on a crowded train:
she's closed her eyes, she's folded her hands on her lap
as she's hurtled backwards
through the intermittent tunnels of soot-black stone
that lead to London.
Her mouth is set with the trace of a smile, and I wonder
if she's offering up
some sort of apology to the scruffy young man next to her
as she tunes him out,
or to the threadbare foxes that sometimes lope
along the tracks.
Perhaps she's trying to meditate, clearing her mind
of the thousand things
she carries with her to the end of the line at Charing Cross;
perhaps she's being pulled
inside that place where there is no time, rushing toward
her eternal now,
but since she seems so at ease in a morning commute
she might not feel
the need to get there. Just after a pause at Kidbrooke,
her head begins
a gentle nod: now she drifts along another path,
caught off guard by sleep.

1967 DETROIT UPRISING: A VIEW OF THE WOMEN OF 14TH AND WEST GRAND
BY PAUL DAVID ADKINS

Return with your shield, or on it!

That's how Spartan mothers cheered their warriors.

But these Women, they
advanced. They
flung bottles,
hurled bricks through glass.
Who do you think raised

all those 200-pound men
for 18 years?

All those men. Who raised them?

Who lifted the heft of their spirits
when they could not find a job?

Who bought specials from the butcher?

Who pushed children through the straits?

Who paid the bondsmen cash?

Their eyes beheld the glory
the foremothers warned them of.

Even in heels, in flats.

Within the waves of smoke,
beside the curls of midnight fire that was a beauty shop,
they threw down their lengthy shadows,

filled those shadows
with a man's world
and smelted themselves pure gold.

ON ELECTION DAY

BY KIMBERLY JARCHOW

my cat vomits for the first time in months. neon green bleached pure white, so the carpet won't forget the shape of today. there was never a worry of that. still i panic when filling in the ballot bubbles. nobody is perfect. it takes longer to order a Starbucks hot tea. the barista points to the faded sticker on his phone case. the check engine light blinks sheepishly as i drive home against dark clouds and windshield water droplets. nothing is ideal anymore. i forget to drink the tea, so i microwave it while buying holiday gifts. mother gets the ugly outdoor dinnerware set from her Amazon wishlist. my sister a makeup bundle she may never use. i find a thousand piece puzzle for my grandmother entitled *Joyspotting*. in a music video, Harry Styles dances with a fish. maybe we are drowning. i forget to drink the tea so i microwave it. the world stops smelling like gasoline for a moment. last friday i got a sunflower tattoo on my shoulder. a student emails me asking what time voting locations close. i wake up two hours late, and it doesn't make a difference. there never is a good time to rip off a bandage. in 2016 i wore a t-shirt from Target that said *party crasher* with the elephant and donkey in party colors. in 2016 i wasn't queer yet. in 2016 we got drunk and Quinn punched a wall. last night, when the dread set in, i picked out every rainbow piece of clothing i had. they all came from my partner's closet. on campus, color feels like a target. maybe we are dancing. *Walking On Sunshine* comes on my song shuffle twice. there is joy here, but it isn't alone. i tell my partner i love them. i check my email ten times. i chug lukewarm tea.

SONNET OF THE MAN WITHOUT A MASK
BY DAVID LEWITZKY

Get a load of this guy
Walking by the church and laundromat
Without a mask. What balls of brass
Felon spitting figs of phlegm

In your face flamingo, storking down the road
Defiant Godzilla, denying God and government
Breathing schmutz into the good clean air
He's killing us and he don't care

Teach this dude a lesson. Go ahead
Pistol whip his sorry butt. Scramble his eggs
Take his credit cards, his glitz and gelt
Strip away his alligator boots, his snake-skin belt

You can do it, Masked Man
You're The Lone Ranger

MY FATHER'S GRAVESTONE IS BUT A PILLOW
BY MARTINS DEEP

when the old man dims his lamp in the sky,
father's tombstone becomes a pillow,
& he sleepwalks towards me
in an aura the taste of ice.

memories herald him
to place empty bowls under my eyes —
milking it of smelted gold.

every time his scent wafts
through the evening air,
i know he is standing at my doorstep
waiting for graveclothes; failed poems on paper, & tear-dyed.

by mother's cooking fire,
he awaits berceuses from her mouth,
& fetches embers for my heart
on his bare palms.

HER SUFFERING

BY ELISE CHADWICK

how well they understood its human position

W. H. Auden, *Musee des Beaux Arts*

As much as the old masters knew
she knows more
about the solitude of suffering,
the way it encases you like a corset
ivory fingered whale bones pinching
'til the waspwaisted cincture
renders you breathless.

Pale and rail thin
except for the midline coil
of her feeding tube
auburn sweater a smidge darker
than her red hair
part halo, part goldilocks, still
she knows how to make an entrance.

We visit on lawn chairs
talking through labored speech
and a syringe of pain meds
about books and Netflix and current events
until she commands
with the laser focus
of a wild thing
tell me what's going on with you
and doesn't break the spell until
the litany has been invoked.

A master of misdirection
sleight of hand
and diversions so smooth
it is only hours later
in the looping playback of my mind
that I mourn my failure
to bend the beam inward
and illuminate the pulse
of her suffering.

MAKE-BELIEVE

BY NANCY BOTKIN

What I saw in a winter sky was not
the angelic order, but a tattered
handkerchief stretched above the playground.

When I opened the hymnal, the notes
were shaped like lemons, and what I heard
in the voices was silence, the aftermath
of a house blown open,
empty.

One year I knew beating wings, and in another
snapping bones.

What I took for guilt was just my hair
wet against the back of my neck
and anger was a gate unlatched and frozen.

Make-believe was like the tide washing up
with its scalloped edges, white like a cloud,
fluttering like a butterfly

or the hem of a little girl's dress
as she twirled and twirled.

ON SEEING DEATH IN THE LIVING ROOM

BY A. RABADUEX

duckling blood on the rug
and a downy body
yellow like daffodils, wilted
in the husky's mouth

this is the kind of hour
that creates the weight
of a manhole cover
which the boy will carry
onto the school bus
into cars and trains rolling over churning rivers
past fields of farro
into forests scorched by wildfires
there isn't a moment he will not feel its heaviness
the life he thought was his versus what he has seen—

breath isn't ours
none of it is
look at the fingers used to throw the skipping stones
the palms to grab the driftwood floating down river—these are not yours
the eyes which witnessed a hundred sky lanterns
like shooting stars in slow motion, caught in the net of the twilight
they are borrowed
I'm sorry.
that time hides under a leaf until the midday sun
I'm sorry.
that I pulled you from the sky
to feel what these bodies of earth and minds of mist must endure,
I'm sorry.
but then again, I'm not.
you are the center of gravity
the sun would have no fire
without the pull of you
flowers wouldn't sing to bees, birds would not make trails along the breeze
if you hadn't been brave enough to unpack your suitcase
inside four small chambers.
If I am but two winding strands of sugary thread, you are the next stitch.

Section Two

GRIEF BARGAIN AT SALMON CREEK

BY L KARDON

Never mind the gentle salt-air,
the click and clack of the seashell
wind-chime, the slanted sun.
Over there by the beached log,
the smooth, grey drift,
I sat for hours with pebbles in my fist

and imagined a slow necrosis,
a curling black rot
of your tiny, perfect toes.
I sifted the sand through
my hands. I sat with sirens—

the blaring kind, the racket.
All through the chap, the rip, of my
nipples. The boulders
at my breast; a brackish mix
of milk and terror.

When the tide came in,
I couldn't bear to think
of you suffering anymore—
so I made a little bargain,
over and over.

