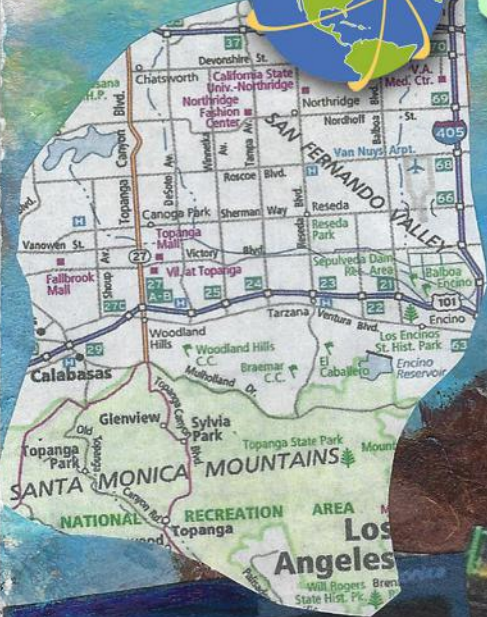


# Gyroscope Review

*fine poetry to turn your world around*



*Issue 21-2 Spring 2021*

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Issue 21-2  
Spring 2021

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Constance Brewer

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## **From The Editor**

Welcome back to spring, and the one-year (plus) anniversary of living with COVID 19. The good thing is we are starting to see a light at the end of a very dark and Wonka-esq tunnel. Poets have kept up with the good news, and there is a lighter feel to this issue's poems, while still tackling important topics.

This is the sixth anniversary of Gyroscope Review, and we are grateful for all the poets who allow us to publish their outstanding work four times a year. In some ways publishing during the pandemic is easier, with fewer distractions when it comes time to put the issue together. In other ways, it's been a struggle to connect with friends, poets, and editors. Zoom and social media to the rescue. Who'd have thought I'd be grateful for staring at my computer screen all day?

Our voluntary theme for Spring 2021 was Place. After being stuck at home for a year, I wanted to hear about places I haven't been to—yet. Or places I could go to in my mind or search out on Google Earth. Many poets responded with outstanding vignettes of the world around them, whether it was the city, a canoe on a lake, a beach, or a freeway exit, the poets in the Spring 2021 Issue took us on a trip and showed us the sights, sounds, and uncertainties lurking beneath the surface. A great deal of longing resonates in these poems. We all want to go back to our special places, the ones that live in our memories and burrow into our souls.

The wonderful cover artwork by Assistant Editor Elya Braden reflects where we are right now. Poised on the brink of reopening, studying our maps and brochures while we gaze longingly at the boardwalk, hoping the Ferris Wheel isn't symbolic of the future. We don't know what's coming next but if we keep our gaze on the blue skies and click our ruby slippers together three times, things will head back to normal. As normal as it's going to be from now on. As I write from a place as far from the big city as you can get, I'm grateful to our poets for touring me around their worlds and keeping my travel curiosity alive in these still wobbly times.

Constance Brewer, Editor

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# Section One





## DECOYS

BY JEN KARETNICK

Add a bobbing crocodile head to the pool,  
built from resin and venom, and it's  
checkmate to the family of raccoons who

dab their paws in the shallow ends  
every night, washing off their meal, and leave  
feces in their chlorinated wake.

Gardens require a different static threat.  
Here, a jaundice-eyed owl turns away  
insistent seed predators, fruit sneaks, and fence

jumpers whether sinister or simply hungry,  
keeping them circling in hunter-gatherer  
limbo. But at the marsh, with shotguns,

make sure to launch the plastic ducks in  
natural patterns that live birds will fall for,  
or ripple a pancake-slick pond with a

pull-string. No trick is too un-American or  
quaint to deploy: headless feeders,  
resters, duck butts. Spread them on the

surface with an eye toward the sky  
traffic that memorizes its flyways,  
underneath being just as important as the

visibility ahead. Foreign geese floaters  
will land some, too, as ducks lack  
xenophobia and other artificial boundaries

yet to be established, their fate to be both  
zeppelins and the bombs they carry in their bellies.

## AT YONKERS

BY MARION BROWN

From Lake Tear of the Clouds, the stream  
thickens to a river, nodding to Albany  
and the old capital Kingston, gathering  
toward heavy populations up ahead.

Its edge is sutured with railroad ties  
and leavings. Up and down, the river  
carries loads: heating oil and jet fuel,  
girders and containers filled

with excavators and tractors to heave  
the earth. When will the land lie?  
Banks that rise from the waterline  
bear the tracks on seamed arms,

warehouses and junkyards, clapboard  
homes of those who work. The Hudson butts  
Yonkers, its carpet mills, elevator works  
and sugar refinery closed; bricks set

against hills arch like dinosaur ribs,  
articulate, grim. Men and women who live  
in cratered streets take jobs in hospitals  
and nursing homes and smell piss all day

instead of acid or caramelized sugar.  
So the Hudson skims, with cold eyes,  
the undersides of bridges, the projects  
and left-over hopes of women and men

who came to make lives. Some moved  
on. Others stayed, in mansion, high-rise,  
or shack, staring at the river that barges  
their trash to sea. Beyond, river broadens

to harbor, floods the Hudson Canyon  
where mementos of cliff dwellers bob  
and float, petitions flung from heaped  
barges. Tugboats nudge, "Move along."

## NEW DELHI

BY SALLY SIMON

Curry and cardamom combine,  
a sea of cilia ripple the scent landing it full stop.  
Men with heads wrapped in tangerine and scarlet scarves  
offer Masala chai in miniature glasses  
as if they want to fill me with liquid spice,  
birth memories in me so I'll return,  
a swallow to a distant land.  
Hijab-cloaked women avoid my stare,  
reject my presence as if I'll rub off.  
Men sitting cross-legged hawk their wares,  
eyeing a lone woman wandering down dirt drenched alleys.  
Oxen plod on cobblestone,  
dragging wooden carts flowing with okra and onion,  
almond-skinned teenagers dance abreast to keep pace.

I watch women pray to elephant gods I do not know.  
I wonder how their breath can be my breath,  
their sky my sky.  
I want to press my palms together and mirror them,  
but my heaven is hollow.  
I want to saturate myself like a cloud,  
cradle the moisture before it morphs into rain.  
I am a drop of water clinging to a glass on a sultry summer day  
that lingers before it slides to the surface  
and makes a ring that someone wipes away.

## MEDIEVAL DREAM POEM

BY LOIS MARIE HARROD

In the middle of my middle age I awake  
to my sister telling me she wears  
her street clothes to bed, *What's the point,*  
she asks, *changing?* She's angry.  
Someone at the Senior Center  
has told her she smells like a dog.

In the middle of the bed I awake  
to my dog, wrapped in purple polyester  
that she does not shed. She's smelling  
of rancid mutton, which I don't like,  
not even those little lamb chops smothered  
in mint, *chop chop*, says Detective Frost.

In the middle of my mystery I awake  
to Detective Frost, my hand numb  
where I had grabbed the suspect's knife,  
clenched it as if my life depended on cutting  
off my fingers, and in that life, it did.

In the middle of my sullen art I awake  
to a knife slicing the Mona Lisa from her frame,  
worried as I roll it that the great cameras  
of the Louvre, all those pinholes into pictures  
will catch me at work and I will pull down  
my hood and hobble out.

In the middle of the night I wake  
to naked skin, and this time it is you  
touching me, gently, as I always wanted you to touch  
me. Nothing comes of it as nothing comes  
of most dreams, but you touched me.

## WINTER'S EDGE

BY KAREN PAUL HOLMES

—Michigan's state slogan was once *Water Winter Wonderland*

My husband and I stand on a winter dune, higher than the town's chimneys above Lake Michigan. White on white: snow on sand. The sapphire quelled at this distance, storm of summer tourists gone.

Our climb quick, urgent—prompted by cold and a craving for this view. A world dozing, snuffed in cotton.

Pines and waves stilled, lake frosted with icy meringue. We climb those peaks too—foam frozen in mid-crash, six-foot mounds. Opaque silver, clear aqua

like the surface of ice-giant Neptune, three billion miles from the sun that saves us in today's ten degrees. A meter beyond our feet slushy waters summon the nightmare: a slip, a plunge, body freezing on impact.

These glacial sculptures catch our breath—they form once every twenty years, if that—  
though we prefer Michigan in summer,  
where heat is fleeting,

where anyone who hasn't seen the Great Lakes can't fathom their ocean presence, body-crashing waves, sugar bottoms with quartz grains that glint around the feet even when neck deep.

Where the *SS Badger* takes six hours to cross from Ludington to Milwaukee. And much of the way, all you see is sky touching lake, the stern churning water white—like ice.

