



Gyroscope Review

fine poetry to turn your world around



Issue 21-3
Summer 2021



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Constance Brewer

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From the Editor

Hello, summer! It's nice to see you back and to see things loosening up a bit in our Covid contaminated world. We're not out of the woods yet but things look better than they did a year ago. The tenor of poems has changed to a little more optimistic bent.

The poems in this issue broke themselves into interesting arcs. Celebrations of life, ponderings about death and divorce. A concern for the environment and some wonderful food poems we could not resist. As always nature has an important place in poems for this issue. I love reading about the experiences of other people out in the wild, whether it's camping, hiking, berry picking, or just standing on a mountaintop absorbing the world above and below.

Summer is a time for relaxation and whimsy. A time to recharge batteries before fall and winter. (Sorry to the folks Down Under. I've never been out of the Northern Hemisphere.) In this issue I see poets tackling different forms and stretching ideas, growing like the season. We had an influx of poems from young authors, 12 to 17, that showed a great deal of promise. We're always happy to see the next generation committed to writing what's in their hearts, and sending it out into the world. A good reminder to remember what it's like to be brave, to believe in your work, and embrace the possible in your poems. As you read the wonderful poems in this issue take a minute to reread the ones that touch you. If you can, reach out to the author and compliment them. We're all in this together; let's champion each other while the sun shines bright on poetry and poets.

Constance Brewer

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Section One

ÉTÉ, MON AMOUR

BY SUSAN MICHELE CORONEL

After Meghan Sterling

Summer, take me into your arms,
into the folds of a tropical beach towel
dusted with sand, the pavement
shimmering glass in the blistering heat.

Summer, the café windows
are melting. I cannot touch your lava
mouth but offset your fever
with Thai iced tea & fresh lemon bursts.

Summer, hold me dry & sunburned,
lathering cream into my bruised back.
Slide off my wet bathing suit,
sticky on my belly like a second skin.

Let your rays punish me.
Your ocean breezes awaken
a clear heart of salt, gull
& slow burn. Your gaze erases

weighty thoughts & you rise
like smoke above a smoldering campfire,
pungent evergreen drifting
from nearby woods & scrub.

How much I still believe
since we first met, how you steady me
while the world is ablaze. Keep me content.
Love me into the filament of burning stars.

LOS ANGELES AS ARS POETICA

BY SHELLY HOLDER

because I live in a valley of bright advertisements & shining
disbelief, because of our stop & go, stop & no freeway going
direct to any *where*, because we say *the 405, the 10, the 101*
to make up for it, because blue and grey skies muddy
water & not a fallen drop in reservoirs, because shattered
glass pools like tar on every driven-over surface, because not
even unnamed weeds are native to the gaps they flower,
because Modelo bottle caps & e-cigarette tips choke the gutters
while rats nest in dead brown palm fronds like high-rises,
because in these streets of dust *ablution* only sounds like *absolution*,
& *solving* becomes *sobbing*, because I title my failures & call them poems,
because born in the desert, I've learned to dam every thirst inside me.

YOU MOP YOUR FOREHEAD WITH A ROSE, RECOMMENDING ITS THORNS

BY JONATHAN YUNGKANS

after John Ashbery

The Pacific beams turquoise and ultramarine in either good marketing
or raging insincerity on a freshly-coated Technicolor summer morning,

and Point Vincente's orange cliffs, brazen, want gravity to slow-dance,
saying there's too much calm to hyperventilate. Waves whisper, barely

scudding the time between coffee and a good primal scream, no cloud
looking white and innocent. And the sun blazes mad with blue whales

which were insane to swim past this promontory, bringing their calves
but not enough money for concession stands further north in Venice—

but California's expensive like that and migration can drive a cetacean
to anxiety. Gulls rocket past to flock and pickpocket random handbags

and pelicans cruise the shoreline, styling like chrome hood ornaments,
always going fishing, ready to photobomb anyone holding a selfie stick.

DINNER, KIAWAH ISLAND

BY VIRGINIA LEBARON

all us kids, we are boiling alive
the crabs collected that morning
along the brackish shore

this is apparently fun
to drop them
one by one with padded blue tongs
into the dented pot, steam rolling over our sun-burnt faces
like a fiery fog

they go in pale, strange
googly eyes bobbing on stalks
at first, stunned and silent

then, the tapping. Like Poe's Tell-Tale Heart
claws *TAP, TAP, TAP*
RAP, RAP, RAPPING
banging against the old metal lid until
it flies off, clatters across the terracotta tile
In protest that this is how it ends

And then: the fight spaced out

TAP, TAP, TAP....

TAP, TAP, tap...

TAP, tap, tap...

tap...

tap..

tap...

When it is my turn, I cannot
despite how good they tell me the flesh will taste

So, you grab my hand in yours, make me choose
from the plate, open the lid
and drop one in
Both of us, now, to be cooked, cooled, then torn
limb from limb

TAP, TAP, TAP....

TAP, TAP, tap...

TAP, tap, tap...

tap...

tap..

tap...

RISOTTO

BY DONNA HILBERT

Down again. Tonight, it's the purple
of heirloom tomatoes,
I slice into olive oil, garlic, red-bell pepper,
short-grained rice, a pinch of saffron
or two. I add broth one ladle at a time.
I stir the rice and I am stirred
by Beethoven sonatas
alive in the fingers of Emil Gilels,
and stirred too by the winter setting that fills
the window I look through to the sea,
from my station at the stove.
When the Waldstein Sonata, begins
I cry into the copper-clad skillet
I use for sautéing petrale sole
and for making frittata and risotto.
No need for a special pan.
No need to steep a broth from scratch,
bouillon paste from a jar, plus water, will do.
Beethoven wrote thirty-two sonatas.
Emil Gilels recorded all but five
before he died unexpectedly in Moscow.
Sviatoslav Richter believed the KGB
had killed him, fearing he would defect to the West.
You might add lemon zest, capers, or olives,
if your risotto needs more zing.
All that really matters is the stirring
until every bit is tender, add broth, stir.

SOMETIMES A WILD SAINT

BY NANCY MURPHY

After Tom Hiron, Sometimes a Wild God

Sometimes a wild saint will storm in while
you're at the stove
searing steaks,
tapping smoked paprika
onto sweet potatoes. She'll start

a fire in the blue room, open the best

Burgundy without asking,
crank up

the Stones. Sometimes a wild saint
is not exactly
drunk, (but not undrunk)

maybe beyond

drunk like I was
in my twenties after work

in bars with married co-workers.
I'm not here to confess, I'll just say

I have seen how things can break

down, how anything can be
forgiven, how miracles are not
that rare really.

Sometimes a wild saint

is such a martyr, deadly
serious. But I'm
not going to fall
into that deep

well of belief again, the longing

that follows, all that embarrassment
when god doesn't show up
in time.

Sometimes a wild saint
will remind us that there will be summer

again, that I will be able to go underwater
and feel cool on my entire head
and not even care
if my hair ever
dries.

ANOTHER MORNING

BY SHELLY HOLDER

For dents in the bed we don't want to leave,
and the coffee that makes us do it regardless,
let's celebrate.