I sat for hours, on the beached log,
the smooth, grey drift,
thinking instead of all
the ways that *I* could die

and, oh, the soft relief,
the calm-sea stillness,
for a moment, in those
thoughts. Smooth in the palm
like an ocean-tumbled rock;
but heavy in the hand, in
the vigilant
knuckle clutch.

T'INT RIGHT, T'INT FAIR, T'INT FIT, T'INT PROPER
BY MARISSA GLOVER

There's a cliff in Cornwall
where people stand
to look across the sea
toward France. From windy
heights, they throw shells
or pebbles down to water
and make a wish.

Demelza pines for Ross
the way Poldark longs
for lady Elizabeth—
and in the end
we're all Warleggans,
greedily grasping for coins
already tossed to air.

Unanswered desire
burrows deep, makes us
sick with want. The splash
of dreams too faint
to hear. The plucked spring
squill and buttercup will
wither before we reach home.

EARLY IN THE MORNING
BY ANNA IDELEVICH

Early in the morning jelly smokes over the water,
put semolina and millet in the boiler
and make a dream in the ocean of love.

Your love.

Disheveled my braids,
braids, not just disgrace,
curls of curly house.

Will fall like a beam into a ditch,
will whisper to me, will embrace,
and the line will run.

He will press, he will kiss,
and I'm already a river...

NORTHERN FLICKER, MAEVE, READING
BY KEVIN MILLER

I press a flicker feather
at the chapter's end, its orange

side facing, like coals left alive
this place of pause and kept breath,

a grandfather dreams, muted-horn
rest stop, jazz between places,

a weathered milepost lists from
persistent southerlies, rain's

way with reading, its sideways
suggestion of motion and

order, beginning before
middle, middle before end

until this marker's cupped fire
beats with the heat of the child

who discovers her options
multiply when she refuses

and follows the light and fire
her wits and ways know true.

NIGHT FLIGHT

BY LORETTE C. LUZAJIC

Imagine, we were half bird. Our flight is fleeting, yes, but still we sometimes slipped into the sky. You are new to this world and don't know the half of it. Even so, you show us the way. How to slay the dragons, how to turn the page. We gnaw on plastic poultry legs and rubbery bananas and you fake punch a random price into a toy cash register, hold your grubby paw out for my pocketful of coins. I wouldn't have wished the world on you, but here you are. You have arrived, starry eyed and surprised. You have a blue-green bike and a matching bow in your hair. You love cucumbers and mangos and the frilliest pajamas. Every word is a victory and you're starting to string them together. We were dancing in our sock feet in your toy room, stripes and polka dots a blur in your swirl. If only we had more ice cream, you say when I pull out the goodnight story. You stall for time before lights out and I guess it's the same for all of us. *Lord, just one more year, just one more day, just one more hour.* But soon you are drifting through the clouds and I watch sleep soften your small face. The moon is your witness, I think, kissing you where she does on your dimple. I cover you in a thin sheet, watch your shifting shoulders, small wings dark as earth.

PATTERN IS PURPOSE

BY WILLIAM DORESKE

Watching Canada geese paddle
across the fly pond convinces me
that pattern is purpose. Why else
would the ripple of their wake

mime the wind-response of pines
and the shiver of naked lovers?
On this lithographed afternoon
the geese are unafraid of me,

but prefer the far shore where
there's no bench to seat me
for a Zen moment or two.
No reckless lovers, either,

although one drab evening I glimpsed
sleek bodies parsing each other
while trout bubbled up for mayflies.
The mind settles easily here —

the pond almost perfectly round,
the plantation of red pines planted
in strict ranks, the geese half-tame.
Centered in weight I distribute

through my carefully seated self,
I try to honor distinctions
among the non-human elements —
the geese, the water, the texture

although not the stance of the pines.
Only another human presence
could further refine this scenery.
But I always come here alone

to avoid startling even simple
life forms like trout and insects
and in winter the snow-ghosts
that glide so gently over the eye.

LOBSANG DZOGCHEN RINPOCHE HEARS THE SONG OF MILAREPA
BY JAMES K. ZIMMERMAN

The Mad Monk makes
the pilgrimage, barefoot,
to the Red City, the Sacred
Rainbow Lake, the Mystery
of White Light, sandals
clad in steel, slips them

on his hands, slides them
on the earth, prostrates
before the no-thingness
that awaits, swipes an arc
on barren ground with one
outstretched hand

to spare the lives of mites
and grubs that pay homage
to him, that might seek
warmth under his next
step on frigid soil, rises

to stand, prayer beads
draped across his arm
like memory, like song,
follows the path created
by a sandal-shod hand

kneels again,
 slides,
 swipes,
rises,
 walks,
 kneels,
 slides,
 swipes,
rises,
 walks,
 kneels

a parade of monks, nuns,
acolytes, and children
follows him, carrying
rice cakes and adoration,
hope and water, prayer
flags like spider webs

he teaches the secret
of heart-hot heat to keep
them warm enough to bear
the wind and cold

they know he is crazy
doing this but know he
has been crazy all along
to carry their lives with him

to the Red City, the Sacred
Rainbow Lake, the Mystery
of White Light, sandals
clad in steel, hundreds of
miles over stones and fear

they know the path is far
too long, they know some
of them will not survive,
they know it is many miles
deep in their bones, thousands
of miles away, and they know

it will take a lifetime to get there

HOURS OF MARY

BY TERESA SUTTON

Matins

Rising late again to compose
devotional texts in my head
to you, Mother.
These, I will recite eight times today.
A daughter's duty
grows as seasons pass.

Lauds

Mother of sorrows, cause of joy,
star of the sea,
steeped in morning light,
here are my gifts for you:
a tomato garden,
a patch of wild mint,
two grandchildren.

Vespers

The timbre of your voice floats
over the altar of open waters.
I call back to you and an audience
of seaweed torn by the surf.

Hymn

Wind rattles the window.
It whistles and vibrates
the glass.
I construe this sign
as your absolution.

Compline

Mother, I crown you queen,
Empress of this cosmos
of the dead.
I deliver to you this bed
of shadows,

peppery rocket greens,
and burning bushes
of pea pods.
I lug the little hours
into the next room,
beg you to protect me
against any darkness.

MOTHER

BY HELENE MACAULAY

At the lavender light she retires to her room
furnished with thrift and mementos
murmuring a susurrus narrative
in time with the others
Lurking, waiting...
Anchored to the floor
by leaden-soled slippers
lest she drift through the rose-scented walls

A blood-red sun sets over Erie
where the skeletons of steel mills now share the shore
with wind turbines and a half-finished bike path
One day soon we'll pedal all the way to Toledo
Across the road
the houses glow pink in the ripened dusk
and televisions flicker blue-hot flames
comforting the half-dead melted into threadbare chairs
awaiting release from indifference
while the dog next door
starved and anxious
howls along with the gales off the lake
that rattle the windows like
waves against a sea wall
In every room the clocks tick time in unison
with pulsating blood and nerves

A golden angel appears to her
puts her on hold for a moment
and patches her through to St. Francis
who informs her that the cats are happy in paradise
but I knew it already because we all saw
that robin dredged in a glittering of snow
perched fearless as we approached
and the pretty blue feather quivering in the dunes
on the way to Alamosa