## MIDWEST LANDSCAPE: A QUESTION OF THE BODY

BY WILLIAM REICHARD

The soil there was primarily clay, sticky, slick. Harvesting carrots, radishes, beets, washing the clinging dirt away with icy well water. And the water, full of iron. So strong a single glass left the taste of metal in my mouth. Yet it didn't steel me against that hard life. The air there was filled with conflicting scents: fresh mown alfalfa against the stench of the stockyard next door; peony and piss; lilac and tractor exhaust. My blood was iron. My blood was smoke from the endless stream of cigarettes my family consumed. Cut me and a wisp of burnt tobacco drifted from the wound. My bones were trees: oak, silver maple, ash, boxelder. My hair, the weightless fluff from the cottonwood's seeds. My body, the flat land, the subtle hills that rolled from acre to acre. Frigid river water, the unseen undercurrent, the brackish pools near the shore, my nerves, spreading out in endless tributaries. What held me together: gravel roads and hot tar, snowdrifts and icicles, sheer will, dreams, confusion.

## ODE: TO MENISCUS

BY JUDITH H. MONTGOMERY

*Greek meniskos "lunar crescent"*

O marvelous meniscus, crescent moon plucked convex  
and concave out of starry dark, you enter every human body,  
dock and fender between hard-headed tibia and femur,

white shin- and thighbones as they tend to grind fierce  
and fine, gasping us to ground. Twinned and settling deep within  
each knee's will to swivel, you let us clamber down

from ancient arbor-homes, lope on grass-gleamed plains,  
ease past twist and grimace, migrate striding over Alp abyss.  
O paired gems, *meniscae*: faithful even torn and stitched,

still you lighten human ways and wanders. By stormy noon,  
by starless night, you float us, O best buffers, O supple  
and invisible arcs of moon-reflecting blessing.



## **BIRTHRIGHT**

BY DIANNE STEPP

*Isn't our family about the size of a band  
of Neanderthals, I say to Mike as we sit  
under the fig tree in our back yard  
sipping tea. I mean, instead of watching  
finches cluster like bees at our feeder,  
we could be watching a herd of bison  
grazing on the plain below our cave.  
And our grandkids, instead of playing  
soccer this afternoon at the local park,  
their eyes keener, legs thicker, chests  
barreled broader, stalk the beasts.*

Canny as a pack of wolves they shadow-slip  
between hooves and heaving flanks  
to cut one young bull from the herd.  
The oldest, playing mid-fielder, just as now,  
click-tongues signals to his cousins.  
Terrified, we watch as they leap in relays  
from rock or bush to harry the yearling  
to the blind where our son-in-law waits.  
Not holding a basting brush dripping fat  
as he did at the barbecue last week,  
but a fire-hardened spear he thrusts deep.

And our daughter, shorter and wider,  
long arms ribboned with muscle,  
pulls a knapped stone blade  
from a pouch at her waist,  
with one long slash, belly-cuts  
the dying beast. After all, knowledge  
is never truly extinguished, is it?  
She looks up from the bloody kill,  
gives us a wave. Above her wild  
matt of hair, she lofts the first  
steaming lobe of raw liver.  
Her face shines. Her breasts,  
slick with gore.

## PASSING

BY BETSY MARS

I stood with the commandments,  
followed them to the letter. I hid  
who I was—hitchhiked through churches  
looking for a handout of spirit,

a whiff of G-d riding on the swing  
of incense in a thurible,  
hiding the smoke of shoplifted cigarettes.

I kneeled at the altar of the toilet,  
trying to be thinner, to shed the weight  
of guilt, to blend in with all those sinners—

my lighter friends in their plaid skirts  
eating fish dinners on Fridays,  
handing over their wrongdoings  
in the Sunday confessional.

In my fourth-grade photo I wore two chains:  
a cross and a silver Star of David  
and believed I had it covered.

## HEADSTONE

BY MEGAN WILDHOOD

We are asked to peel potatoes.

We are told to put the skins,  
which my sister can produce in a single  
spiral strip, into a dented metal bowl  
between us.

We will save them for soup.  
I think. I do not think the popular thing is true;  
death is not "just a part of life."  
My sister finishes flaying her spuds, bounds off  
into the unmowed yard.

It is harder than that;  
It is not as if life and death amicably separated  
like an out-of-love couple so that they may find  
more satisfying companions.

Dad reaches inside for breath enough to call his youngest back  
but she's off into the hay, the tresses of what's left of the day's light,  
blonde like Mom was even up to this day last year.  
My sister will not remember. I will not outlive my grief.  
When Mom laughed, she laughed from her soul, they said.

I remember it like that now, growing in a room  
like the steam from her scrumptious kitchen magic.  
I will not outlive my grief.  
But maybe it is not impossible to live;  
extremes can exist back to back.

I give you the zebra, I give you sunset, I give you a naked potato  
clutched in accidentally sliced fingers. Dad is still looking into where  
his girl disappeared, past it now, to the yard of stones  
displaying summaries of entire lives. Death is apart from life, he whispers,  
grazing the pane with his fingertips. It will always be as hard as that.

## MONUMENT(S)

BY ASHLEY OAKES MARTIN

*Sphinx from 1923 Epic 'The Ten Commandments' Discovered In California Dunes*

*The Vintage News, 2017*

1.

*"Located beneath what locals describe as the dune that never moves"*

Some days I feel substantial, like a landmark in my body  
as though, disrobing before the shower, I have been  
delicately unearthed  
from the poly cotton blend of my nightdress  
I step into  
the plume of water that always runs too hot  
over my crooked, runner's toes whose callouses turn  
white and highly visible, I could be a sculpture  
like the ones men make of women

2.

*"So far liquor bottles, makeup and tobacco tins are the other items dug up"*

The park I walk my dogs in has been renamed: its founder is no longer anyone  
anyone under thirty has heard of as they are not familiar with that particular  
battle, the one once thought big enough to give this man a park  
for being in it. I think there is a fine for doing this but I let them  
off leash. The squirrels here have acorns in the pouches  
of their cheeks and I always intend to watch what they do with  
their provisions. I don't believe they really find them all but  
my dogs find skeletons and bird skulls, some with feathers still  
colorful they bring to me with their cautious and glove-like mouths

3.

*“Very intense pigment was used to make the sphinx in fact look gray”*

This morning workers unlock their lots and open storefronts. They are optimistic as sailors who think they are sighting land but find, counterfactual to all reports, more rivers. Like them I continue driving to your funeral. All twenty-six bones of my right foot step on the gas and I am there. At the front there is a photo of you taken by me. It took me hours to arrange your pixels now permanently smiling. I sign the book of condolences with the pen attached to its own marble base. I am counted as one who has been here

*For Linda*

## THE MOUNTAINS OUTSIDE MY WINDOW

BY JARED BELOFF

*Why do ghosts stay after they've died?*

My daughter asks my mother  
question after question, heedless  
of her grandmother's determination  
as she tries to turn back to the weave  
and patterns in front of them: *Look.*  
*See how the colors rest next to each other.*

An elder jade tree collects itself at the window.  
The fleshy red edges of its waxy leaves  
reveal the change in weather.  
The radiant heat of the sun  
disperses the band of mist that moves  
across the valley where this house rests.  
There is a shock of pine trees  
on the mountains out the window,  
bright green under the ridge line  
surrounded by the muted ruddy brown  
of bare branches now that the leaves have fallen.

I think of John Muir, his eyes blinded by industry,  
deciding to leave this settled life,  
if his vision returned, to write about trees  
older and larger than conception.

The trees on this side of the valley wear lichen  
like tattoo sleeves across their delicate arms  
two beings startled by hunger and stress,  
their pale entanglement the tender  
skin held under its bandage.

Our dog breathes her need in my ear.  
She looks out the window for the animals  
whose pellets and tracks betray them in the tall grass.

Upstairs, my father paces his worry

into remission. Blood mixes the dust  
between the floorboards, stretched and disjointed  
from warmth and wear. They groan and settle  
into place to give him away—

*What would you remember?* My mother  
places her hands over my daughter's,  
their fingers fanning to fill the spaces  
between unanswered questions.

*What would you forget?*

The broad face of the mountains  
outside the window look back.

*What would your unfinished business be?*

## **BREAKING DOWN AT CAPE NEDDICK**

BY LANETTE SWEENEY

Pebble Cove is a stretch of striped stones—  
what our beaches looked like eons ago  
before the endlessly patient waves stroked  
the rocks into soft, fine-grained submission.

Each stripe in each rock is made of the matter  
that makes us, matted down to a thin strip of  
circling color wrapped around a cold egg shape.  
Each a reminder of our place in the eternal

turning in the eras before commerce, before  
gathering, before fish, in the cold infinity in which  
there was rock and this water pulled up by the tireless  
moon, then cast out, a glittery net floating down.