For the grey clouds monochroming my window,
let's praise the moisture and the open-mouthed
ground.

For the leaves overlooked by the wind, the dust
it loves to chauffer around instead, let's admire
weightlessness,

for what on this earth is not trying to break
its addiction to gravity? Speaking of tethers,
let's circle

back to the coffee, celebrate the refilled cup—
every sip bringing warmth and yes, undernotes
of bitterness.

Let's celebrate the creaks under our feet
and in our knees, how ache, that neglected
lover

kisses every jointed crease on sleepless nights,
a dedication that can feel exactly like pain.
Let's toast

and cheer and huzzah for every letter used
in *blue*, in *fork*, in *Wednesday* or *mundane*,
rolling them

like calligraphy over our tongues. For what,
tell me, what's better to celebrate than this?

WINGS

BY CONNIE SOPER

We sipped Turkish coffee in the plaka,
swirling and tipping black grounds
that stained our porcelain cups.

I don't remember what destiny was left
in the dregs
of that concoction. I only remember

the heat as its own presence,
large and looming; how August shimmered
a white haze over Athens.

It was then, our bones slow and heavy,
we rented a room bare in its necessity:
bed, window, half-enchanted view.

Heat coursed through him like a juice
squeezed from the sun, seeping
between hollows and curves,
through sweet mounds of flesh
down to his tanned feet.

It was not love

that took us there; rather, a coolness
paid by the hour. A ceiling fan ticked
its metal wings, whirring occasional relief.

We waited until the sun quit the sky
so the moon could rise over ruins;
until a restless flutter of breeze
caused the curtains to sway and gray cats
in the alley were howling again.

THE FERMI PARADOX

BY ERIC FISHER STONE

The Drake equation estimates the number of spacefaring extraterrestrials. Estimates range from over a thousand to one million alien civilizations living in the Milky Way. That none have been found or contacted the Earth, despite their high probability of existing, is called the Fermi Paradox.

San Antonio, I walk the river bars.

A mariachi band thunders guitars,
bawling mournful ballads
this dough-warm night. Moon,

take my hand in your bridal light.
Cosmos, bring me alien ships from depths
telling me humanity might survive
its mania for missiles and mansions.

Dinosaurs, the dodo, extinct ghosts
gnash muffled griefs in the void,
stars and planets glugged by black holes
slurping the abyss. Through speakers,

Hank Williams croons freight train vowels:
his lonesome elegy to love,
to lips soft as birds, kissing
mutual language without words.

Rabbits whisk over brambles.
Sheep wool curls like hot threads of straw.
Sparrows sing that Earth isn't lonely.
The world is a voice from the stars.

LOVE'S GEOGRAPHY

BY SANDRA ANFANG

Love's roadmap
drags us underground
we burrow with rodents
push our secrets
to the surface in mounds
talismans for tentative travelers

Night terrors squeeze me
hold me, bind me to your heart
stroke my dirt roads
pick corn silk from my hair
skip stones on my waters
spouting from unseen geysers

Dine on my longing for your leaves
impersonate our fears
'til we come screaming to the fire
chase me through the bone yard
of your dreams

When we are spent
lying on the shards
of black sand beach
saddle a giant tortoise
and take me home

PEARLS UNWORN WILL DIE

BY PATRICIA DAVIS-MUFFETT

Calling from the other side of the world,
you speak in waves of longing--
"How do you feel about pearls?" I imagine myself
a different woman--red lipstick, kitten heels.
You navigate Manila's multi-stranded stalls,
find one luminescing blue--rough, as if broken
still carrying its mollusk life.

Chilly morning, the pearls cold, unalive--
but heat flows from a body to its surroundings,
bringing everything to equilibrium.
All day on my neck, like a snake coiled
or tiger draped, the necklace takes my heat
stores it in nacre, driving deeper
into stacks of argonite.

Pearls unworn--say, stored for safe deposit--
become brittle, discolored, dry.
We return to each other, at the end of long days.
Undressing, I leave the pearls for last,
hold them to my cheek as they radiate.
I slide into bed, return my body home,
head on your shoulder, breath matching yours,
heat flows between us--brittleness fading,
alive in this moment.

CHICKEN AND THE EGG

BY KAREN GREENBAUM-MAYA

Daughter's tattoo froths Hokusai sea foam. Mother's new tattoo cradles a pearl, sealing off a flinty irritation of sand. Daughter signs up for hot yoga class. Not for pregnant women. Mother posts selfies from Bikram, sweat soaking her sports bra. *My heart center is connecting with the universe.* Daughter goes vegan, won't eat what had a mother. Mother inhales smoothies green with kale, bitter with celery. Daughter interns high on the navel of the world, Cochabamba in Bolivia, seeking language her mother can't eavesdrop. Mother hikes Machu Pichu. *Why don't we learn tennis,* she says. Daughter gets a new tattoo, in skin-toned ink.

“ALI MCGRAW TURNS 79 & LOOKS TOTALLY DIFFERENT”

BY ZEINA AZZAM

Ali McGraw is aging and I am, too.
I want to click on the headline
to see her and Sophia Loren at 83,
Sidney Poitier, 90.
Just how is Ali *totally different*?
Will I think that her face has aged not so well?
How pronounced are her wrinkles,
how blotchy her skin, how ashen her hair?

It's as if the stars in the drama parallel my life,
made to come back and entertain again—
but they arrive with an unsentimental update:
even the famous and the beautiful
become flowers past their peak.

My own body, in an arc of decline,
has begun to accept the news,
the sagging and forgetfulness, too.
Outside, the spring daffodils have died,
tulips keeling, petals dried.
Bending my aching back, I snip stems
and remember loveliness—
an obituary in images.
My fingers flick away gnats
like nettlesome thoughts.

MOM SELF-DISTANCES BY WRITING POEMS IN THE GRASS

BY BETH OAST WILLIAMS

After week five, it's easier to count palms
than fingers, easier to count scratched
up pages than hash marks on a wall.

Mom sits like a child
in the grass just to escape the paint
of a room, lets the curiosity of ink
lead her somewhere warm.

She holds a buttercup under her chin
like she's hungry for sweet summer corn.
Even now she craves the sun,
tries to read what it draws on her skin,
decipher brown dots, the dashes.

The pattern taunts like a coded message
from some god, illegible as chalk
words on the sidewalk, half erased
by rain. What does anything mean?

Wandering neighbors stare at Mom,
lying down in our yard. She digs a hole
where her laughs can hide. The world
is crazy enough without folks knowing
she waves at birds, listens for tulips to speak.

She is no more odd than a grown
man running, unchased, or water
raining out of the ground.
But who raises a hand to question?

Bowing a head is not just for prayer,
it's contemplation. In the quiet of solitude,
Mom's thoughts stick to paper
like the shirt to her moist back. Meticulous
script arcs like the bend of colors
before the sky completely dries.

RITUAL

BY TOTI O'BRIEN

On the balcony, she polishes a birdhouse
of thin plywood, adds a minuscule nail. A brisk
turn, the hammer falls down to the pavement.
Yesterday, as she watched the sun parade
in its red gown, she dropped a crystal goblet
embossed with a garland of cranes.
She poured vodka into the reservoir
of the pressing iron, realizing her blur
as a pungent, pleasant smell bubbled up in foam.
On the stove, the coffeepot rests in wait.
She stares at it blankly.
She has forgotten to turn on the flame.