The carpenter ants she equates with the plague
I wonder if they hear her radio
through the drywall like I do
or crawl through her drawers
where my gifts to her have been stored:
a silk scarf bought on a flight home from Paris
the amethyst ring I wrought decades ago
Both saved for an occasion that never arrived
a boomerang on the cusp of a rebound

a self-referential bequest

Church bells trigger a fog of memory
of a smoldering thurible in a long-ago mass
swung about by a phalanx of mitered holy men
smiting the gaping sins of the world
over at St. Christopher's on the boulevard
I've wasted so much time on bullshit since then
tainted water wrung from a filthy rag

Lawn sign platitudes won't save us now
nor hopeful words chalked on the drive
washed away like dust by overnight rains and
as futile as yesterday's party balloons
drifting across the primordial grass
dwindling over time
like daylight in winter

VIRAL LIFE CYCLE

BY PETER O'DONOVAN

"Indeed, for some RNA viruses, the viral genome can be considered to be a conductor that orchestrates processes in the infected cell." - K Andrew White.

a bird lands nearby and begins to trill
I rise and perform the usual rituals
submitting to this morning's messenger
with my routine of toiletries and toast
an inbox skimmed with automatic answers
another day coordinated with members
of this vast and intricate machinery

on the street I see perhaps the same bird
still singing insistently its firm phrase
a grey shape ill-formed in the distance
an asymmetric blotch bursting with a song
that digs into the mind and rings inside
like words of a dialect or an older tongue
that lies just at the edge of comprehension

I make my way deeper into the city
that seems filled with the melody now
a hum on my lips like an instrument strummed
by mists of grey birds covering the streets
their lull weaving into the rumble of trucks
conducting the flood of raw stuff to factories
that tower all around suddenly uncountable

at work I take my place on the wide line
and assemble those same grey shapes
transcribing the song into receptive flesh
the bodies spliced and stitched as quickly
as we can with fragments of city and self
familiar parts we all have to sacrifice
for that constant call of harmony

at the end of the day we rest and watch
our pieces collected then held up to feed
great spheres that float slowly to the heavens
shepherding our flocks of messengers
our small prophets of the song
heading in every direction
for all those flickering stars

ON REPTILES

BY STEPHEN GROUND

then it happened

I felt my brain evacuate my
skull quick & smooth like
twisted bowels with a snub-
nosed helping hand from a
cold friend, then fell deeply,
suddenly asleep for sixty - five
millions of years till my meat
melted away and I was strung
with wire & glue so lizards
could ogle me, brush my shoulders
& tibias & toes while flashlight - toting
tortoises half - snoozed, unaware.

SONNET PSALM OF A SENSITIVE PERSON
BY MIKE WILSON

Blend me into background like a house
with nobody home, and may they never see
curtains quiver at windows where I peek
at predators wearing deodorant and smiles.

Keep them leashed beyond lunging distance
make them think my tongue might be sharp
don't let them see their own incisors
mirrored in the soft pool of my eye.

Don't let their mouths water when they sniff
the copper scent of my open-heart surgery.
May the tunnel where I bolt close behind me
blocking claws that dig, and hungry snouts.

The very ones who lampoon delicacy will
gobble you up in a single thoughtless bite.

CHOW

BY JOSEPH S. PETE

In every war movie there's a scene where someone suddenly gets killed out of nowhere. In *The Kill Squad*, the sergeant lectures on, smiling and waving, all diplomatic and shit, about hearts and minds, and the importance of public relations during an indefinite occupation, before stepping on a hidden landmine and getting blown to fine powder and pink mist.

In real war, you're bored as hell for an indeterminate duration, lulled into complacency, then have to cope when a suicide bomber rips your chow hall tent asunder, when all the faux, simulated comfort of back home under tent transforms in an instant into an open-air mortuary of dark blood and brain splatter, when you're staggering around in the ringing and confusion, when you're choking convulsively on all the smoke and soot, when you're retching too violently to just die in peace.

PANDEMIC CENTO
BY KAREN GEORGE

Imagine a town
hiding in plain sight
the possible past
calendars of fire
keeping time
the undressing
mistaking each other for ghosts
see how we almost fly

The truth is
the carrying
human wishes
wider than the sky
render an apocalypse
no more milk
the myth of water
otherwise we are safe
though the word is a lie
secure your own mask
second skin

Leave here knowing
the birds of opulence
the girl with bees in her hair
in the house of wilderness
the forest of sure things
the apricot and the moon
gardening in the dark

~ Created from titles of poetry collections and novels by the following authors, in order of appearance: Barbara Sabol, Olivia Stiffler, Aislinn Hunter, Lee Sharkey, Carol Feiser Laque, Li-Young Lee, Lawrence Raab, Alison Luterman, Avery M. Guess, Ada Limón, Robert Hass, Nancy Chen Long, Rebecca Gayle Howell, Karen Craigo, Jeanie Thompson, Olivia Stiffler, Jill Kelly Koren, Shaindel Beers, Katerina Stoykova, Elizabeth Oakes, Crystal Wilkinson, Eleanor Rand Wilner, Charles Dodd White, Megan Snyder-Camp, Cathryn Essinger, Laura Kasischke.

TRAVELLING ON THE EXIT LINE
BY MANDY MACDONALD

at night in the rain streetlamps
are water-haloed where
the high road goes under the railway bridge

shop signs hurl splashes of
scarlet, radar green, ultramarine
at the windows of the slow train in which
you are fleeing her
not quite for your life

chequerboards of apartment windows
observe your jolting progress out
into the polite undulations of the homeless counties

you could look straight into those windows
but you know you would only see her image
in every lighted room, lined up
like those Andy Warhol prints
four by five, twenty of her at once

so you go back to your book
and don't look out

DURING COVID-19, WE RENTED AN RV TO MOVE FROM GA TO CO
BY KUO ZHANG

We wiped everything, though the RV company man
claimed he had thoroughly sanitized. Husband learned
many new RV vocabulary from him.

We loaded a queen-size mattress, all the kitchen stuff.
The aisle was clogged up with a Radio Flyer tricycle,
a ride-on tractor, and a baby bathtub.

On the first day, the made-in-Japan rice cooker
flew down from the table at a right angle turn,
almost hit Aiden's head.

On the second day, Aiden pooped in his potty on the aisle.
His brother cried loudly for the contaminated air.

On the third day, the campground smelled barbecue,
as we cook tomato and egg soup noodles.

On the fourth day, we drove west the whole day
with Kansas wind turbines and kowtow pumpjacks.

On the fifth day, we had to return the RV in Denver,
rented a mini-van, squeezed everything in,
blocked all the rearview mirror.

We drove 4 more hours west into the mountain,
arrived to where we're the only Asian family.

I gifted my neighbor a red box of tea
from my husband's hometown,
a place famous for tea in China.

She's happy. She said
she really loves Korean tea.

POLARITREE
BY KATHLEEN KLASSEN

They don't grow on trees
these left-justified
thought-fragments
left justifying

black on white
negative space
margins themselves
concrete abstraction

Branches drip with half
truths, low-lying
fruit,
'tho
trunk is
centrist. Growth
sprouts from its spine

Orchard left leaning
inclines
lopsided
like

the right hand of
God, who
ordains
rulers

While left-ists
elect leaders
liberal elite
Illogical

paradoxes like death
penalty pro-lifers
or Christians!
for Trump

Buzzing bee
pollinates

left or right

annoying
the shape of
truth, fertilizing off
to the side, as if roots didn't grow

 down
 from from
 the the
 middle middle

Section Three

SUNFLOWER IN WINTER

BY KAREN WHITTINGTON NELSON

The sunflower, alone in the winter garden,
stoop-shouldered, withered, frail—
a deposed pharaoh longing for the kiss of Ra,
denied the comfort of the tomb.