The tide like a deep breath draws in slowly, sifts  
through its jewels, slides over whales and coral  
and seaweeds all waving, waving as the net drags by,  
settles to the bottom, pauses, turns, pulls back. Again.

My chest opens wide to hold the salt air.  
The steadfast waves rise up and slam down  
against the immutable rocks, foaming  
with frustration at all they haven't been able to break.



## SONG ALONG THE LAKESHORE

BY LOWELL JAEGER

Today, lingering along the bay shore  
amidst a jumble of drift logs,  
I listened  
to the calm waters lapping.

*O, Father, where are you  
now the blossoms set near your grave  
are gone?*

A man and a boy came oaring,  
oaring . . . in a yellow rowboat,  
the boy whistling a tune, familiar and strange,  
the father casting and reeling,  
casting and reeling.

*What can it mean, Father,  
now that mourners have returned  
to more common chores?*

I waved as they passed on,  
the man, the boy, the yellow boat.  
Passed on and beyond  
as if less than a whisper.

*The fish weren't having it that day,  
Father, remember? We lost the afternoon  
oaring, casting, reeling. Listening  
to the calm waters lapping.*

*Still . . . will you know him, Father,  
the boy, now a man,  
waving from the shore?*

**JUST AT CRICKET-TIME**

BY K ROBERTS

stepping onto the mud-path

like a tantrum-weary child

who is carried home

me drifting along

past a reasonable hour

a cricket sings low

invisibly

embracing

peace

inside

as if lifted

from a couch

the moon finds

the shoreline

of farmhouse lights

loss trails me

solitude is

that impossible

anywhere

## WINGS

BY GERMAN DARIO

mosquitoes from what is known  
are inelegant flyers but flyers they are  
even if  
in complete turbulent clumsiness

we only dream of flying  
while we survive always  
drunkenly touching ground

mosquito flight must be  
like swimming in the break  
or how one might navigate  
a mental health crisis  
scouring the dark for the sudden  
reassurance of a wall  
like wind lifting  
the underside of wings  
intermittently pushing torso level  
to catch a glimpse of the horizon

## MAGNOLIA

*after Ai*

BY TARA A. ELLIOTT

I want to dig into the rich earth  
& bury your smile.

All is clear now —  
the pollen washed away  
in last night's rain. It is late April,  
and already  
                    wasps  
have begun to show themselves.  
Corseted in black & yellow,  
they hover & they track.

My thumb still bears the scar  
from when I was seven —  
the stinger rooted deep in my knuckle  
until my father dug it out with the honed edge  
of his pocketknife.

                    It swelled for months  
as I picked & gnawed at the infection, my incisors  
ripping at the angry callused wound.  
I had to learn to leave it alone.

I once pointed out  
the precise shade of your eyes  
when dark clouds parted to reveal  
a skylight of cerulean blue. Your silence,  
the trilling of sparrows as they flit & furrow  
for scraps.

Soon the glossy fingers of the Magnolia  
will again clutch pure white flowers —  
each heady with citrus,  
each blooming with wasps.



# Section Two



## A PATH TO A CURE

BY NANCY BOTKIN

They're going fast, those pristine figurines,  
those white angels. The curve of a wing is a revelation.  
Who wouldn't want a cherub sitting on a smooth rock  
or wedged in the dirt? Those colorful windmills  
that mesmerize as they spin will be a nice distraction  
as the dog days approach, days without rain, days  
when sprinkling the lawn seems like an exercise  
in futility. Let's face facts: you won't be 20,000 feet  
in the air anytime soon unless you're the risk-taking  
type or loaded with antibodies, so the solid earth  
is here for you in ways that you've taken for granted.  
You must embrace opportunities since embracing others  
is frowned upon. But back to statues which are tumbling  
in many cities. You've heard Christopher Columbus  
bit the dust, dust being what we're made of  
and what swirls about the cosmos, but no one  
puts Christopher Columbus between the impatiens  
and the daylilies anyway. It's nice to know that the sky  
is there and that things grow underneath it. I'm working  
on the hypothesis that silence and marble and breath  
thundered together call up the low notes. You cannot  
tell me that wind sweeping over the grass is just wind  
and not a symphony, not art darkening the world.



## DETACHMENT

*after Dorianne Laux*

BY SHEI SANCHEZ

A lotus leaf in the rain. A deciduous tree  
in winter. And a faded photo of us

tucked between two leaves of a book  
I finished reading long ago. Free,

the dandelion clock, seeds parachuting,  
like smoke rings from the mouth

of a fire. Last fall's maple samaras, wings  
twirling earthward, until gravity and chance

take over. Forever ago, my feet landing  
on the sands of the Andaman Sea, the sunlint

a sign for things anew. Free, the waves moving  
beneath the surface, my hair, a comet's tail

in the wind. My eyes, forward. How long  
does it take to unclench the jaw

in your heart? To let drops of water wick  
away from your skin? How long before

you let go? Free, the passerines  
perched on the sun's hand, the afternoon

warmth from his fingers glowing  
on their feathers, their song swooping

to the forest floor, its fallen leaves burying  
burdens I am learning to shed. Freedom,

within reach, as I open my palm,  
waiting for the lotus to bloom.

## LAST TRIP HOME

BY ANNA S. ANDREWS

Take the second freeway exit, trash-strewn,  
right at the light, bridge under construction,  
past the gas station, newly renamed, and the 7-Eleven,  
still the same, a left down the hill,  
and I'm parking on roughed asphalt, welcomed  
by familiar yellow paint and darkened brick.  
The scent of pine carries me to the cool front porch,  
shaded as always. Inside, the furniture's gone.  
The walls bear ghost images, framed, like the marks  
on the rugs, wavering, like the water stains  
flowing down the stairwell wall, the house strange  
and distant, a faded shell. Yet, memory restores a sofa,  
portraits, the sharp corner of a dining room table  
too long for its space, a tarnished tea service,  
dusty knit doilies, and a tan phone on the wall,  
ringing, over scraps of paper in a dish with a pen,  
should I answer? Through the glass, gauzy, grandma's roses  
stand sentinel in their neat rows, heads tilted toward me,  
do they hear? Awaiting shears, the brightest  
still preening in a vase on the kitchen counter,  
eggs sizzling, grandpa working the crossword,  
and still, the phone ringing. I answer,  
holding it high so all can see, the whole house  
weeping with me, as I turn, an old dog barking  
weakly at the gate, wind chimes crooning,  
and a realtor, slipping silent out the back.

## UNEASY PEACE

BY JULIE L. MOORE

*I almost like Indiana today*, I tell my daughter  
on Christmas, while we sit outside in super-  
natural sunshine blaring

60-degree heat that pinks our cheeks,  
zephyr wafting through the pines,  
lulling us with its soft song.

It's been five years since my divorce,  
three since moving here,  
trading in a place of constant conflict

for a state of uneasy peace,  
one Midwestern home for another.  
Beneath this sky the hue of Marian blue,

my Lab bathes her golden fur in light,  
snoozing on grass gleaming  
not with silver snow like days ago

but spectral tints of daffodil and forsythia.  
In the distance, hunters' shots knock  
on the afternoon's door like un-

welcome guests sent to remind us  
of our flaws, triggering the knots  
in Ashley's body that've disabled her

all autumn long. She is ready to practice  
law, to defend the accused of what they did  
or didn't do, to wrench just

mercies from the only system  
in this imperfect union. Pain  
hems her in. No cure's in sight.

So here we are, weary of waiting,  
longing for good news, when my dog  
bursts forth in frenetic circles,

swinging her Frisbee from her mouth,  
her spirit bejeweled with bliss,  
going nowhere and everywhere at once,

ignorant of disease and death,  
fearing absolutely nothing, though more bangs  
clang beyond the fence.

## **BROKEN THINGS**

BY ROSIE PROHÍAS DRISCOLL

Pouring water into the coffee maker, my hand slips and knocks the mug to the floor. Time slows as I watch it fall and hit the unforgiving tile—the handle first to break off, then crack in half as the rim shatters into jagged pieces at my feet. My favorite mug, the first one I brought home from The Dancing Turtle near the end of the road on Hatteras Island. The first one I reach for blindly every morning seeking comfort in the way it nestles into my fingers curled around the North Carolina clay, thrown by someone who loved it to life and purpose, tinted in shades of mossy green and dusty rose, passing love forward to my hands that cradle hope as I sip, and inhale coffee, and salty breezes blowing in from the Atlantic, and my little girls' voices rising above the music of lapping waves as they gather shells, and their father rejoicing in the fresh catch of marlin and wahoo he tosses on the hot grill, and the flutter of plover wings escaping our greyhounds' enthusiastic attempts to catch the little birds in flight.