Something is amiss. The toolbox needs
reorganizing. The padding of the ironing plank
is stained and torn, the coffee jar empty.
Time is dancing a round, two steps forwards
one backwards, slowly spiraling in. Time
is sleepy and drunk, shredded in long filaments
curled in ribbons now wriggling over the floor
like a scatter of baby snakes seeking twilight.
One by one, she lifts them on her upturned palm.
Offers them to the moon, the cold goddess.

ETHEL IN RED

BY MARSHA LEWIS

Instead of the muted beige she
is modest in, a brash-colored cloth
swimming. Licks the horizon line
like flame, flies out beyond her.

Will that be her afterlife,
a lush flamenco watercolor,
for years of sewing rips
and threading unspoken anger
through the needle?
What is the reward for tight-lipped prudence
while frustration rifles its way
into your joints?

I would give her fabric
the color of madness and watch
what it becomes under her thumb,
in her skill see it turn
into a skirt that carries fire-

wood, thread, supper
casseroles and the emotions
of the ministers around her
in hidden pockets. Then sweep it into

a glorious whirl of blur
that centers her, its calm eye,
til she is ready to reveal
herself as crimson, furious,
desirous of full-throated rage.

Section Two

PORTLAND'S COVEN

BY BRANDY MCKENZIE

. . .as many as 16,910 roosting crows. . . begin to arrive in the city before sunset and fly in from all directions in groups ranging from a handful to flights of many dozen birds. Pre-roosting is a raucous time when crows gather, vocalize, allopreen, and engage in impressive flight displays. However, by the time darkness overtakes the city, the crows have settled into hundreds of trees, become silent and sleep until just before dawn. --pdxcrowroost.com

No peaceful prayers for these penitents, no;
flight on easy promise & landing on those tiny limbs
bent like a baby's pigtails they always choose
the smallest, the highest, as if they know
their hollow bones aren't much more than
a breath, the last exhale of daylight
chased into the hills by small dark absences,
pinioned night the trees in their innocence
raising arms raising hands tangling
the clans in their hair this nightly
trickster laugh anti-harmony of ten
thousand voices coming from above
and behind swirling fractured mosaic of sin
spinning above some sharp-beaked death
perforating the sky ten thousand converge
every dusk, fifty miles to arrive and who
draws the route but our own dream selves
we're always so desperate for more
& the crows grant our wish crowing
and cawing and honking and clacking
until we're blinded by the omens of our
own mawkish want our need for a coven
of monks and magicks to pepper our streets
with the wastes of legends, our broken
black selves and sharp silence

WILDFIRE ENTROPY

BY JUDITH MIKESCH MCKENZIE

In the smoke the spectres move
ghosts in a child's room

doing their work while she sleeps
beneath the flames.

The day you left dry leaves blew
thru the window

onto my floor skittering across
the wood like fireflies

in mountain air. When the moment
comes that the past

explodes into today's air the shower
of sparks burn, and spirits

move under cover of the smoke.
Once burned, the ash can never

return to what it once was.
Ash is evidence of the

inevitable unending shifting
of the universe

towards ground

ADVANCE DIRECTIVE

BY JAN SEAGRAVE

We expect burnt remains to settle like dust
but the finest particulates rise
and mix in the batter of being
small eddies in the Milky Way

We want ashes cast upon the surf
to be foam forever on a fraying swell
but soon they give their salt to the sea
their calcium to clams

their hard white wings lining the beach
footprints of retreating waves
Pig-tailed girls sandy with surprise
plunk their seashells into pails

to show the grandparents waiting inside
who write their wishes in advance
Scatter us where the view is free
or back of the old family home

But release my elements to beauty irresistible
to the place that will always draw you back
the world even then
still stunning

UNANSWERED PRAYER

BY DAVID DIXON

Last night they said you were “put on a vent”
with no explaining needed, for this is our new way
of eloquence, of making ourselves at home
in unfamiliar circles; letting hair down and propping up
feet in foreign spheres of pretend cool, hip, savvy.

So newly plugged-in and in-the-know dropping words
with no fears of their brokenness, no sudden reflexive lurch
or lunge to catch the fall, no instinct to retrieve. Or save

us from casual notions of tubes-in tubes-out breathing
machine life support gas exchange rate rhythm tachy
brady hypo hyper S_1S_2 O_2 CP SOB CPR DNR PIP
auto-PEEP normal PEEP not a peep in the house

this morning as I download you and other additions
into prayer files, where I will be reminded to lift you
like an unmoored ship in the rising tide and even though
I really have no conviction, no idea what this means I still
manage to do it for a couple of days, until the phone call

which says it wasn’t you after all but merely
a great uncle you were fond of in a clear case
of mistaken identity which is understandable
in a small town and not to be confused with
gossip or hearsay or scuttlebutt or prattle or

leaving me on deck like Noah and Gilgamesh
waiting for the return of fine-winged supplications,
fully commissioned, anointed and dispatched,

while hoping, praying even, for blank skies
and the sign that something, anything heartfelt
would stumble upon familiar branches in which to roost;

and finally find no God-damned reason to return.

THE ARCHEOLOGY OF GRIEF

BY DIANA DINVERNO

Beneath a bright sky, in a year we dismiss as medieval, a man accompanies a cart piled with bodies, including his wife and child, flesh bruised by disease, to make certain they're handled with care by day laborers tasked with their delivery to a mass grave outside city walls. Once they arrive, workers heave the dead into earth's yawn. The man howls, runs down to his family to untangle them from others, place them side by side, fold hands across their narrow chests, sees sun glint his wife's heavy braid, tendrils framing her face, the delicate band he placed on her finger on an afternoon when they'd wandered among lilies. There is laughter, followed by impatience, when the man refuses to climb from the pit. Instead, he falls to his knees, welcomes the rain of shoveled stone and clay, spreads his body over the woman, her hair still full of light, the boy who only days before sat on his lap, petted, then kissed his cheek.

ALTAR

BY SARA JEANINE SMITH

These stones are stacked
for my memory of you,
a pile pointing to the blank sky
where the black wings
to which I was once bound
once flew, now flounder,
a clatter of hollow bones.

Your shape is now a shadow
I paste onto blurred background,
your voice a faint cawing.
You are as thin as charred paper,
a wavering vane cut from tin,
metal whose edge I won't touch,
its outline fading as my vision recedes
from you, some distant idol
I have shoved into pagan places.

Here is my religion now:
I cannot worship what I have reduced
to sticks and stones, cannot crush
a heart that is so damned hard,
whose cold catechism
is only a question:

*how can hate become itself
without first having been love*

ODE TO A DEAD FRIEND

BY FASASI ABDULROSHEED OLADIPUPO

Like last year, I wrote this kind of poem, ode
to my brother, when the world said
my mother did not own strong limbs
to hold precious things, like gems, like roses,

they said how could she let go of her fruits,
she is a tree that easily gives up to the harmattan.
After you left, the world turned your mother
into a sad news, some days they call her witch.