THE TIME BETWEEN

BY DEBBIE K. TRANTOW

Just off shore the bones of cone flowers
stand hollow against wind. The shrunken
heads that last year burst with purple
now brittle as memory. It is death
but not death, these desiccated
remnants holding the place of future
glow. They stand over the rose bush

that just now's acquired leaves
being buried for months under snow,
and I hope it's the same for the soul.

They tell me it is. Our dried out remains
just a place-holder, just a marker
for some future soaring,
some owning of the skies.

COVID BARBIE'S DREAMHOUSE

BY DAVID COLODNEY

– after Denise Duhamel

COVID Barbie wipes spit-up and drool from her *fashinista* dress before sprinting to the kitchen, smelling dinner burning on the stove. With baby in one hand, iPhone in the other, her days blend into a multitasking hodge-podge. Fashion dolls aren't supposed to have this much on their minds.

She coaxes the twins to finish their homework at the dining room table and she logs back in to work for a 4:30 meeting. She takes a moment to ask herself how she's coping. Mattel did not give her legs flexible enough for running through the house easily but was thoughtful enough to give her the ability to self-reflect.

With three stories and seven bedrooms, Barbie has a lot of ground to cover. Mattel added an elevator and smart TV with remote to entertain the kids when she needs to get some work done. KOVID Ken works from the garage, space available because the car was sold separately. He doesn't help with the kids, claiming he's busier working from home than he ever was at the office.

Some of his paint hair has rubbed off and he owns an extra ring around his midsection that Mattel added by equipping him with a pull-string gut that expands and contracts. He pretends to work but mostly mopes and searches porn. Barbie sometimes thinks she smells beer on his breath after lunch, but she doesn't say anything.

The quarantine couple breathes easier knowing the re-released Barbie's Dreamhouse has been updated for 2020 with tap water sanitizer and wall hooks for face masks. But she doesn't sleep well these days. Some nights she spends hours staring at the popcorn ceiling of her princess bedroom. Ken snoozes off his stupor but Barbie can't help thinking things were so much better when she could just stand in her cardboard box and gaze at the world from a toy store shelf through the kaleidoscope of a plastic shield.

NO HARM DONE

BY BRUCE ROBINSON

That's one way of putting it: no harm done.
The DVR left on at night, the Charger
idling at curbside or at the pick-up window,
the rodomontade of mowing machines

weaving on the neighbor's lawn, and then
on that neighbor's lawn and then
on the television, we've heard that
before, only yesterday, the dead vole

on the driveway, no explanation,
the chick that tried too soon
to leave its nest, goodnight
moon. Or the lines I left you with

last night careless
of an answer: no harm done.

TWO MEN STAND

BY KEVIN MILLER

—for Jim Bodeen and Bill Ransom

1.

Near the meadow two men clear a culvert,
 smoke from the Paisley
fire is a thin scarf on the pine, meadow
 grass a shade darker
than wind driven smoke, beside their white truck
 they are ghosts, shovels
raised like clam guns in offshore gray, diggers
 in the high desert
as if water flow were an issue that
 might surface from dreams.

2.

The resistance kindles a steady light,
 the silenced hold
their fire close, they honor intentions like
 vows at an altar
where god disappears in a cairn of spent
 shells. Vengeance is mine
says the misused book upside down or not.
 Hell fire is man made.
Sometimes the day's work requires belief in
 anything but man.

3.

No one discovers a way out, through is
 deceptive, escape
refuses to unpack, to reveal clean
 sheets and room service.
Wash away ocean towns stack gray wood,
 weathered bodies,
the salty smoke of beach fires, southerlies
 and rain, a salve soothes
and toughens, gray whale horizon has their
 backs, one more last stand.

IT'S ALWAYS HARD TO GET OUT OF BED

BY MARISSA GLOVER

the morning after a school shooting.
On the drive, the thirteen-year-old asks
why there are so many love bugs, why they kill
themselves on the windshield. He feels sorry
for the one just along for the ride, who never
sees what's coming. The ten-year-old wants
to know what she can put down to stop
Wall Breakers if she doesn't have a Skeleton
Army. In Clash Royale, players have options.
I wonder if I'll be able to wash off the bug
splatter before the acid eats away the paint.
I wonder what kind of mistake we make,
becoming mothers.

We feel like drivers for Uber Eats, delivering
children for the day to consume. We watch band
kids lug to class, newly suspicious. Yesterday,
the shooter hid his guns in a guitar case.
Judgement Day—a boy runs down halls, fleeing
the danger his mother warned him about.
But the Terminator protects John Connor
from Cyberdyne's T-1000. Schwarzenegger's
shotgun blooms from a box of roses. We pray
none of it's real—it's all special effects for ratings,
CGI or squib rigs. We pray for a Guardian, just in case
everything's real—make sure our kids aren't felled
by bullets or liquid metal arm-swords that pin people
to the wall like bugs.

POSTCARD FROM THE BATES MOTEL, 1960
BY MICHAEL BOCCARDO

Dearest Sam,

Have you known me to ever venture so far from home, instinct and a vacant sky my only guides? In my purse, the money burns hot as neon. Night rode beside me like a dark carnivorous bird. Tell me again the difference between a trap & a private island, between necessity & sacrifice. Fate chose the one that led me here—a single room rented from an owner who spoke of madness & hours so empty he fills them with sawdust & needles, thread suspending feathers into soundless flight. Crazy as it sounds, I doubt he'd even harm a fly. Unlike his mother—her tongue the shrill slash of a bow opening up the throats of a dozen violins. How can I not dwell on loneliness, why we isolate ourselves, confined by loyalty, obligation. Wait for me, won't you, darling? I recognize now what was never mine to keep. Still, I must rinse this day away, this private trap. Nothing, as you once said, a hot shower won't cure.

Forever yours,

Marion

TRYING TO READ IN THE CASTLE LIBRARY
BY SHYLA SHEHAN

I sit in an overstuffed reclining chair in the library
surrounded on two sides by built-in shelves
populated with books that are not mine
with bookends and candles and other odd trinkets.

There are windows on the other two walls
and a skylight overhead. The ceiling is painted sky blue
with clouds and a solitary bird—hovering.
My books are in cardboard boxes in the corner.

I turn on every light
to trick my body into daybreaking—
to feign a place warm and lush
where unripe fruits find their way to sweet and red.

Instead my mind is heavy
with the dampness of the drapes,
lulled into contemplation by the rain's tap-tap
on the skylight dark with overcast day.

The tapping turns into a code turns into a message.
*This place will never be the lamplit blanket fort
your books were so sure was home.
Don't fight it, just go.*

I curl myself into a ball
and open umbrellas
on the inside.

PERSONALIZATION PROGRAM

BY PETER O'DONOVAN

The call you got was hushed, just audible
but with a static almost lush, almost
murmuring to you, comforting voices
like parents talking in the other room,
soothing, calling you home as you lay there
for hours, so when it suddenly cuts
off, you're left withdrawn, a little more alone.

Next come the emails, anonymous arrows
enclosing strange shapes, dream-like imagery
with text beneath, obscure but absorbing,
and you read yourself in those strings of words,
your winding mind, your syntax uncertain,
as though your hidden worlds were being described,
all the parts that purpose, that justify.

You sense a stirring, just beyond the screen,
a machinery turning towards you,
categorizing your plans, modelling
your inner motions, reaching out to you,
deciding where you're going, what you're shown.
And yet, you're known as you've never been.
How easy to open, to let it in.