The scent of a time before I learned that love is as fragile as fired clay, so easily broken into shards scattered on the kitchen floor.

## FORTUNE

BY SARAH CARLETON

At a traffic light west of Ybor City,  
I gave a guy my leftover pizza  
and a cold, unopened bottle of water.  
He handed me a cardboard sign with “Hungry”  
on one side and “Lucky” on the other.

After that, lost objects reappeared like hat rabbits:  
mandolin picks came home wrapped in ravioli,  
and I pulled a tin-whistle mouthpiece from the pocket  
of a stilts walker at Busch Gardens.

Carabiners turned up hung on the necks of roosters  
who strutted through neighborhoods to deliver them to me,  
thereby answering the age-old question  
of why the chicken crossed the road —

a discovery that sent the academic and comedic  
worlds into a tizzy. Now I keep busy with paid appearances  
at packed venues. My frequent Ted talks  
address myriad issues of fowl and fortune.

I tell people the trick is not to push it.  
If your fish wife says go back and wish to be king,  
ignore her. Keep giving dollar bills  
to the beggar on the corner.  
You’re never off the hook.

## NEVER CAN SAY GOODBYE

BY JANE SNYDER

It was me who took the bucket of industrial grease from behind the Burger King  
and poured it on your lawn,  
where it left the slick brown circle that will never leave.

The subscriptions to *Let's Knit*, *American Rifleman*,  
*Poultry World*, and *Hustler* were from me.  
The bills will come later.

Soon, at work, you'll receive a handsomely wrapped box  
of feces.  
Mine.

Making you picture me at stool, straining,  
my right hand under my bottom holding open the plastic bag.

Intimate.  
We're intimate still.

## THE MUMMY

BY ALLISON GOLDSTEIN

*A prophecy*, he said  
like a promise

hands tied in knots  
chest an empty bellow

Whose fault is it anyway,  
this endless sleepwalking?

I never believed in curses  
until I met you



## REMAINDER

BY MEGAN WILDHOOD

*Heaven and earth will pass away...No one knows about that day or hour,  
not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*

*~Matthew 24:35-36*

The Jewish uprising against the Romans  
in 70 AD: the final end-time battle.  
Coins were minted. The world remained.  
A French bishop announced the end

of the world in 365. The world remained.  
Three learned men said, no, the year 500  
will be the last because of the dimensions of Noah's Ark.  
Pope Innocent III: the world will end 666 years

after the rise of Islam. After their leader's 1260  
prediction failed, the followers of Joachim of Fiore  
rescheduled the end of the world to 1290  
and then again to 1335. The world remained.

1346-1351: Black Plague: end of the world for many.  
Some people who were alive around 1439 thought the world  
would end. Hand-wringing: now that people no longer had  
to remember anything, now that everything could be written

down, what will become of everything we love?  
People feared books would destroy culture.  
The world filled with tomes and remained.  
Now imagine a democracy without a free press.

A Puritan minister declared the end three times,  
starting in 1697. John Wesley said anytime between  
1058 and 1836. Rural farmer and Baptist preacher  
William Miller promised The End in 1844.

The world remained and everyone was disappointed.  
The Catholic Apostolic Church, founded 1831,  
couldn't give an exact date for Jesus'  
return, just that it would be when the last

of its founding members died, which was 1901.  
1939 turned out to be a good candidate for the end.  
The world remained.

Jim Jones saw visions of a nuclear holocaust  
occurring in 1967, which the current  
administration says you can survive.

"You can live in remains," they mean.  
A doctor of natural medicine and founder  
of a Ba'hai sect: Haley's Comet will obliterate

Earth in April 1986. The world remained. His friend:  
a series of disconfirmed prophecies that would lead,  
step by step, to the apocalypse. Also: Middle

Eastern terrorists would attack New York  
with nuclear bombs. The world remains.  
A quatrain by Nostradamus, who survived

the Plague, says the "King of Terror" will  
come from the sky "in 1999 and seven months."

Y2K. 2012. Some think 2016.  
Some 2020. Some think the Internet

will yet destroy everything.  
The world remains.

The world remained. The world remains.

## FLIGHT TO OLD EUROPE

BY PSYCHE NORTH TOROK

Let me go back  
and live with you, I cried  
    beneath the beat of drums.  
In the old cottage  
her voice drifted as if  
    one of us were drowning.  
My mind was numb from  
conjuring memory.

    There were thatched roofs  
and iron pots;  
worn floorboards  
    and before the boards

there was a floor of earth

    and a piece of light  
dancing between leaves,  
rough hands on a flint ax,  
bright eyes squinting through  
    the needle bone,  
lips that speak no English,  
    that utter names of gods forgotten  
as the part of me  
who would know them,  
who would speak the names;

oh, holiest of shadows,  
oh, hallowed blood,  
let me come back  
let me come back

and live with you.

## DISNEYLAND (1962)

BY TIM HUNT

It is the pilgrimage all must make: the *Magic Kingdom*  
where Frontierland is a pageant of Tom Sawyer tricking the other boys  
to paint a fence and Huck the poor boy down the block,  
who has a jackknife and knows how to whittle away mere time

as if it's a stick of pine and Indian Joe is somewhere in the night  
like a faded dream your prayers chase away as if he'd never been,  
and there are black people, just a few, who wear rags and shuffle,  
all Uncle Remus, singing "Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah" as Br'er Rabbit hop skips along.

And in the *Magic Kingdom* there is a Jungle Land where a hippo  
gapes at your passing boat while the log along the far bank becomes a crocodile.  
And, too, a Main Street where strolling men wear straw hats called boaters  
and sing Barbershop to ginghammed ladies. And Tomorrowland—

a revelation of the gleaming-to-be, the ambient light glowing  
the smooth plastic, and through the portal, stars upon stars against the absolute dark  
of eternal Space, and this a kind of cathedral as you rocket into Forever.  
And in this *Magic Kingdom*, most wondrous of all, there is

no Today Land of used car lots and the finance company on the way  
home on Friday after work. And as the sun sets and the streetlights  
wink on and you wait for the Grand Parade to begin, you do not think  
to wonder whether your parents believe or pretend

because here, in this Magic Kingdom, you do not have to worry about that. Yet.

**PIETA (MESA WAY, SANTA ROSA, CA, 1956)**

BY TIM HUNT

*Remembering Ardis and Butchie Hardman*

The boy down the street never comes out to play.  
And somehow you understand that he is older,  
even though he only smiles and gurgles like a baby  
as he twists his pipestem arms, gnawing the back of his hand  
as he rocks on his mother's lap, a woman you later  
remember as looking like the poster of Rosie the Riveter,  
but Rosie as the Madonna and this her child  
crucified across her lap and she must hold him forever,  
as you kneel shaking a baby's rattle and his eyes turn  
to you, and the eyes are joy, and his smile shines on you  
as if that, too, is forever.

## CONGRUENCE

BY CHRISTINE STEWART-NUÑEZ

I'm caught by Allan d'Arcangelo's  
*Web*, a painting of a sculpture's maroon

and rust-red beams which bleed  
off the canvas, its crisscross intersections

creating triangles — vibrant blue —  
the color of my lover's favorite pants,

and so I write *Web* into a building,  
declaim a ledge and roof and simple

geometries since I can strip rectangles  
and squares from the canvas until

it becomes our bed and a beam his torso  
swathed in sheets, legs sticking over

the side, and if he saw *Web* he'd argue  
tone, the saturation difference of orange

and neon orange, he'd say, Take art  
for what it says, but don't always believe.

Close-up, I study buildings by their bones  
and joints, not their silhouettes;

close-up, his scent, sound, and skin  
persuade me: come, come closer, come.

***PAINTING CAFÉ TERRACE AT NIGHT***

BY JOHN M. DAVIS

the café's yellow canopy  
shelters a mock day.  
at the tables, sad souls  
who live without praise, without blame,  
huddle with the resignation of blind men  
or the wistfulness of widows.

servers perform careworn choreographies  
seeking some small acknowledgement  
at the end of their service.

as streets begin to thin,  
comes a carriage  
    drawn by a pale horse.

heaven's dark, deep-blue cloak  
and all its stars wrap about me.  
light streams into my eyes  
from so far away,  
when Creation was first envisioned  
on those starry nights of a distant time

that opened all around Them.

## **BLUE ROCK BAPTISM, 1986**

BY JENNIFER SCHOMBURG KANKE

Drive our car three-person'd God, up and down  
Route 23, past the Mead papermill  
and through the sandstone hills. Save my father  
yet again, for the first three times  
it didn't take. The preacher calls you down  
to the blue house sliding from the hill.  
His the only voice you'll listen to.