The last thing they called her was a rabid dog; dìgbòlugi.
They said you are just a ritual; ètùtù for her bird to keep soaring,
some said she has owed more than she could pay back,
she is the reason your wife becomes empty, a shadow of herself.

In the market, all the children run after her,
after you left your mother becomes a colic horse
keeping the company of the house, she becomes
a dying dog that won't be let alone, she becomes

a name for wicked mothers, nostalgia is taking her life,
the world is killing her, accusing her of God's doings.
They call her god, drinking from the skull of her own child.

WARNING!

BY ALFRED FOURNIER

Do not feed honey to infants under one year.

They may give up the breast.

They might sprout mandibles and gnaw
the crib rail restlessly, fly from the window
with a craving for wildflowers
and forsake human form.

And who can blame them?

Distillation of floral nectar gathered
in a million flights of drones, passed
mouth to mouth—whole societies
ordered around this purpose—to hover,
to taste, to fly, pollen-laden legs
dusting the air, trailing back to the hive.

And isn't this how humans began?

Community and kin. Returning with food
to nourish our young. Stories 'round
the firelight. Cherished home among
rivers and plains, before we got the taste
for nature as commerce.

A memory this deep becomes a danger.

Do not feed honey to your infant.

They may become famished
for a world long gone, waking up hungry
in a place where nothing is sweet.

PIPER DREAM

BY PATRICIA FROLANDER

The runway is gone, overgrown with grass and weeds.
Robert's hangar was the first to fall—tin roof collapsing into the void
followed by each metal side spilling into the open front
where he once taxied his life savings.

The others fell the same —folding in upon themselves.
Now the hoe, plow, and truck have done their duty,
left no trace of yesterdays. His Piper, the neighbor's Cessna,
the Beechcraft long-ago sold, the men forgotten.

Echoes of *Clear!* The thrust of engines as they caught,
the deafening roar, wind purged from propellers—
only a light breeze tips the grass, the silence more deafening
than thunder when the planes lifted into the blue.

A BONE THAT CAN'T SPEAK

BY GARRETT PHELAN

The stars move tonight.
I can feel them shift inside me.
The constellations fret.

The fevered moon
scrutinizes bones in my hands.
They are fossils
that include
the details of ancestors.

I use words inside my fingers
to anxiously write thank-you notes,
but here, here's a bone
that cannot speak.

I fill a charnel house
of questions it can't answer, like,
where do I belong
and for how much time?

SITTING

BY ANTONIETTA BOCCI

Otherwise it'd be allowed
to escape or satisfy
such turbulence of the soul.

But here must lie the 'cure' – in
brushing the Other's essence
without truly grasping it.

In this place and time, it is
possible only to sit
with what inhabits the heart.

AT FIVE

BY AMY MOORE

God sleeps on the piano, he says,
while swirling plastic bricks. Budding
engineer, he builds fantastic worlds

where imprisoned melodies await
their fate & calloused fingers.
He says *God sleeps on the piano*,

as if it were a fact. Nothing is abstract;
from my breast he drank agnostic milk.
He builds fantastic worlds, nonetheless,

hearing silent refrains clatter through;
to be freezing hot, to declaim:
God sleeps on the piano. He knows

we have no god within our walls, just
squirrels and rats and mice who nest within
the fantastic, plastic worlds he builds.

At five, he knows how to prepare for
loss. Spiderman is just as real as
squirrels and rats and mice. And, God,
yes, god — sleeps on the piano.

A DAY OF ANGELS

BY JOHN M. DAVIS

down

from the heavens,

angels with no orders,

no stones to throw.

only words soft as sighs, wings

of the lightest snow.

high in the sky,

angels sozzled on the sun.

light passes clear through them.

not a single shadow

shrouds

the backs of heaven's clouds.

bending light

into night

like the closing of an eye,

they fold their wings around darker things.

and let the stars go by.

NO ONE EXCLUDED

BY ANTONIETTA BOCCI

Fragility /frə'dʒɪl.ə.ti/

noun [U]

Property inherent to the
human being, consisting in
reduced levels of resistance
to impact with life's cruelty.

Strength /streŋθ/

noun

Ability of some human
beings to bear the weight that stems
from observing and accepting
their manifest fragility.

Stupidity /stju:'pɪd.ə.ti/

noun [U]

Fault of any human being
attempting to cover their own
inadequacies by calling
themselves 'strong', the Other 'fragile'.

WOULD YOU PLEASE STOP WHISTLING, PLEASE?

BY HAYLEY MITCHELL HAUGEN

My dad is genetically programmed
to whistle, "Hey Jude." I hear him
washing the cars of my childhood,
always humming, whistling, no weight
of the world upon his shoulders.
Even now, at age eighty, he hoists
a paint-roller with the ease of a tune,
replasters the bathroom tile, patches
a hole in the neighbor's roof,
whistling his way, making it better.
It's that other whistler who haunts me now,
my uncle, whistling over each Thanksgiving
turkey, half-naked in his kitchen,
sweat rolling down his huge,
impossibly pregnant-looking belly.
Even on holidays, he wore nothing
but swim shorts. Outside, he allowed
his fat penis to loll obscenely outside
his gaping trunks. I didn't know
exhibitionist, knew only his whistle,
the beautiful, terrible sound
of that perfect pitch. Neil Diamond,
Roger Whitaker, Cat Stevens –
he whistled whatever the family danced
to. Each time his fingers entered me,
his quiet niece, a child, he whistled.
Somedays now, I am blindsided.
My husband's weak whistle, I think,
is hardly worth the effort, but when
he hits a note just right, my skin crawls.
I want to ask him, Will you please stop
whistling, please? But I don't want to be
that woman, that damaged girl, that one
person at the party who can't appreciate
a little music.

VISIONS OF POTPOURRI DANCE IN MY HEAD

BY RANDY MAZIE

potpourri...

dried petals and spices in a bowl or sack
a barge adrift with venerable fragrances
a dying bouquet which cannot be worn on a first date, nor any thereafter
a nursing home for august colors and earthy hues
a class reunion of retired tints of aging baby blues, palliative pinks, redacted
reds and weakened-willed yellows

potpourri...

a residential treatment facility for drying-out buds
a cemetery of small headstones of decaying floret accoutrements
proof for the macabre that death can smell sweet
a cover-up for musty boudoirs and crusty bustiers
that which is strewn along white lace on old tables with china tea pots and
dainty saucered cups

potpourri ...

organic impressions of Matisse paintings
that red velvet couch aroma in the Salon on the Rue des Moulins in old Parez
that piquant slap you receive upon entering a vintage collectibles boutique
a trick used to hide a damaged veneer
spring's lingering decay into winter incarnate
lip-popping slopping verbal fireworks, even without the "t"

potpourri...

the anthology
of nature's seasoned blossoms;
poems of dried petals

ITS 3 AM AND I MISS YOU

BY MIRANDA RODRIGUEZ

if i could peel back my scalp
and peek into my skull
i'd spill a million sonnets to the stars
recipes for soups
and a home for you and i
in a landslide of lavender and silk
with a choir of evenings
where the sky was lit aflame