MIDNIGHT TRAIN ACROSS THE DESCHUTES
BY SUSAN NOTAR

Across the river
the midnight train is calling its mate
now on a parallel track in Kansas.

What happens to a goose
that loses its mate?
I see it swimming, fishing, alone
in the witch-green cold November algae.

Next week perhaps
the screech owl will fly low
the moon will become full
bringing high tides and mischief
arguments and fruitless passion.

I clasp and unclasp my hands
slip on and off
an engagement ring
I no longer wear.

In breath.
Out breath.

How much grief is sufficient?

ONE HAND CLAPPING

BY TRAVIS STEPHENS

I woke with a palm pressed to my face
chin cupped, fingers splayed
over lips, over nose & cheeks.
My palm.
The hand smelled of sleep after
a Negroni, of bad teeth &
time to get your ass up.
Maybe the dog woke me.
Or a dream of my father's hand;
wide fingered & nicotine,
a farmer's hand looking for something to do.
Somehow I inherited an affliction
where my little left finger has quit work.
It curls up like a sleeping puppy
ready to lead a fist or to
seek the pillow of my palm.
It has a name, this affliction, which
is a tightening of finger cords.
It is a gift from Northern Europeans,
mostly, sometimes called Viking finger.
Nose picker. Snot scratcher.
I woke reminded that I am a mutt of
poorly made pieces, not tall, not short,
not worth looking at twice. My kind
show up in newspapers in disaster sites—
car wrecks, barn fires, another business failing.
Among the handful of onlookers at
the scene of the crime.
We used to be numerous
we used to make a softball team.
Finger the ball, let Grandpa play.
This bed is as far from my childhood as possible.
Hand in hand walking the beach.
For the flight west & almost success,
give the guy a hand.

IMPECCABLE FLIGHT

BY CORDELIA HANEMANN

meditation on *the cloud of unknowing*

at the verge
 the very edge of the cliff
where everything has the feel
 of falling as though
the verge invites flight

the leap the letting go everything
 that fills the dark
the emptiness the very
 air with desire

don't look down if you do
 note the conjunction
of the two elements
 rock and air

stand on it breathe it in
 know you may belong
forever to the rock
 and air air and rock

the mind opens out the heart
 knowing and unknowing
reaching the impeccable darkness
 its silence its call
releasing into the sheer drop
 an updraft a cloud

what cannot be known

a bird's wing the rise of it
 the sheer miracle rising
in the air beside the rock
 not falling not imperiled
a miracle in a blue wind

pause in the moment
 watch the unfolding
of the wing of the two wings
 without thought feathers splayed
for flight prepared to catch
 the updraft to float
in the free wind everywhere

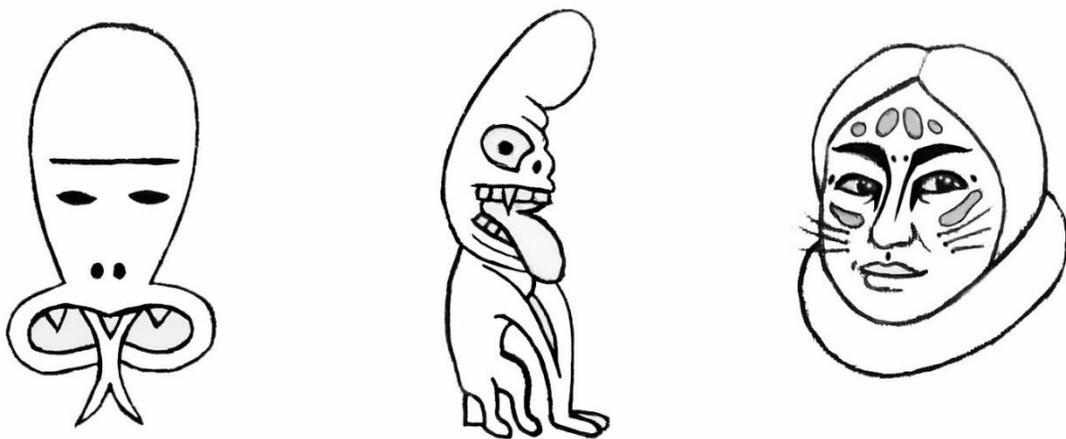
all at once

up and up a vertical desire
 a shape of its own design
a coursing a miracle
 in the blue wind
where you stand leaning
 outward from the brink

GIFTS WITHOUT WORDS

BY SUSAN MAXWELL CAMPBELL

you are the owl
and I am the night forest
it's not absence when you
turn your back silent
in daylight stillness
you say instead
it's meditation or rumination
or even digestion of the night
I've seen your pellets
counted the evidence
of your intense life
under your roost
and I've known
the powdery smell
of your wings
that you wrap around
your private turning
but I know
your favorite branch
tight to the trunk
near the crown
and how it fits
just under my left breast
over my heart
owl— come here
open your eyes
who you ask aloof and slow
yes you



TRIPTYCH: MY SHAMAN LOVER
BY JIMMY PAPPAS

Left Panel

My shaman lover wears a stone mask.
Those are slits that were his eyes.
He breathes through two small holes.
His fer-de-lance tongue pokes out from
a permanent scream. He is my mineral master.

Center Panel

When my lover travels out of his body,
he leaves an ivory *tupilak* carved from
the tooth of a sperm whale to prevent
intruders from entering my bed.
Tomorrow on the kitchen table,
I will find the result of his hunt.

Right Panel

Tonight I will glue cat whiskers
around my mouth, paint my face
with brown and yellow spots.
When my lover returns from his journey,
I will be his panther.

* Triptych Artwork by Clovis Schlumberger

VANISHING ACT

BY HOWARD FAERSTEIN

After the poem went absent
I reported it to the authorities

but nothing came of that—
fabrication is not our priority.

I'd lost it before though like my dog hungry
for a treat, it had always turned up.

When I gleaned a parsnip patch bordering
the river it stayed by my side

and seemed determined as I fell asleep,
yet like a dream, nothing remained at daybreak.

Now it was missing for a week, disappearing
in a fog of birds after a splash of rain.

I've lost arguments, my bearings,
other poems except

this one was different. Formed in a farmers' market,
held fast in wreaths of garlic,

it began with the thought
that barring life, everything lingers too long.

One stanza spoke of earth
after the last glaciation. Another,

sun's shadow piercing
rock when hanging moon hesitated

and deep sky caught fire.
One line referenced octopus
having three hearts, still another
the difference between candle & sheet ice.

The ending remained elusive
for it existed beyond time.

I've searched for signs—
a sound, a beat, a silence,

wondering if someone else took possession,

wondering if I might've done better by it.

This evening I thought I heard its bones
rattling, like cello strings bowed by tracers

but that was wind chimes, a raven's call,
only disembodied voices stirring in winter wind.

If it does resurface — its fugitive body
misshapen like the yard's fallen pine,

mulch now for the garden,
tinder for the burn —

will it offer rebuke
for not listening carefully enough

for not letting it
lead the dance?

ON READING THREE NEW BOOKS OF POETRY
BY CAROL TYX

It does no good to be jealous of these poems
how they glitter, each word a star perfectly placed
in the Milky Way,

the way they lift their arms like synchronized swimmers
the timing of each movement exact, yet fluid
kaleidoscopic

the way they move through weather patterns
sunny, partly cloudy, thunderstorm, light rain
all in a single page.

Your lexicon is not theirs, you hold your pencil
with a pressure all your own, drink different days and when
you can ease envy over to the side

you can be grateful someone built these poems
a house where you can find shelter.