See the chartreuse Mustang,  
do not judge for this impractical choice.  
Mother knew not its heavy frame,  
its low gas mileage.  
Father picked the color. Touch him  
wet, shaking, and sure the world is born anew.  
Tell me it is you, tell me it is you.



## THE REVELATION OF COSTUMES

BY BRIAN YAPKO

At ruddy twelve the boy explored Party City seeking glory,  
angel-crowned with a plastic halo of gold,  
coruscating topaz and tiger's eye amber.

Placing the halo upon his unruly red hair he suddenly  
carried majesty in his posture, his freckled face luminous  
with the triumph of martyrs and the wisdom of prophets.

He replaced his halo with the mate cap of a frigate boatswain.  
Now he had sunburnt skin from shirtless wind-salt days plying  
the sea, mocking the lightning bolts as they scalded the air.

A crusader helmet and his biceps swelled along with his skill  
at drawing sword from scabbard. His t-shirt glowed red, reeking  
of dragon scales left behind from some Beowulfian fire-battle.

A laurel wreath and his pale stomach plumped with peacock  
roasted in garum, lounging in the atrium of a Roman villa rich  
with rosemary, political scheming and wine reeking of vinegar.

A baroque purple and silver mask of papier-mâché left him lost  
among the enchanting alleys near the Basilica di San Marco, its  
gaudy gold mosaics stained with age and singing of Venice.

A black top hat and the four horses of his barouche carriage  
brought him to Verdi, his cane tapping to Aida, as he weighed his  
East India investments in colonial railways, tea and underlings.

He hesitated. Then he dared. He placed a white bridal veil on his head.  
Then a flapper hat. He saw himself as a geisha. In a saree. Arrayed  
as Queen Elizabeth I. Waltzing in a hoop skirt with... the boy trembled.

**ACROSS THE BORDER AND TO THE MOON (DARKROOM, *THE SEBASTOPOL  
TIMES*, 1964)**

BY TIM HUNT

Bathed in the darkroom's red light, George skims the fixer  
across the print, the blank sheet graying into an image  
to rinse and hang to dry as he tells me of having been across the border —  
how he, and Charlie, and Jack lied about going camping, and instead  
drove all night into the mountains in his mother's car  
with some secret map to the house they hoped would be there —  
and it was. Listening, I imagine something like a ski chalet  
and Douglas firs crowding in as the morning sun  
casts that shade that is really light instead of the actual Nevada,  
that desert glare I haven't seen yet, and George tells me  
how Charlie talked the Madame into letting them  
in when she wanted to send them away because she thought  
they were only sixteen, which they were, but he fooled  
her, and then they paid for it, and it was no fooling  
and each of them went *Around the World* and *To The Moon*  
and had really done it and how I mustn't tell anyone,  
but when I was old enough he'd tell me where, and how  
to get there. And I never told, but after that even I could see  
how the girls seemed to know that George and Charlie and Jack  
had the secret map—the one that showed the way  
across the border and around the world.

## MARS AND THE FAKE BOY

BY DANIEL EDWARD MOORE

Wondering why it happens to you /why normalcy  
tapes tomorrow's mouth / with the Band-Aid routines  
of a blow-up doll / sitting on the sofa between family  
& friends / smiling as if something new could be said /  
about emptiness being beautifully powered / by double  
AA batteries / & sexy playlists / you have the right to  
remain silent / which usually means the cuffs are tight /  
a subtle reminder of how much control / you are willing /  
to never surrender / of how the veins / in your neck's white vase  
are stems / stripped of their petals / if survival is hungers  
domestic desire / maybe that's why you purr / & growl /  
drinking milk / with a bone in your mouth /

# Section Three



## DREAMING IN FLATWARE

BY LOIS MARIE HARROD

I begin with the *dinner fork* and the *salad fork*  
but the forks multiply, the *fish fork* and this?  
an *oyster fork*, are we having oysters?  
you didn't tell me we were having oysters,  
the *oyster fork* which is the only fork  
to be placed at the right side of the plate  
says a voice in the wings, my Girl Scout  
Leader Mrs. Winklevoss explaining  
the Setting of the Table, where to place the *fruit fork*  
to go with the Samoas, Tagalongs and Savannah Smiles  
and the *dessert fork* and *snail fork*  
and in this dream everyone—  
which means the two of us and someone coming—  
gets a *prosciutto fork* and an *olive fork*  
and a *larger salad fork* and spoon  
to serve the lettuce and now the *serving fork*  
and the *roast pork fork*. I am unrolling them  
from their flannel pockets, the long line  
of forks, where to put all these utensils  
handed down to us—*asparagus fork*,  
*barbecue fork*, *beef and berry fork*,  
the *carving fork*, is the someone-coming a giant?  
in one fairy tale a giant's fat cures the prince,  
the French-fry fork known in Germany  
as the *Pommesgabel fork* and the *currywurst fork*,  
and the *crab fork*, the *fondue fork*  
which has a pleasing alliteration.  
I haven't seen one of those since the 60's,  
the *relish fork* and the *pickle fork*,  
which you tell me with your usual impatience,  
are not at all alike, how can I be so dumb?  
And the *knork* which is a knife and a fork,  
and the *spork* which is a spoon and a fork  
well loved by Dr. Spock and Dr. Seuss,  
and the *sucket fork* with tines at one end  
and a spoon at the other and now the *chork*

which can be broken in half to form chopsticks,  
or kept whole for the manually challenged,  
and finally my *granny fork* which actually is my Granny's Fork,  
the one my mother said I must have  
before you came along and laid me flat.

## LUNCH AT ECLIPSE DI LUNA, ATLANTA

BY KAREN PAUL HOLMES

These tapas I dedicate to you in some firmament somewhere.

Golden beets with Swiss chard taste of earth

I did not bury you in.

With each bite I toast your kiss. Licorice-sweet, peppery,

the *tomate fresco's* basil and balsamic.

I finish it all myself this time,

won't let grief lunch here where we shared small plates

before ballroom class. Monday nights. Six years

we savored oversways and swivels floating

body to body, my right palm in your left: an oath.

Your other hand's blessing on my back,

my man so full of grace.

I try the lamb chops with tahini — too much garlic for you,

will tango my tongue all day.

I know better than to order

your calamari and *patatas bravas*

or to be here for dinner, when our favorite waiter

would ask after you,

and I'd have to hear my voice answer



## COFFEE

BY PAMELA NOCERINO

I can explain my happiness  
with coffee.  
The first on a piazza  
in Florence,  
recreated every time  
the mug is small  
and the foam sticks to the side  
in a pattern like weathered cathedral walls,  
the way my impatience  
burns my tongue  
and the way  
I slow down,  
letting the final sip  
move to room temperature,  
becoming  
the impolite sound  
of breathing in,  
with greedy delight,  
the light,  
sweet  
ending.

## ODE TO SALT

BY KAREN PAUL HOLMES

If I can choose, I'll choose you pure: Fleur de Sel or Celtic  
with traces of sea: magnesium, iron, zinc.

If I toss a pinch over my shoulder, you'll bring me luck—  
but is it the left or right?

If I sprinkle you on our cockatiel's tail, he won't fly off—  
you won't leave a trail on my child's face.

Your dash on brie and mushrooms loosens the taste of earth,  
but if soup's overwhelmed, a potato will draw you out.

You'll scrub my legs to silk for the beach, then bead in sweat  
between my breasts. Swimming, I'll taste your brine. But O!

to be the Karen Holmes in *From Here to Eternity*, kissing,  
kissing Burt Lancaster in the ocean's uprush,

seaweed and sand and you in my hair and eyes and every crevice—  
oh no, but I'll take your fine grain drying on my limbs,

drawing skin canvas-taut, like a sail caught by sun—  
a sail you've splashed all day, carried to harbor on wind.

## **MIDWEST LANDSCAPE: A LOST BOY**

BY WILLIAM REICHARD

Listen: the wind whispers through the tall corn. Gather the syllables together as you walk each row. Hold your hands up to hold the leaves' sharp edges away from your soft face. No caresses here. Only cutting. One row to the next. Collect the sounds. String them together in the milky moonlight until words are formed. You knew how to listen to them once, could comprehend the land's language, but you've been away too long. All of the green has flowed out of your veins. You cannot translate the language of this quiet country.

## **TRAIL BESIDE A WETLAND**

BY JULIE L. MOORE

*Rocky Fork State Park, Hillsboro, Ohio*

Sycamores and beeches, tall as Greek gods,  
stretch their limbs across the canopy they form,

releasing their orange and amber leaves,  
which deepen on the ground like the myths

they're made of. Seeds once flapped their wings,  
breaking free from their prickly pods

to achieve the one heroic feat  
predestined for them: to settle in,

cultivate roots strong enough to sustain this small  
kingdom my son and I have chanced upon.