Section Three

CENTO FOR HIS MONOLOGUES

BY RIKKI SANTER

*excerpts from five seasons of Rod Serling's
opening and closing narrations*

with many bromides applicable,
a collection of question marks
as they are wont to do in a very special bivouac area —
since this is strictly a story of make-believe
a strange province
a shadowland
small exercise in space psychology
not a virus, not a microbe, not a germ
not a good-natured counterman
not a gentle product in the form of a grandmother
or a twisted fanatic
or some rough-and-wooly nail-eaters
but proof positive that you can't out-punch machinery
in rebellion against the mechanics of our age
and the moment we forget this,
the ninety percent of the jigsaw pieces,
then we become the gravediggers
with the aggressive vinegar of a corpse
doomed to a perdition of unutterable loneliness
when fear that washes over
like fog and ocean spray —
yet you can find nobility and sacrifice,
no moral, no message, no prophetic tract
just a suit of armor held together by one bolt
call it faith
a naked target
like trying to pluck a note of music out of the air
and put it under glass to treasure,
that will-o'-the-wisp mirage that dangles
from the sky,
wishful thinkers made of glass
tormented by an imagination
sharp and pointed
as if some omniscient painter mixed a tube of oils

for some laughing ghosts that cross a mind
 chasing an idol across the sand
and leave a second chance lying in a heap
 to shake hands figuratively
for a dark spot from the tapestry of life rubbed clean,
 the genie you save may be your own
 tilt-of-center,
going over the top of a rim—
 let this be the postscript

ROOM TONE

BY R. A. ALLEN

*The recorded "silence" of a room on a film
location during which no dialogue is spoken.*

I went back to the old place to pick up a few things
before the movers got there. It was so quiet.
The stairway that was once our happy hill
to Bedfordshire could have now led up
to a corridor in a mausoleum. Too quiet.
It wasn't the hushed tranquility of snowfall
in a forest, but it wasn't like white noise either—
which could set you barking.
No, it was more like white space in a poem,
but less pretentious.
In short, it was its own thing.

In the library-cum-bar, the cast & crew
were patiently motionless. Some stood smirking
in mid-gesture. Others had stopped just short
of rolling their eyes. Like Brando, they remained
in character, even while wearing cloaks of silent invisibility.

I had been intimate with them all—sometimes in affection
and sometimes in opposition but always with wit.
Now they were waiting for me,
as their oneiric auteur, to say *that's a cut on room tone*,
so we could move on to our final scene.

WORST MAN SPEECH

BY SPENCER SAPIENZA

i never liked you or i always loved you
Long winded, short of breath
Off the cuff and open cumberbund
Well mic'd heartbeat
and canker sores coming through
Remember playing doctor
Now you're in finance and i'm in debt
Tongue in bitten cheek
Shush your niece
Airing dirty laundry as i untie my shoes
A prayer, a plug, ahem

P A U S E

Clear my throat with a full mouth
Glasses clink, wet blink
Half empty sentiment, does this hold water
Bowtie dipped in clavicle sweat
Frozen smiles, melting makeup
me me me me me and your mother in law too
Aggressively disagree with my earlier point
Hackneyed jokes done til death
Half of all best man speeches end in remorse
And now a song

DEGREES OF SEPARATION

BY KRISTIN BERGER

My husband — still mine on paper — walks with our son and dog on the trail, stringing the familiar line of parents and planet-of-child, still needing our heavy centers. Whatever needs to be said falls away, leaving one of the jobs of breath go. Our son watches, through his camera, a barn owl glissading the meadow, hunting at dusk. How diligently we continue to track each other less and less head-on, but by angles and degrees — the way his teenage face appears from under thick hair, then disappears behind the lens.

They say the moon is moving away from us at the rate of fingernails lengthening. One day, unhitched from Earth, it will leave only myth in its wake. This wants to be a poem bigger than the gulf I can't yet imagine — that moment of unbelonging, the moon no longer silvering the film of our minds, invisible seas of serenity, tranquility, seas never named or crossed —

Later, I'll lose sleep remembering the day as a planet, banking back to the trail, tugged apart by the sweet gravity of waxing, all my waters gone helpless before the moon's great, cold need — some storied love that hunted us, were briefly orbited by, where we once set our troubled feet upon, lightly.

ORIGIN STORY OF A DIVORCE

BY LINDS SANDERS

An invisible marble forms
between repelling magnets.

I ask her to retell the story.
That Mother's Day in the cafe
in Red Lodge, Montana when
she decided to divorce my dad.

He hit her once, just as he hit me.
Careless, like swatting a fly,
picking it up by a wing, discarding it.
Matched polarities separate.

We sat at a four-top by the window.
I forget I was there, only five at the time.
I like the story better without me in it.
Only the sunlight through the salt shaker
sending bright pyramids across the table.

My wife doesn't want me around,
he calls from the vacation condo.
Down the street, the restaurant
still serves dollar-coffee off laminated menus.
Some magnetic fields are unchanging.

I picture her sitting there alone
by the dish of individually wrapped jams,
sipping coffee and inspecting the freedom
under her fingernails. I take him out of the story:
his instructions to find a goddamn payphone
to call her father for a ride back to Billings.

Isn't it ironic his condo is in Red Lodge,
she asks from her new house in Oregon.
She sends pictures of her rain-freckled windows,
the sky reflected upside-down in a hundred orbs.

My grandfather, alive then, pulled up to the cafe.
My dad walked ahead, packing distance behind him.
My mom paced with her stolen secret and my short strides.

He doesn't know this story he co-authored
or Lenz's Law on charged fields effecting movement.

This is where I like being in the story--
walking beside her, my hand tucked into hers,
touching that invisible marble of her future.

ODE TO MY MORNING COFFEE

BY LARISSA LARSON

How could I start
my day without you?
Alarms buzzing in
barely open eyes,
sleepy stumbles to
sunrise showers,
battles of bras
underwear and
what to wear?
but one sniff of
your morning
dew, bless you!
My mocha man
full bodied, black,
a little bitter
but hey I ain't mad.
You put in all the work
to wake my ass up.
The early morning
taste bud rise:
splash of cream
sprinkle of sugar.
You go down
warm and smooth,
your bean brew is from
the sweetest tree.
People say you're
a drug well it's too late,
I feen for your caffeine.
Oh Joe, you know
how to curl my toes,
enthused and infused
with that Columbian
culture. We sway in
the kitchen, java gyrating
to the raspy voice of
Ray on the record player.
You almost make me
want to be a morning
person.

ABOUT BEARS

BY CLAUDIA PUTNAM

The cinnamon one — there were
a pair, one dark, one red, unusual,
two adults together marauding the
cherry trees. Met Mr. Cinnamon
on the trail into greenbelt, he heading
out, my dogs and I toward town.
We all halted, dogs gazing sideways:
What bear? Don't see no bear.

I spoke English to him. I imagine he's
good with English, overhearing it
while pillaging yards, probably better
than I am at Spanish, overhearing it
in the grocery store. What do you want to do?
He looked me in the eye, sidled off
the trail, bulky and graceful on the hillside,
polite: it was terrain I could not have
negotiated. By sidled I mean he kept
me in view. Those were my cherries
the other night, by the way, I called after him.