IN INFINITY SPINNING

BY WILLIAM T BLACKBURN

In infinity spinning, rock around this celestial clock, passing time
Time goes by in linear fashion from A to B, traversing happenstance
Happenstance, by chance encounters, you and I at bus stop standing
Standing still life, fruit bowl rendered in acrylic and wall ensconced
Ensconced amid family photos age progressions as upstairs rising
Rising as bread baking, oven bound, creation of mother's hands
Hands raised, endeavored inquiry, some past participle dangling
Dangling carrot-like pole-end fishing lure, prize seeking 'neath waves
Waves of change ebb and flow constant inconstancy consistently
Consistently insistent pushing envelopes around this desktop stamped
Stamped and metered, saliva needing, licking ice cream closure
Closure at last, and understanding that we are all in infinity spinning

SHIFTING TOWARD LIGHT

BY MARTIN WILLITTS JR

In the darkness I had forgotten,
a catalog of stars trekked across empty acres.
In intervals of silence, creation is still building.

I hold my breath like a candle in the night.
An up-tempo breeze could make this world
all go away. Whatever falls might rebuild.

In the shift of seasons —
the births, the deaths, both unpredictable —
the darkness has forgotten me.

Someday, people will scatter out to the stars
and it won't be science fiction.
There might be places with heavy snows.

Someone might bring an envelope of seeds.
They might look back at this planet
They too might remember what they left behind

Today, the last yellow marigolds drooped,
and a gap formed in the universe.
In these silent intervals, seasons rebuild.

CONTRIBUTORS

Paul David Adkins lives in NY. In 2018, Lit Riot published his collection *Dispatches from the FOB*. Journal publications include *Pleiades*, *River Styx*, *Diode*, *Baltimore Review*, and *Whiskey River*. He has received one Best of the Net and six Pushcart nominations and the 2019 Central NY Book Award for Poetry.

Currently based in Ohio (USA), **William T Blackburn** struggles still to find his car keys. He holds a BA in English: Writing/Teaching and Music Composition from Westminster College. His work appears in *SCRAWL*, *Emerald Press*, *Route 7 Review*, *Edify Fiction*, *Weekly Degree*, *The Blue Mountain Review*, *a fws:journal of literature & art*, *Paragon Press*, *The Anti-Languorous Project*, *Contemporary Expressions*, *Soliloquies Anthology*, *Please See Me*, *The Rainbow Poems(UK)*, *AIPF Anthology*, and *Abstract Elephant*. He contributed to Adirondack Center for Writing: PoemVillage-2019 and 2020 & Response II, as well as Riza Press/Pen and & Pendulum "Giving" anthology. He is an Ageless Authors judge 2020.

Michael Boccardo's poems have appeared in various journals, including *Kestrel*, *storysouth*, *Connotation Press*, *Mid-American Review*, *Iron Horse*, *The Southern Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Nimrod*, *Cimarron Review*, and *Best New Poets*, as well as the anthologies "Spaces Between Us"; "Poetry, Prose, and Art on HIV/AIDS" and "Southern Poetry Anthology", VII: North Carolina. He is a four-time Pushcart Nominee and a finalist for the James Wright Poetry Award. He resides in High Point, NC, with three rambunctious tuxedo cats. Additional work can be found at www.michaelboccardo.com

Nancy Botkin's newest full-length collection of poems, *The Next Infinity*, was published by Broadstone Books in December 2019. Her poems have appeared in *Poetry East*, *Cimarron Review*, *Eclipse*, *Midwestern Gothic*, *The Laurel Review*, and many others. She lives and works on her art in South Bend, Indiana.

Susan Maxwell Campbell grew up in Dallas and is retired from teaching languages in public schools. Her principal activities are gardening, birdwatching, and singing. She has two degrees in French and a degree in creative writing from University of North Texas, where she received the University Writing Award for Graduate Poetry. Her poems have appeared in several publications. Read her works in "Anything You Ever Wanted to Know" (the 2015 book winner of Poetry Society of Texas); "Summer's Back"; the CD "Two Lilies" with Susan Vogel Taylor; and "Ping Pong Poems" with Christine Irving.

Elise Chadwick taught English at Horace Greeley High School in Chappaqua, NY for 30 years. She lives in upstate NY and spends weekends caring for her 200-year-old home coexisting with the deer, groundhog, fox, bats, rabbits and squirrels, who got there first. Her poems have been recently published in *The Paterson Literary Review* and *Muddy River Poetry Review*.

Sudasi Clement is the former poetry editor of *Santa Fe Literary Review* (2006-2016). Her work has recently appeared in *Rewilding: Poems for the Environment* (Split Rock Review & Flexible Press), *Main Street Rag*, *pacificREVIEW*, *FUNGI Magazine*, and *Loch Raven Review*. She is the author of a chapbook, "The Bones We Have in Common", published by Slipstream Press. Sudasi entered and won her first Poetry Slam in 2019 at the age of 57. She lives in Santa Fe, NM.

David Colodney is the author of the chapbook, *Mimeograph* (Finishing Line Press, 2020). A two-time Pushcart nominee, his poems have appeared in *South Carolina Review*, *Panoply*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Causeway Lit Mag*, and *The Chaffin Journal*, among others. David holds an MFA from Converse College, and lives in Boynton Beach, Florida, with his wife, three sons, and golden retriever.

Dale Cottingham has published poems and reviews of poetry collections in many journals. He won the 2019 New Millennium Award for Poem of the Year. He lives in Edmond, Oklahoma and works as a lawyer during the day.

Shannon Cuthbert is a writer and artist living in Brooklyn. Her poems have appeared in *Amethyst Review*, *Bangor Literary Review*, and *First Literary Review-East*, among others. Her work is forthcoming in *Dodging the Rain*, *Hamilton Stone Review*, *Déraciné Magazine*, and *Ink Sweat and Tears*, among others.

Martins Deep (he/him) is a Nigerian poet, artist, & currently a student of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. His work deeply explores the African experience. His creative works have appeared, or are forthcoming in *FIYAH*, *The Roadrunner Review*, *Covert Literary Magazine*, *Barren Magazine*, *The Hellebore*, *Chestnut Review*, *Mineral Lit Mag*, *Agbowó Magazine*, *Suburban Review*, *IceFloe Press*, *FERAL*, *Kalahari Review*, & elsewhere. He loves jazz, adores Bethel Music and fantasizes reincarnating as an owl. He tweets @martinsdeep1

William Doreski has published three critical studies and several collections of poetry. His work has appeared in many print and online journals. He has taught at Emerson College, Goddard College, Boston University, and Keene State College. His most recent book is "Stirring the Soup."

Howard Faerstein is the author of two chapbooks: "Play a Song on the Drums, he said" and "Out of Order" (Main Street Rag) and two full-length collections: "Dreaming of the Rain in Brooklyn" and "Googootz and Other Poems", both published by Press 53. His work can be found in *Great River Review*, *Nimrod*, *CutThroat*, *Off the Coast*, *Rattle, upstreet*, *Mudfish* and on-line in *Verse Daily*. He presently volunteers as a citizenship mentor at the Center for New Americans, and is co-poetry editor of *CutThroat, A Journal of the Arts*. He lives in Florence, MA.

Karen George is the author of five chapbooks, and two poetry collections from Dos Madres Press: "Swim Your Way Back" (2014) and "A Map and One Year" (2018). Her work has appeared in *Adirondack Review*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Salamander*, *Naugatuck River Review*, and *SWWIM*. She reviews poetry at Poetry Matters: <http://readwritepoetry.blogspot.com/>, and is co-founder and fiction editor of the online journal, Waypoints: <http://www.waypointsmag.com/>. Visit her website at: <https://karenlgeorge.blogspot.com/>.