We ramble through its trail in late autumn's halcyon  
demise, at peace with its own denouement,

shadowing the same impulse as the blue heron  
who emerges from the shoreline, wades into reeds,

then, elegant as a goddess, lifts its lissome leg  
and waits, stroking the water with its toes.

## STATUS REPORT

BY AGNES VOJTA

I walked along my creek  
which is a term of endearment—  
one doesn't own a creek any more  
than one owns the clouds—

stood on a limestone slab  
and watched the ripples on the water,  
the reflection of leafless trees,  
the darting minnows.

I moved an earthworm  
from the path onto the grass.  
The robins were eating red berries  
off a vine whose name I did not know.

Five crows held council in an oak tree  
and flew away when I approached.  
Something has been tearing  
the Osage oranges to yellow shreds.

I found a purple leaf and a snail shell.  
More I did not accomplish —  
besides standing, still, in amazement  
at the colors of the cardinals.

## **THIS DEATH VALLEY**

BY MARK A. FISHER

oh coyote please, tell me what you know  
living with mesquite, and with salt, and sand  
and remembering where waters still flow

what can you see, in this not empty land  
so much is hidden away from the sun  
living with mesquite, and with salt, and sand

shaded and sleeping bright daylight to shun  
waiting, and waiting, until comes the night  
so much is hidden away from the sun

oh coyote, stealthy through the campsite  
seldom noticed, and seldom ever seen  
waiting, and waiting, until comes the night

tiny belly flowers growing and green  
back away from the roads, still living wild  
seldom noticed, and seldom ever seen

so deep in this desert nearly exiled  
oh coyote please, tell me what you know  
back away from the roads, still living wild  
and remembering where waters still flow

## TRIDUUM

BY ROSIE PROHÍAS DRISCOLL

### I. Holy Thursday

In the half light of dawn  
we drive up the road  
edged with royal palms  
to the entrance of Baptist Hospital.

Mami has come to be broken open  
understanding, finally, that  
she must be broken open  
to rise and walk again.

I shudder to leave her, shivering  
laid out on cold, metal slab  
bathed in iodine prelude to the scalpel  
poised in the surgeon's delicate hand.

One hour passes.  
The surgeon emerges, says  
all is well, promising  
she will walk – even dance! – again.

### II. Good Friday

Her room is shrouded in darkness  
punctuated by the steady hum  
of machines, and anxious whispers.  
She cannot rise as expected,

body not responding to will.  
The color drains from her face  
throwing her small moles into relief.  
The nurse calls for fresh blood

while I hold vigil  
praying to the dead  
my litany for the living.

*Papi, pray for us*  
*Abuelo y Abuela, pray for us*  
*Coco y Nana, pray for us*

### **III. Holy Saturday**

I seek respite in her house on Mentone Street  
but I cannot sleep, overwhelmed by the scent  
of lavender and Listoline, and candles  
lit for the intentions of her children.

The wood plank floors, pristine, warp as  
our ghosts pass through their sealed cracks,  
breaking through the glass-encased tombs  
arranged in patterns on the walls,

pulling chairs around the domino table,  
passing cafecitos laced with laughter,  
the clic clac of ivory tiles setting  
a new rhythm.

Laying in her bed  
I conjure them all, trusting  
they will roll away her stone  
take her pale hands into theirs  
and lead her out  
to dance and sing again.



## ERASED GHAZAL OF BREAKING FREE

BY ALIXEN PHAM

Pull the thorns from your neck and ankles. There's no room  
For dead gods in your bed. Only saints and sinners [REDACTED]

When the last petal falls, burn the book. Oar your feet to an emerald shore.  
Taste power glistening on mountain summits. Fierceness unhoods woman  
[REDACTED]

The road is solo. The sky unadorned. The body begs for footsteps to friend.  
Nurse your solitude in the nursery of your hollow. The spine trunks [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

If ghosts attempt to imprison you, unbarb language to tongue love.  
Unchain joy dungeon in their hearts. Repent the blade [REDACTED]

No suitcase can imprison your pelvis. No man stamps your back.  
Wrist the sun to light your path. Re-moon your story [REDACTED]

The orchard libraries a new life, pomegranates of potential seedlings.  
White out your atlas with black lipstick. An Alexin is [REDACTED]

## HOW TO KILL A VIRUS

BY JULIE WEISS

You rise ahead of the sun, coaxing  
a night's worth of unrest out of your eyes,

clenched fists a testament to the warrior  
breaking out of your little girl's body.

Your brother follows close behind,  
his stuffed bunny trailing him like

a sad shadow. I can't sleep either.  
The same monsters plunder my dreams—

when I say surrender, I mean to my embrace.  
You've weighed all the battle strategies,

slung stones into open spaces, imagined  
a swarm of viruses collapsing in the grass.

You've kicked brick walls as though  
your shoe could flatten their spiky faces

if launched from a cannon of rage.  
The times we buried birthday invitations

in the trash and you brandished your voice,  
slashed open the sky. Drained of color

the rainbow in your gaze slumps over me  
like a frown. Your brother is too young

to shape loss into anything resembling  
a memory, but you know time pushes

backwards in a pandemic, drives us to the cliff  
edge of a past teeming with skeletons.

## THE DOG STAR

BY ERIC LOCHRIDGE

I moved to a neighborhood with no streetlights  
save one, a bright star over the mailboxes.

In summer, neighbors gather under it at dusk,  
retrieving letters and packages, sharing news of the day.

Daylight stretches out, so I walk the dog down late  
and opine leisurely on the sunset's tropical pastels.

When winter blows in like a smudged fiction,  
feeble words smear into the pulp of gray days.

Darkness grips the leash early, a fist  
knuckling me out to the side of the road

before supper to drain my troubles into the gutter.  
Undaunted, I tug on the leash, always toward

the boxes, where I sniff the rotting pole,  
where I linger on its loyal isle of light.

## THE SMELL OF EARTH AND EVERYWHERE WE'VE BEEN

BY LUCINDA TREW

I fall asleep to the smell of earth  
and everywhere we've been  
a musky map of our path  
through days and years  
the diurnal churn that presses  
pawprints and boot tread into sand  
and clay that will be washed away  
by waves and wind

but we have the scent of where we've been  
the fermentation of leaves, sluice of rain  
and debris ringed around storm drains  
the tang of pine, spoor of deer who bed  
in the hedge, the trace of piss  
against lampposts, rosehips

crushed upon stone, layers of muck  
and sludge, the peat of fresh-turned fields  
brine of eelgrass and ocean air  
August steam rising from asphalt  
onionweed and fresh-cut lawns

all this pungency and memory  
this magnetic pull of crust, core  
and currents, the geology of walks  
all this in your paws and breath and scruff  
the smell of earth  
and everywhere we've been

## THE CITY

BY .CHISARAOKWU.

carries elephants on paper planes through its sewers  
breathes sighs through handcuffs & brokers fees  
ties hands with jungle vines & promises  
bleeds tales on the concrete, hot & hungry  
a dream drowning bodies between two rivers  
her story an unscripted comedy of handmaids  
a street corner solopreneur selling darkness  
in a square full of lights the rhythms  
& the cracks the rhythm in the cracks the  
rhythm is the crack breaking bodies breaking souls

## WORDS MATTER: CHOOSE WISELY

BY JOANNE DURHAM

says the sign on the red and white cooler  
in my neighbor's front yard. Kids on bikes, curious  
walkers, tourists who wander off the beach  
lift the creaky top. We find smooth stones,  
egg-sized, still heavy with the mountain  
they long ago deserted, each painted  
with a word. Should I prop open my door  
with *imagination*, anchor fly-away papers  
with *song*, or ponder *oblivious* and *obvious*  
as bookends? *Sunrise* could last all day  
on the mantle, and I could fiddle with *detrimental*  
in my jacket pocket without causing harm. Visitors  
will surely depart with *dolphins*  
nestled in duffle bags, a teenager will tuck *courage*  
under her pillow. I choose *wisely*,  
so *understanding* remains  
for the home that needs it most.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Anna S. Andrews** lives in Southern California. You can find her on Twitter @a\_s\_andrews or at [chickenscratchwords.com](http://chickenscratchwords.com).

**Jared Beloff** is a teacher and poet who lives in Queens, NY with his wife and two daughters. You can find his work in *The Westchester Review*, *littleddeathlit*, and the forthcoming issues of *Contrary Magazine* and others. You can find him online at [www.jaredbeloff.com](http://www.jaredbeloff.com). Follow him on twitter @read\_instead

**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 numerous journals and magazines. She lives in South Bend, Indiana.