I'm thinking about him, his buddy. How they
haven't been around lately. A fire consumes
the greenbelt, the canyon beyond, just as
bears try to find their sleep. If the bear
is your spirit animal, your power, strength,
are innate. Your kryptonite is the circadian
surge. Hunger all summer, pray no one finds
you in winter. And fire, when it comes, as
it does, as it will, with greater ferocity month
by passing month. Each of us lives in the flame,
breathes exhaled trees. Inhales berries, barks.
Charred feathers and furs. It changes us,
to subsist like this.

RASPBERRY PICKING

BY DEBBIE K. TRANTOW

Picking raspberries, we find
Crushed-down grass, beds
Where deer have lain.
So familiar, so unafraid at night.
It's an honor, somehow,
That they leave traces of themselves.

We tangle through thorns.
Scratch on skin reminds us
That everything has its price
And even plants protect their young.
We gladly bear the cuts.
They are part of it all.

Sweet berries tinge our mouths.
We carry home the tattoos,
Exhibit the red carvings to friends
Along with ice cream buckets
Full of small berries.
It makes us feel like bears
To browse and talk among the thorns
Eating fruit from our paws
Instead of dishes.

AMAZON BOATS

BY RICHARD ALLEN TAYLOR

-More than 7,000 fishing boats ply the Amazon-Solimões River corridor.

The water level has fallen
in the night, but remains
high enough to fill this cove
where weathered boats,
tethered to shabby piers,
rock and pitch
almost imperceptibly
on the tiniest waves.

A lone crow, dark-cloaked,
menacing, perches atop
a mooring post, eyes
the ragged fleet pulled up
on a black shore
of boot-sucking mud.

For the people here,
to catch fish is to live.
Catfish, tambaqui,
peacock bass,
pirarucu, piranha.

Light rain clicks against
everything—wood, water,
soggy ground. Wide-awake
fishermen crouch
on the decks
of the closest craft,
ready to launch
into a curtain of drizzle,
gray sky draped
across gray water.

Yes, piranhas are edible.

AFRICAN PENGUINS EXPLORE THE FLORIDA AQUARIUM

BY ELLEN JUNE WRIGHT

Watching the black and white birds
more like little people or toddlers

waddle about the empty aquarium—
well-behaved children on a school field trip.

Their caretaker shares all the necessary
stats about their breathing, coloring,

wingspan, feathers and why they can't fly.
As part of the Species Survival Project

they'll double their natural lifespan
in captivity and since their habitat

is shrinking all the time,
they'll probably never go home again

like my ancestors never saw their homes
once they stepped through El Mina's narrow doors

passing from the womb into a never-ending terror,
packed into lower decks never to return.

IN MY LIFE

BY NANCY CHERRY

I've forgotten the smell of ponderosa pine on the trail up, and
the dust of hiking down. And I've lost Sierra snow melt, white water
over granite spliced by cold weather.

I've forgotten the winter wind howling down streets
in Port Townsend, Great Falls, and in Victoria
where night crashed into the cemetery, and the stone angel
stared through wild trees, bone-cold.

And I've forgotten forms of travel—the rattle of trains, the song
that lifts the plane and the song that helps it land. I've lost
my mother's breakfast voice, my father's frown,
my cousins playing in the hay barn, and my uncle at the piano.

I've forgotten misery on the tongue like a dry wafer. Forgotten
the loss of trees by fire—the sudden flare, the incandescent cloud—
and the road abandoned to flood.

A few names of wildflowers remain—the blue
lupine, the poppy, trillium, myosotis. I have forgotten
the delicate and the plain, but I recall everything about my sister.

PINNACLE OF STICKS

BY GREG NELSON

Coconino National Forest

All morning we climb ridges,
then from atop the mesa,
the dappled valley unfolds.
In the clearing, a tepee, a fire ring,
and a young woman in a paisley dress,
hanging laundry on a line
arcing between cottonwood trees.

She moves like leaves,
her auburn hair stirring in the breeze.
The red rocks spring with ghost dancers.
Here, it's impossible to forget
we are saguaro, we are raven,
we feed the wind.
She waves, and we wave back—

ours is a tribe of stubborn dreamers.
She clips a white T-shirt on the line.
It flaps, like a wing, or a flag
signaling the sky. We turn
and weave back down
the rocks, following
the paths water takes.

for Cliff

ST. CHARLES CANYON

BY JOAN COLES

This is where
the moose is supposed to be,
where the stream slows,
eddies
under willow whips, alders,
bright bundles of red-osier dogwood,
and meanders
through the tangles.

Brown grass
lies flattened by snow
that melted just
last week,
and grey-brown moles made
delicate feast of grey-brown earth,
and left
soft tunnels.

I never saw them.
Instead, flocks of warblers dive
sidelong, vanish in the trees,
and shake
the tips of spruce and pine. I can
conjure a black and august
presence;
I can set it in the willows,
feeding.

SUMMERSTORM IN 5 ACTS: A DRAMA

BY MELISSA RIDLEY ELMES

I

The storm came fast and furious, swirling clouds and earth-shaking thunder, lightning crashes and hard rain pellets, water spilling from the gutters, coasting in waves across the grass. Feet soaked, a woman spins about, glories in the gorgeous electric-blue sky peeping out beyond the cloud eddy abovehead, darkly luminescent light, symphony in cobalt, marriage of intensities.

II

Skylight interrupted and summer day paused, the storm didn't ask for an invitation. Ruined picnic, the ants are disappointed. The wind assaults the pool, kicking up impromptu waves; no one can enjoy them for the lightning strikes. In the breezeway, a child cries, inconsolable. He dropped his popsicle purchased from the neighborhood ice cream truck running from the rain.

III

The brown grass sways hallelujah as the water spills out of the clouds, resuscitating waterfall, lifegiving force. No one can claim *we did not desperately need the rain*. The rabbits will dance in the morning in the clover that springs up overnight and the brown world will look alive again under the new green. Inside, a mother sends the kids to their room and reaches for a book.

IV

Hard to say which is more electric, the jolt of lightning bolts or the tingling skins of the new lovers across the way. Hard to say which is louder, the thundering volleys of the storm outside or the upstairs neighbors pelting one another with torrents of words. The dog has to go out but the cat has left a hairball on my flip-flops; bare feet on wet ground swoosh-squelch, a gentler sound.

V

The storm did not linger, it was in a hurry to wherever it was going, moving so fast it did not even have time to leave a few clouds in its wake. No rainbow, either, just clean sky and petrichor; the sidewalks were dry before the thunder was out of earshot, the parched ground drank up all of that water and that Flood is a memory of a storm that was and now is not here.

DESERT SUMMER

BY CAROL EDWARDS

Desert summer sounds like the cicadas' buzz
high in the Palo Verde and Eucalyptus,
a drowning chorus tingle across your ears and neck.

The bullfrogs at the wetlands park burp their lazy
bass; looking at one, you'd never think
how its acoustic timbre resonates in your chest.