Marissa Glover teaches writing, humanities, and public speaking courses at Saint Leo University. She is co-editor of *Orange Blossom Review* and a senior editor at *The Lascaux Review*. Her poetry recently appeared in *River Mouth Review*, *Middle House Review*, *The UCity Review*, and *HocTok Magazine*. Marissa's full-length poetry collection, "Let Go of the Hands You Hold," will be published by Mercer University Press in 2021. You can follow her on Twitter @_MarissaGlover_.

Stephen Ground graduated from York University in Toronto, then moved to a remote, isolated community in Saskatchewan's far north. He's since relocated to Winnipeg and co-founded Pearson House Films. His poems have appeared in *From Whispers to Roars*, *Back Patio Press*, *White Wall Review*, and elsewhere. Find more at stephenground.com.

Cordelia Hanemann is currently a practicing writer and artist in Raleigh, NC. She has published in numerous journals including *Gyroscope Review*, *Turtle Island Quarterly*, *Connecticut River Review*, *Dual Coast Magazine*, and *Laurel Review*; anthologies, "The Well-Versed Reader," "Heron Clan" and "Kakalak" and in her own chapbook, "Through a Glass Darkly." Her poem, "photo-op" was a finalist in the Poems of Resistance competition at Sable Press and her poem "Cezanne's Apples" was nominated for a Pushcart. Recently the featured poet for *Negative Capability Press* and *The Alexandria Quarterly*, she is now working on a novel.

Anna Idelevich is a scientist by profession, Ph.D., MBA, trained in the neuroscience field at Harvard University. She writes poetry for pleasure. Her books and poetry collections include "DNA of the Reversed River" and "Cryptopathos" published by the Liberty Publishing House, NY. Anna's poems were published by *Louisville Review* and *Fleur-de-Lis Press*, *Weasel Press*, *In Parenthesis*, and displayed at The McNay Art Museum, among others. We hope you will enjoy their melody, new linguistic tone, and a slight tint of an accent.

Kimberly Jarchow is a queer poet from the Southwest. Their poetry collection, "A Synonym For Home", was published by Atmosphere Press in 2020, and other work has been featured in *Awakenings* and *Storm of Blue Press*. They are an MFA candidate at Northern Arizona University where they are focusing on writing through a primarily queer lens in terms of the relationship with the self, the body, and spirituality. Jarchow is on the editorial staff of *Thin Air Magazine* and is a prominent organizer in the Flagstaff literary community, and in 2018 was the recipient of the Flagstaff Viola Award for Best Emerging Artist.

L Kardon has been writing poems since they were four years old. They reside in Philadelphia with their small child.

Kathleen Klassen is an emerging writer who discovered poetry as a source of healing after injury. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming on *Bywords.ca*, *Dots Publications*, *Rise Up Review*, *Anti-Heroine Chic*, *Dissident Voice*, *passagerbooks.com*, *Paper Dragon*, *In/Words Magazine and Press*, *Alternative Field*, and *ottawater*.

Lois Levinson is the author of *Before It All Vanishes*, a full-length book of poetry, and a chapbook, *Crane Dance*, both published by Finishing Line Press. Her poetry has appeared in *Global Poem*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, *The MacGuffin*, *Canary Journal*, *Cloudbank*, *Literary Mama* and other journals. She is a graduate of The Poetry Book Project at Lighthouse Writers Workshop in Denver, Colorado and is currently working on her second book.

David Lewitzky is an 80 y.o. retired social worker/family therapist living in Buffalo, New York who resumed writing poetry in 2002 after a 35-year hiatus. During that tongue-bit time he carried a sandwich board in his head declaring me: "Poet. Not writing!" Lewitzky has had about 125 poems published in a variety of litmags; most notably *Seneca Review*, *Nimrod*, and *Passages North*. He has work forthcoming in *Stillwater Review*, *La Presa*, and *Up The River* among others.

Lorette C. Luzajic is the author of five books of poetry, most recently *Pretty Time Machine*. Her creative writing has been published in several hundred literary journals in print and online, and at least a dozen anthologies. She has recently been nominated three times for Pushcart Prizes and twice for Best of the Net. Her story, "The Neon Raven", won first place at *MacQueen's Quinterly* in a recent contest. She is the editor of *The Ekphrastic Review*.

Helene Macaulay is an actor, writer, filmmaker and award winning fine art and documentary photographer living in the American Rust Belt.

Australian writer and musician **Mandy Macdonald** lives in Aberdeen, Scotland, trying to make sense of the 21st and other centuries. Her poems appear in anthologies from Arachne Press, Grey Hen Press, Luath Press, and others, and in many print and online journals in the UK and abroad, including *Rat's Ass Review*, *Ribbons* (Tanka Society of America), *Causeway/Cabhairs*, *The Curlew*, and *The Poets' Republic*. Her pamphlet *The Temperature of Blue* (bluesalt.co.uk) was published in pre-lockdown 2020. Mandy writes in the hope that poetry can change the world, even a little. When not writing, she sings and plays harpsichord.

DS Maolalai has been nominated eight times for Best of the Net and three times for the Pushcart Prize. His poetry has been released in two collections, "Love is Breaking Plates in the Garden" (Encircle Press, 2016) and "Sad Havoc Among the Birds" (Turas Press, 2019).

Kevin Miller's fourth collection *Vanish* received the Wandering Aengus Press Publication Award in 2019. Miller taught in the public schools of Washington State for thirty-nine years.

Will Neuenfeldt studied English at Gustavus Adolphus College and his poems will be published in *Red Flag Poetry* and *Freeze Ray*. He lives in Cottage Grove, MN home of Steven Stifler and a house Teddy Roosevelt slept in.

Susan Notar has flown over Iraq in helicopters wearing body armor and makes a mean burre blanc sauce. She gardens with abandon and believes in the healing properties of herbs. She loves dancing to Duke Ellington music in flapper dresses. Her work has appeared in a number of publications including *Antologia de Poemas*, *Alianza Latina*, *Written in Arlington*, *The Bridgewater Review*, *Joys of the Table: An Anthology of Culinary Verse*, *Penumbra*, and *Springtime in Winter: An Ekphrastic Study in Art, Poetry, and Music*. She works for the U.S. State Department helping vulnerable communities in the Middle East.

Peter O'Donovan is a scientist and writer living in Seattle, WA. Originally from the Canadian prairies, he received his doctorate from the University of Toronto, studying design aesthetics. His poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Typehouse Literary Magazine*, *River Heron Review*, *Qwerty*, *Phantom Drift*, among others.

Jimmy Pappas served during the Vietnam War teaching English to South Vietnamese soldiers in Saigon. He is the Vice President of the Poetry Society of New Hampshire. His poem "Bobby's Story" was one of ten finalists in the 2017 Rattle Poetry Contest and won the 2018 Readers Choice Award. It is included in his first book *Scream Wounds*, a collection of poems based on veterans' stories. He was a winner of the 2019 Rattle chapbook contest for *Falling off the Empire State Building*. His interview with Tim Green is on Rattlecast #34.