A lifelong resident of New York State, **Marion Brown** lives in Yonkers. Her chapbooks, published by Finishing Line, are *Tasted* and *The Morning After Summer*. She serves on the Advisory Committee of Slapering Hol Press, the Program Committee of the Hudson Valley Writers Center, and the National Council of Graywolf Press.

**Sarah Carleton** writes poetry, edits fiction, tutors English, plays the banjo, and makes her husband laugh in Tampa, Florida. Her poems have appeared in numerous publications, including *Cider Press Review*, *Nimrod*, *Chattahoochee Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Crab Orchard Review*, and *New Ohio Review*. Her first collection, *Notes from the Girl Cave*, was recently published by Kelsay Books.

**.chisaraokwu.** (she/her/hers) is an Igbo American actor, poet & healthcare futurist. Her poetry has appeared in academic and literary journals, including *Obsidian*, *Cider Press Review*, *Cutthroat*, *Tinderbox Poetry*, & others. She has been awarded fellowships and writing residencies in the US & Italy, and was named a Cave Canem Fellow in 2020. She is currently working on a collection about the Biafra War.

**German Dario** resides in Tempe, Arizona with his wife, two sons, three dogs, a guinea pig, many plants, and sometimes a fish. Recently published work in *Gyroscope Review*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Into The Void*, *The New Verse News*, *The Acentos Review*, and *The American Journal of Poetry*.

**John M. Davis** lives in Visalia, California. His work has appeared in numerous journals, including *Gyroscope Review*, *The Comstock Review*, *Curating Alexandria*, *Reunion: The Dallas Review*, *Bloodroot Literary Magazine*. "The Mojave", a chapbook, was published by the Dallas Community Poets.

**Rosie Prohías Driscoll** is a Cuban-American educator and poet. Her work has appeared in numerous journals, including *The Acentos Review*, *Mas Tequila Review*, *Literary Mama*, *Saw Palm: Florida Literature and Art*, *SWWIM Every Day*, *Sin Fronteras/Writers Without Borders*, *No Tender Fences: A Journal of Immigrant and First Generation Poetry*, and *Pensive: A Global Journal of Spirituality and the Arts*. In 2020 she was a finalist for the Orison Poetry Prize. A native of Miami, Florida, she now lives in Alexandria, Virginia with her husband and greyhound.

**Joanne Durham** is a retired educator who lives on the North Carolina coast. With the ocean as her backyard, she always finds a poem waiting. She was a finalist for the 2021 NC Poetry Society's Poet Laureate Award. Some of her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Love in the Time of Covid Chronicles*, *Flying South*, *Poetry in Plain Sight*, and *Your Daily Poem*, as well as in national teaching journals.  
<https://www.joannedurham.com/>.

**Tara A. Elliott's** poems have appeared in *TAOS Journal of International Poetry & Art*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, and *Stirring*, among others. She currently serves as the President Elect of the non-profit Eastern Shore Writers Association (ESWA) in Maryland. For more information, visit [www.taraelliott.com](http://www.taraelliott.com)

**Mark A. Fisher** is a writer, poet, and playwright living in Tehachapi, CA. His poetry has appeared in: *A Sharp Piece of Awesome*, *Dragon Poet Review*, *Altadena Poetry Review*, *Penumbra*, *The Turnip Truck(s)*, and many other places. His first chapbook, *drifter*, is available from Amazon. His second, *hour of lead*, won the 2017 San Gabriel Valley Poetry Chapbook contest. His plays have appeared on California stages in Pine Mountain Club, Tehachapi, Bakersfield, and Hayward. He was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2015. He has also won cooking ribbons at the Kern County Fair.

**Allison Goldstein** received her MFA from California College of the Arts. She has been published in a variety of literary and cultural publications including *Cicatrix: A Journal of Experimentation*, *Not Very Quiet*, *Switchback*, and *Maximum Rock'n'Roll*. Allison currently lives and writes in South Florida with her husband and two cats.



**Lois Marie Harrod's** *Spat* will be published in May 2021. Her 17th collection *Woman* won the 2020 Blue Lyra Prize. *Nightmares of the Minor Poet* appeared in June 2016 (Five Oaks); her chapbook *And She Took the Heart*, in January 2016; *Fragments from the Biography of Nemeis* and *How Marlene Mae Longs for Truth* (Dancing Girl Press) appeared in 2013. A Dodge poet, she is published in literary journals and online ezines from *American Poetry Review* to *Zone 3*. Online link: [www.loismarieharrod.org](http://www.loismarieharrod.org)

**Karen Paul Holmes** has two poetry collections: *No Such Thing as Distance* (Terrapin, 2018) and *Untying the Knot* (Aldrich, 2014). She's been featured on The Writer's Almanac and Tracy K. Smith's *The Slowdown*. Publications include *Diode*, *The Pedestal*, and *Prairie Schooner*, among others. Holmes founded and hosts (on Zoom these days) a critique group in Atlanta and Writers' Night Out in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

**Tim Hunt** has published four collections, most recently *Ticket Stubs & Liner Notes* (winner of the 2018 Main Street Rag Poetry Book Award). Recognitions include The Chester H. Jones National Poetry Prize. He is the editor of *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* and has published two critical studies on Jack Kerouac. He lives in Normal, IL, but does not raise corn.

**Lowell Jaeger** (Montana Poet Laureate 2017-2019) is founding editor of Many Voices Press and recently edited *New Poets of the American West*, an anthology of poets from eleven western states. Jaeger is a graduate of the Iowa Writer's Workshop, winner of the Grolier Poetry Peace Prize, and recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Montana Arts Council. He was awarded the Montana Governor's Humanities Award for his work in promoting civil civic discourse.

**Jen Karetnick's** ninth collection is *The Burning Where Breath Used to Be* (David Robert Books, September 2020). She is also the author of *Hunger Until It's Pain* (Salmon Poetry, Spring 2023). Karetnick won the 2020 Tiferet Writing Contest for Poetry, the Hart Crane Memorial Prize, and the Anna Davidson Rosenberg Prize, among others, and has been an Artist in Residence in the Everglades. Co-founder and managing editor of *SWWIM Every Day*, she has work appearing recently in *Barrow Street*, *The Comstock Review*, *december*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, [Terrain.org](http://Terrain.org), and elsewhere. Find her on Twitter @Kavetchnik and Instagram @JenKaretnick, or see [jkaretnick.com](http://jkaretnick.com).

**Eric Lochridge's** debut full-length poetry collection is forthcoming from FutureCycle Press in 2022. He is author of three poetry chapbooks: *Born-Again Death Wish*, *Real Boy Blues*, and *Father's Curse*, and editor of *After Long Busyness: Interviews with Eight Heartland Poets*. His poems have appeared in *DIAGRAM*, *Okay Donkey*, *Kissing Dynamite*, *Slipstream*, and many others. He lives in Bellingham, Washington. Find him on Twitter @ericedits and at [ericedits.wordpress.com](http://ericedits.wordpress.com).

**Betsy Mars** practices poetry, photography, pet maintenance, and publishes an occasional anthology through Kingly Street Press. Her second anthology, *Floored*, is now available on Amazon. "Pyrisence," was a winner in Alexandria Quarterly's first line poetry contest series in 2020, and she was a finalist in both the Jack Grapes and Poetry Super Highway poetry contests. Her work has recently appeared in *Verse-Virtual*, *Sky Island Journal*, *Writing in a Woman's Voice*, and *Sheila-Na-Gig*, among others. She is the author of *Alinea* (Picture Show Press) and co-author of *In the Muddle of the Night* with Alan Walowitz, from Arroyo Seco Press.

**Ashley Oakes Martin** is a tutor and freelance photographer specializing in family portraiture. Mother of four (mostly) grown children, she now focuses more energy than she should on entertaining her dogs, cats, guinea pigs and chickens.

**Judith H. Montgomery's** poems appear in the *Tahoma Literary Review*, *Bellingham Review*, and *Healing Muse*, among other journals, and in a number of anthologies. Her first collection, *Passion*, received the Oregon Book Award for Poetry. Her fourth book, *Litany for Wound and Bloom*, was a finalist for the Marsh Hawk Prize, and appeared in August 2018 from Uttered Chaos Press. Her prize-winning narrative medicine chapbook, *Mercy*, appeared from Wolf Ridge Press in March 2019.