The wind is a balm, though the sun still burns
the tops of your feet. Monsoons start as
fluffy clouds peeking shyly over rocky hills.

The brittle trees still stand tall, surviving leaves
rustling at the smallest breath, their scant
shade cooling the ground for slowly roasting lizards.

The smallest beetle alights on the bones of your
parasol, seeks respite from its ceaseless
rounds, wingéd hunchback with a mighty grip.

Desert summer feels like an open-beaked
sparrow, lost at a coffee shop closed to
a pandemic, blind to the oasis two miles west.

LOVE POEM WITH A SNAKE

BY LINDSAY RUTHERFORD

We shuffle along a dusty, rutted road, chests aching
in the high altitude air, having escaped
the kids and your family, briefly,
for one short run together.
Placid lake to our left, foothills
pocked with rust-colored rocks
and sagebrush to our right.
One mile in, our lips rimmed with grit,
throats choked with dust, everything
too dry, too hot. You stop
next to what I think is a discarded cable
or piece of rubber tubing but
is really a garter snake
lying still on the side of the road.
You crouch down, nudge it softly
with your fingertip. I stand back, still panting,
worried that it's not a garter snake
but something venomous, something
that will spring to life and sink its fangs
into the gentle flesh of your hand.
You lean closer, studying
for signs of life. Four, five, six times
you nudge it, sending ripples
shivering down the snake's limp body.
Each time I flinch.
I'm impatient, want to move
on, although all I wanted
a minute ago was to rest.
You lean closer still, your face
a mere inch from the snake's
small black head. *I thought I saw
its tongue flick*, you say,
squinting at its narrow slit of mouth.
I don't want it to suffer, you say
and stand, grimacing, and —
swiftly, gently —
bring your heel down
on its skull,

twist once, then continue
down the road without
looking back, as if we'd just stopped
to catch our breath, as if this small
merciful act was nothing.
A copper puff of dust is already
settling around the snake, limp
black S on brown dirt. My breathing
steadies, a strange peace settles
in my chest. I don't know
whether it's the altitude
or this immense quiet sky
or your soft footsteps kicking up
their own small puffs of dust.
Perhaps it's knowing
that one day, in the end,
if I am lingering in the hollow
between life and death,
that you will do what must be done,
that you will not let me suffer.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Susan Michele Coronel is a poet and educator based in New York City. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in publications including *The Night Heron Barks*, *Prometheus Dreaming*, *Amethyst Review*, *TAB Journal*, *Ekphrastic Review*, *The Inflectionist Review*, *One Art*, and *Passengers Journal*. She was the recipient of a 2020 Parent Poet fellowship from The Martha's Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing. She is currently working on the manuscript of her first book.

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

Patricia Davis-Muffett (she/her) holds an MFA from the University of Minnesota. She was a 2020 Julia Darling Poetry Prize finalist and received First Honorable Mention in the 2021 Joe Gouveia OuterMost Poetry Contest. Her work has appeared in *Limestone*, *Coal City Review*, *Neologism*, *The Orchards*, *Pretty Owl Poetry*, *Loch Raven Review* and *Amethyst Review*, among others. She lives in Rockville, Maryland, with her husband, three children, one good dog, one bad puppy and one demon cat.

Diana Dinverno's work has appeared in *Peacock Journal*, *Ekphrastic Review*, *Orange Blossom Review*, *Panoply Magazine*, *The MacGuffin*, *Slippery Elm Literary Journal*, and other fine publications. She is the recipient of the Michigan Poetry Society's 2019 Margo LaGatutta Memorial Award, the Barbara Sykes Memorial Humor Poem Prize, and a nomination for Sundress Publication's Best of the Net 2020. Diana writes and practices law in Southeastern Michigan. Read more at dianadinverno.com.

David Dixon is a physician, poet, and musician who lives and practices in the foothills of North Carolina. His poetry has appeared in *Rock & Sling*, *The Northern Virginia Review*, *Connecticut River Review*, *FlyingSouth*, *Sand Hills Literary Review*, and elsewhere. His first book of poetry *The Scattering of Saints* is forthcoming.

Carol Edwards is a northern California native transplanted to southern Arizona. She lives and works in relative seclusion with her books, plants, and pets (2 dogs, 5 cats, + husband). She grew up loving the fantasy worlds of C.S. Lewis, Peter Beagle, and J.R.R. Tolkien. She enjoys a coffee addiction and aspires to be a succulent mad scientist. Her work has appeared in *Space & Time*, *OpenDoor Poetry Magazine*, *Origami Poems Project*, *Uproar Literary Blog*, *Heart of Flesh Literary Journal*, and in *Cajun Mutt Press*. Her chosen superpower would be to fly.

Melissa Ridley Elmes is a Virginia native currently living in Missouri in an apartment that delightfully approximates a hobbit hole with a family that lets her write because keeping her busy doing what she likes frees them to do what they like. Her poetry and fiction have appeared in *Thimble Magazine*, *HeartWood Literary Magazine*, *The World of Myth*, *Spillwords*, and various other print and web venues, and her first collection of poems, *Arthurian Things*, was published by Dark Myth Publications in 2020.

Alfred Fournier is an entomologist by day and writer and community volunteer by night, based in Phoenix, Arizona. His poetry and creative nonfiction have appeared in *Plainsongs*, *Welter*, *The Main Street Rag*, *Lunch Ticket*, *the Ocotillo Review* and elsewhere. New work is forthcoming at *Amethyst Review*, *New Plains Review* and *The Perch Magazine*.

Wyoming Poet Laureate Emeritus, **Patricia Frolander**, manages the family ranch in the Black Hills of Wyoming. Patricia's first book, *Grassland Genealogy*, was published in 2009 followed by her second, *Married Into It*, which garnered the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Award Wrangler Award for Best Poetry Book of 2011, The Willa Cather Award for Best Poetry Book by Women Writing the West and 2012 Best Woman Writer by High Plains Book Awards. Her recent release, *Second Wind*, received the 2020 Wrangler award.

Karen Greenbaum-Maya is a retired clinical psychologist, former German major and writer of restaurant reviews, and, a two-time Pushcart and Best of the Net nominee. Her first full sentence was, "Look at the moon!" Poems have appeared in *B O D Y*, *Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, *Riddled with Arrows*, *Comstock Poetry Review*, *Heron Tree*, *Waccamaw*, *Spillway*, and, *Rappahannock Poetry Review*. Collections include *The Book of Knots* and their Untying (Kelsay Books) and the chapbooks *Burrowing Song*, *Eggs Satori*, and, *Kafka's Cat* (Kattywompus Press). She co-curates Fourth Sundays, a poetry series in Claremont, California.