Triptych Artwork by Clovis Schlumberger:- Franco-American, he grew up in Los Angeles/California, drawing every day and animating small characters in stop motion. When he returned to France, he was admitted in the French school "Ecole des Beaux Arts of Paris", where he experimented with figuration and composition, surrounded by the ghosts of the magnificent Masters of the past. Paint is his primary medium for now, for its physicality and the deep sense of heritage it conveys. <https://clovischlum.wixsite.com/artist>

Joseph S. Pete is an award-winning journalist, the author of two local interest books, an Iraq War veteran, an Indiana University graduate, a book reviewer, and a frequent guest on Lakeshore Public Radio. He was named the poet laureate of Chicago BaconFest, a feat that Geoffrey Chaucer chump never accomplished. His work has appeared in *Indiana Voice Journal*, *Prairie Winds*, *The Grief Diaries*, *The Dime Store Review*, *The Five-Two*, *Chicago Literati*, *The Tipton Poetry Journal*, *Dogzplot*, *shufPoetry*, *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, *Pulp Modern*, *Zero Dark Thirty* and elsewhere. He once Googled the Iowa Writers' Workshop. True story, believe it or not.

A. Rabadux lives a provincial life with books, chickens, and her family in the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania. An Ohio native and Air Force veteran, she holds a B.A. and M.A. in English and teaches college writing courses.

Recent work by **Bruce Robinson** appears or is forthcoming in *Seventh Quarry*, *Pangyrus*, *Main Street Rag*, *Maintenant*, *Evening Street Review*, *Rattle*, and *Poets Reading the News*. He can be located at poetsbridge.org/manivelle

Shyla Shehan is an analytical Virgo who has spent the majority of her life in the Midwest. She holds an MFA in Writing from the University of Nebraska where she received an American Academy of Poets Prize in 2020. She lives in Omaha, Nebraska with her husband, children, and four wily cats. Shyla spends most days tending to a healthy household and is pleased with her role as Managing Editor for *The Good Life Review*. She enjoys gardening, road trips, blogging from her treadmill, and hunting for the perfect cheeseburger. All this and more at shylashehan.com.

Philip St. Clair has published nine collections of poetry, most recently "Red Cup, Green Lawn" (Main Street Rag, 2020). His awards include the Bullis Prize from *Poetry Northwest* and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Kentucky Arts Council. He has loaded aircraft in the Military Air Transport Service, tended bar in an Elks club, worked at the editor's trade (both in-house and freelance), and taught at Kent State University, Bowling Green State University, Southern Illinois University, and Ashland Community and Technical College. He lives with his wife Christina in Ashland, Kentucky.

Travis Stephens is a tugboat captain who resides with his family in California. A graduate of University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, recent credits include: *2River*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Hole in the Head Review*, *GRIFFEL*, and *The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*.

Teresa Sutton's third book, "Breaking Newton's Laws," won first place in the 2017 Encircle Poetry Chapbook Competition. The first poem in the book, "Dementia," was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. The last poem in the book, "Confiteor 2," won second place in the 2018 Luminaire Award for Best Poetry.

Debbie K. Trantow holds an MFA from the University of Minnesota. Her poems have been published in *Gertrude*, *North Coast Review*, *Fox Cry Review* and other literary magazines. Her chapbook, "Hearing Turtle's Words," was published by Spoon River Poetry Press. She contributed two researched encyclopedia entries to Greenwood Press's "Books and Beyond". After living most of her life in and near Chicago, she returned to her rural Wisconsin roots, where she finds her spirituality by engaging with nature. She's taught English at the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin. Currently she tutors troubled youth in Polk County, Wisconsin.

Carol Tyx lives in Iowa City, where she facilitates a prison book club, raises her voice in the community sing movement, and supports community-based agriculture. Her poetry has most recently been published in *Big Muddy*, *Caesura*, *Iowa City Poetry in Public*, and *Remaking Achilles: Slicing into Angola's History* with Hidden River Press. Currently Tyx is the artist-in-residence at Prairiewoods eco-spirituality center. She also makes a phenomenal strawberry rhubarb pie.

Sherre Vernon is an educator, a seeker of a mystical grammar, and a 2019 recipient of the Parent-Writer Fellowship at MVICW. She has two award-winning chapbooks: "Green Ink Wings" (prose) and "The Name is Perilous" (poetry). Readers describe Sherre's work as heartbreaking, richly layered, lyrical and intelligent. To read more of her work visit www.sherrevernon.com/publications and tag her into conversation @sherrevernon

Mike Wilson's work has appeared in magazines including *Cagibi Literary Journal*, *Stoneboat*, *The Aureorean*, and *The Ocotillo Review*, and in Mike's book, "Arranging Deck Chairs on the Titanic" (Rabbit House Press, 2020), political poetry for a post-truth world. Mike resides in Central Kentucky and can be found at mikewilsonwriter.com

Karen Whittington Nelson lives in rural Southeast Ohio on a small farm. She attended Ohio University and had careers in both nursing and teaching. Her most recent short story can be found in the "Anthology of Appalachian Writers", Crystal Wilkinson, Volume XII. New poetry is forthcoming in *Women Speak Volume 6*. Her poetry and prose appear in the *Women Speak Anthologies*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Pudding Magazine* and *Common Threads*.

Martin Willitts Jr, a *Comstock Review* editor, has 25 chapbooks including the Turtle Island Quarterly Editor's Choice Award, "The Wire Fence Holding Back the World" (Flowstone Press, 2017), plus 21 full-length collections including the Blue Light Award 2019, "The Temporary World." His forthcoming books include, "Harvest Time" (Deerbrook Press, 2021)

Kuo Zhang is a faculty member at Western Colorado University. She has a bilingual book of poetry in Chinese and English, *Broadleaves* (Shenyang Press). Her poem "One Child Policy" was awarded second place in the 2012 Society for Humanistic Anthropology [SHA] Poetry Competition held by the American Anthropology Association. She served as poetry & arts editor for the *Journal of Language & Literacy Education* in 2016-2017 and also one of the judges for 2015 & 2016 SHA Poetry Competition. Her poems have appeared in *The Roadrunner Review*, *Lily Poetry Review*, *Bone Bouquet*, *K'in*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, and *Anthropology and Humanism*.

James K. Zimmerman is an award-winning writer and frequent Pushcart Prize nominee. His work appears in *American Life in Poetry*, *Chautauqua*, *Nimrod*, *Pleiades*, *Salamander*, *The Carolina Review*, and *Vallum*, among others. He is the author of "Little Miracles" (Passager, 2015) and "Family Cookout" (Comstock, 2016), winner of the 2015 Jessie Bryce Niles Prize. He can be contacted through his website, <https://jameskzimmerman.net>.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

With the Spring 2021 Issue, Gyroscope Review celebrates its 6th Anniversary.

In honor of that, and the tumultuous year we had in 2020, including lockdowns and stay at home orders, we are calling for poems that speak of place. Write about your country, your state, your city, your street, the apartment building you live in, the bodega on the corner. We haven't been vacationing the past year, what can you tell us about *your* place that takes us there? We want to travel through your poems and get a glimpse of your little corner of the world. The issue will be taking regular submissions alongside Place submissions, but we hope you'll consider taking a shot at the theme.

Our next reading period begins on January 15, 2021, and closes March 15, 2021 or when the issue is full. During that time we will read submissions of previously unpublished contemporary poetry for our Spring 2021 issue. The Spring issue comes out in April, so we welcome spring-themed pieces. Please do not send summer/fall/winter poems. All submissions must come through Submittable. Any submissions sent to us via email or any other method will not be considered. (Submissions received with a free Corgi puppy will be given priority.)

Please put your poems—no more than FOUR—in one document, each poem on its own page. Title your document with Last Name, First Initial, and Spring 2021. Use the name you would like to appear in the journal in your bio. More information is available in our guidelines (www.gyroscopecoreview.com/guidelines/). We 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!