**Daniel Edward Moore** Daniel Edward Moore lives in Washington on Whidbey Island. His poems are forthcoming in *Lullwater Review*, *The Meadow*, *The Chaffin Journal*, *The Chiron Review*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *The Bitter Oleander*, *Armstrong Literary Review*, and *Gulf Stream Magazine*. He is the author of 'Boys' (Duck Lake Books) and "Waxing the Dents" (Brick Road Poetry Press)

**Julie L. Moore** is the author of four poetry collections, including, most recently, *Full Worm Moon*, which won a 2018 Woodrow Hall Top Shelf Award and received honorable mention for the Conference on Christianity and Literature's 2018 Book of the Year. A Best of the Net and six-time Pushcart Prize nominee, she has also published poetry in *African American Review*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Image*, *New Ohio Review*, *Poetry Daily*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Southern Review*, and *Verse Daily*. Moore is the Writing Center Director at Taylor University, where she is the poetry editor of *Relief Journal*. You can learn more at [juliemoore.com](http://juliemoore.com).

**Pamela Nocerino's** life is full of creative play. She writes, acts, teaches, and once helped build a giant troll. Decades ago, Pamela performed almost everywhere in Denver but that was before the internet so there's no proof. Then she taught in public schools for over 20 years and raised two sons. One of her short plays will be staged at The Grand Theater in 2021, and another was performed online with Denver's Theater 29. Her poems were selected recently for *Plum Tree Tavern* and *Splintered Disordered Press*, and her ghostwriting income is a lifeline in these need-so-much-chocolate times.

**Alixen Pham** is an emerging poet. She is published with/or has pending publications with *New York Quarterly*, *Lily Poetry Journal*, *DiaCRITICS* and *Brooklyn Poets* as Poet of the Week. She leads the Westside Los Angeles chapter of Women Who Submit, a volunteer-run literary organization supporting and nurturing women and non-binary writers. She is the recipient of Brooklyn Poets Fellowship, the Association of Writers and Writing Programs' Writer-to-Writer Mentorship Program and PEN Center / City of West Hollywood Writing Craft Scholarship in Fiction and Nonfiction. She bakes and brews while writing poetry, fiction, and nonfiction work.

**William Reichard** is a writer, editor, and educator. His seventh poetry collection, *Our Delicate Barricades Downed*, will be published by Broadstone Books in 2021.

**K Roberts** is a professional non-fiction writer and artist. Recently published poems have appeared in *The Light Ekphrastic* and *Panoply*.

**Shei Sanchez** is a writer and photographer from Jersey City, New Jersey. Her poems and prose have appeared in or are forthcoming in *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Autumn Sky Daily*, *Harness Magazine*, *Catchwater Magazine*, *Common Threads*, *Indolent Books*, *Dissonance Magazine*, *Sepia Journal*, as well as the anthology *Essentially Athens Ohio: A Celebration of Spoken Word and Fine Art* (independently published, 2019). In a past life, she was a regular contributor for two lifestyle magazines in Bangkok, Thailand. She lives on a farm in Appalachian Ohio with her partner.

**Jennifer Schomburg Kanke**, originally from Columbus, Ohio, lives in Tallahassee, Florida, where she edits confidential documents for the government. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *New Ohio Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Pleiades*. Her chapbook, *Fine, Considering*, about her experiences undergoing chemotherapy for ovarian cancer, is available from Rinky Dink Press. She serves as a reader for Emrys. She serves on the Board of Directors for Anhinga Press.

**Sally Simon** is a retired teacher living in the Catskills of New York State. Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Academy of Heart, Mind and Children*, *Churches, and Daddy*. She also writes fiction and memoir. When not writing, she's either traveling the world or stabbing people with her epee. Read more at [www.sallysimonwriter.com](http://www.sallysimonwriter.com).

**Jane Snyder's** poems have appeared in *Funny Looking Dog* and *Eight Poems*. She lives in Spokane.

**Dianne Stepp's** poems have appeared in the *High Desert Journal*, *The Oregonian*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Cider Press Review* as well as other journals and anthologies. A graduate of the Warren Wilson MFA Program in Poetry, she has been a recipient of an Oregon Literary Arts Fellowship and writer's residencies at both Caldera and Playa. Her chapbooks, "Half-Moon of Clay" and "Sweet Mercies" were published in 2007 and 2017 respectively. A retired therapist, she lives in Portland, Oregon with her husband.

South Dakota's poet laureate, **Christine Stewart-Nuñez**, is the author of several books of poetry, including *Untrussed* (University of New Mexico Press 2016) and *Bluewords Greening* (Terrapin Books 2016), winner of the 2018 Whirling Prize. This professor of English at South Dakota State University just released a new poetry anthology, *South Dakota in Poems*. Find her work at [christinestewartnunez.com](http://christinestewartnunez.com).

**Lanette Sweeney's** first collection, *What I Should Have Said: A Poetry Memoir About Losing A Child to Addiction*, is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press and includes the poem showcased here. After lifetimes as a fundraiser, teacher, waitress, reporter, editor, mother, and non-profit executive, Sweeney is grateful to now be a full-time writer thanks to her wife's support. Her work has appeared in many journals and anthologies, including the popular women's studies textbook, *Women: Images and Reality*, and can be seen on her website, [Lanettesweeney.com](http://Lanettesweeney.com).

A graduate of Ohio State University, **Psyche North Torok** is a lover of words, language, and nature. She often visits the Olentangy River and has been known to leave offerings at its banks. Her poems have appeared in *Common Ground Review*, *Plainsongs*, *Avalon*

*Literary Review*, and various anthologies including *Dead of Winter*. She lives and works in Columbus, Ohio.

**Lucinda Trew** holds degrees in journalism and English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her work has appeared in *The Fredricksburg Literary and Art Review*, *The Poet*, *Cathexis Northwest Press*, *The Bangor Literary Journal*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Kakalak*, *Flying South* and other journals. She is a recipient of a 2019 North Carolina Poetry Society Award and a Kakalak 2020 Poetry Award. She lives and writes in Charlotte, N.C. with her jazz musician husband, two dogs, and a wily cat who stopped counting after life number 9.

**Agnes Vojta** grew up in Germany and now lives in Rolla, Missouri where she teaches physics at Missouri S&T and hikes the Ozarks. She is the author of *Porous Land* (Spartan Press, 2019) and *The Eden of Perhaps* (Spartan Press, 2020), and her poems have appeared in a variety of magazines.

**Julie Weiss**'s debut chapbook, *The Places We Empty*, will be published by Kelsay Books in July 2021. She was a finalist in *Alexandria Quarterly*'s first line poetry contest series and a finalist for *The Magnolia Review*'s Ink Award. A Best of the Net nominee, her recent work appears in *Montana Mouthful*, *Mothers Always Write*, and *Dust Poetry Magazine*, among others, and she has poems in many anthologies, as well. Originally from California, she lives in Spain with her wife and two young children. You can find her on Twitter @colourofpoetry or on her website at <https://julieweiss2001.wordpress.com/>.

**Megan Wildhood** is an erinaceous, neurodiverse lady writer in Seattle who helps her readers feel genuinely seen as they interact with her dispatches from the junction of extractive economics, mental and emotional distress, disability and reparative justice. She hopes you will find yourself in her words as they appear in her poetry chapbook *Long Division* (Finishing Line Press, 2017) as well as *The Atlantic*, *Yes! Magazine*, *Mad in America*, *The Sun* and elsewhere. You can learn more at [meganwildhood.com](http://meganwildhood.com).

**Brian Yapko** is a lawyer whose poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Grand Little Things*, *Society of Classical Poets*, *Poetica*, *Chained Muse*, *Garfield Lake Review*, *Tempered Runes Press*, *Auroras and Blossoms*, *Showbear Family Circus*, *Sparks of Calliope*, *Iris Literary Journal*, *Rainbow Poems*, *Parliament Literary Journal* and *Abstract Elephant*. He lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Get ready for the Summer 2021 Issue of Gyroscope Review!

There are no themes for this issue, we're just looking for fine, contemporary poetry. If you're not sure what that means, take a look at our back issues to get a feel for what we like. There are guidelines and a FAQ on our site to help you along. We know National Poetry Month is a busy time for poets, and we hope you write some wonderful poems and send them our way.

Our next reading period begins on April 1, 2021, and ends on June 1, 2021, or when the issue is full. During that time we will read submissions of previously unpublished contemporary poetry. The Summer Issue comes out in July, so we welcome summer-themed pieces. Make us sweat! (Unless you live down under) Please do not send spring/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. Use page breaks. Title your document with Last Name, First Initial, and Summer 2021. (Smith J Summer 2021) Use the name or pen name you would like to appear in the journal in your bio. More information is available in our guidelines ([www.gyroscopecoreview.com/guidelines/](http://www.gyroscopecoreview.com/guidelines/)). We encourage you to look at past issues and become familiar with the kind of contemporary poetry we publish. Young writers, old writers, established writers, and emerging writers all have a place among our pages.

Thank you for reading!