Hayley Mitchell Haugen holds a PhD in English from Ohio University and an MFA in poetry from the University of Washington. She is a Professor of English at Ohio University Southern, where she teaches courses in composition, American literature, and creative writing. Her chapbook *What the Grimm Girl Looks Forward To* appears from Finishing Line Press (2016), and poems have appeared, or are forthcoming, in *Rattle*, *Slant*, *Spillway*, *Chiron Review*, and other journals. *Light & Shadow, Shadow & Light* from Main Street Rag Publishing Company (2018) is her first full-length collection. She edits *Sheila-Na-Gig* online: <https://sheilanagigblog.com/> and Sheila-Na-Gig Editions

Donna Hilbert's latest book is *Gravity: New & Selected Poems*, Tebot Bach, 2018. Her new collection, *Threnody*, is forthcoming from Moon Tide Press. She is a monthly contributing writer to the on-line journal *Verse-Virtual*. Work has appeared in *The Los Angeles Times*, *Braided Way*, *Chiron Review*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Cultural Weekly*, *Zocalo Public Square*, *One Art*, and numerous anthologies. She writes and leads private workshops in Southern California, where she makes her home. Learn more at www.donnahilbert.com

Shelly Holder is a poet from Monrovia, CA, which she likes to call an 'outer-outer-outer suburb' of Los Angeles. She has commuted to many writing workshops, both private and professional, all over the greater LA Basin, and has come to appreciate the bounty of Zoom craft talks, workshops, and readings now available. She recently partnered with Surprise the Line to facilitate a poetry book club for poets, called BYOB+B. She has one poem published by *Mandala Journal* and flash fiction pieces published by *DOGZPLOT* and *Camden Press*.

Larissa Larson is a graduate student in the MFA Creative Writing program at Hamline University in St. Paul, MN. She serves on the editorial board of *Water~Stone Review* and *Runestone Literary Journal*. Outside of school, Larissa works at a used bookstore, explores the many lakes with her partner, and watches scary movies with her calico cat, Athena. Her poems have appeared in *The Briar Cliff Review* and *Tenth Muse*.

Born in Charlottesville, raised in Pennsylvania, and former resident of D.C., Tucson, Boston, and India, **Virginia LeBaron** is a peripatetic later-in-life poet, oncology nurse, and amateur ornithologist. Her first collection of poetry, *Cardinal Marks*, Finishing Line Press (2021) explores how we navigate the turbulent waters of loss and pain, and the unexpected guideposts that chart a path towards clarity and solid ground. Virginia is currently faculty at the University of Virginia School of Nursing, where she conducts research on how to improve care for patients with cancer and teaches courses in human development and qualitative methods.

Marsha Lewis lives outside Philadelphia, PA. She grows vegetables for a community center in the city and assists people with disabilities in finding creative ways to thrive during the pandemic. She likes writing down words and rearranging them. Her poems have appeared in *Panoply*, *Apricity*, and *Red Weather*.

Randy Mazie's poetry has been published in numerous media, including *Light*, *The MacGuffin*, *DASH*, and *the Anthology of Transcendent Poetry*, Cosmographia Books, 2019.

In a dusty past narrative, **Brandy McKenzie** has published poems in more than three dozen literary magazines, won various awards, been nominated for both Best of the Net and a Pushcart Prize, and worked on the editorial boards of three different nationally distributed literary magazines. Most recently, she has published in *Madcap Review*, *Thin Air*, and *The Racket*. These days, though, she mostly works as a paralegal, teaches critical thinking and writing to community college students, and tries to provoke conversation about the strangeness of our shared waking dream.

Judith Mikesch McKenzie has traveled much of the world, but is always drawn to the Rocky Mountains as one place that feeds her soul. She loves change - new places, new people, new challenges, but is always connected to the people and places of her roots. Writing is her home. Her poetry has been published in *The Poetic Bond X*, *The Wild Roof Journal*, *Rogue River Review*, *Plainsongs Magazine*, *Elevation Review*, *Scribd* and others.

Amy Moore was born in a small town in Virginia and, as an emancipated minor, pursued and funded her undergraduate studies at Kharkov University in Ukraine, the University of Virginia and UC-Berkeley, where she also received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. She is raising three boys, spends a lot of time in forests, and taught Composition and Literature for a bit over a decade to undergraduates at UC-Berkeley and a year to students of the Patten College-San Quentin Prison program. She has had poems published in *The Oak Leaf* and in *the California Quarterly*.

Nancy Murphy has studied poetry writing at UCLA, Beyond Baroque and with various private teachers and workshops such The Poetry Salon. Previous publications include: *The Baltimore Review*, *Glassworks*, *Stoneboat Literary Journal*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, and various others. Her website www.nancymurphywriter.com features previously published poetry. She grew up in upstate New York and earned a B.A. in American Studies at Union College in Schenectady, NY.

Greg Nelson is a depression survivor, a former teacher and an advocate for social justice and Mother Earth. He received an M.F.A. in poetry from George Mason University. His wilderness adventures include a solo hike through The Grand Canyon. His proudest accomplishment is being a dad. His work has appeared in *Snapdragon*, *Fredericksburg Literary*, *and Art Review*, *Penultimate Peanut*, *Phoebe*, and *the minnesota review*, among others. Greg, who leaves his cell phone in the car, can't imagine a world without poetry.

Toti O'Brien is the Italian Accordionist with the Irish Last Name. Born in Rome, living in Los Angeles, she is an artist, musician, and dancer. She is also the author of *Other Maidens* (BlazeVOX, 2020), and *An Alphabet of Birds* (Moonrise Press, 2020).

Fasasi Abdulrosheed Oladipupo is a Nigerian poet, a Veterinary Medical Student, whose first love is art making. His works has featured or forthcoming in Night Heron Barks Review, Poesis Literary Journal, Praxis Magazine, The Citron Review, 433 Magazine, Stand Magazine (University of Leeds), Louisiana Literature, Olongo Africa, Obsidian: Literature and Art of African Diaspora and BBPC July 2019 anthology. Fasasi writes about migration and its tales, homeland and Insurgencies, nature and ecosystem depletion.

Garrett Phelan is the author of the chapbook *Outlaw Odes* (Antrim House) and micro-chapbooks *Unfixed Marks* and *Standing where I am* (Origami Poetry Project). His poems have appeared in numerous publications including *Potomac Review*, *Connecticut River Review*, *Word Riot*, *Off the Coast*, *decomp*, *Unbroken Journal*, and *Leaping Clear*. He is a Pushcart Prize nominee.

Claudia Putnam lives in Western Colorado, on land taken forcefully from the Nuche people. Her town has a nice, suburban-sounding name, but early white colonizers called it Defiance, which goes well with Rifle, a town 30 miles away. She will be at Hypatia-in-the-Woods this summer, working on a chapbook about wildfire. Other work can be found in *Rattle*, *Spillway*, *Tar River*, and in dozens of other journals. Her debut collection, *The Land of Stone and River*, has won the Moon City Poetry Award and will appear in November 2021. More info: www.claudiaputnam.com

Miranda Rodriguez is a 21-year-old bisexual Latina witch from New York with a traveler's heart and a renaissance woman's ambition. More of her work can be found at her website: www.inlustris.art

Lindsay Rutherford is a writer and hospital-based physical therapist specializing in palliative care and ICU rehab in the Seattle area. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Cleaver*, *Literary Mama*, *Lunch Ticket*, *The MacGuffin*, *SWIMM Every Day* and elsewhere, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Linds Sanders (she/her) is a Montana-native who lives, writes, and paints out of her van which she strives to park on level ground. Winner of the 2021 Icebreaker Prize from *Sparked Literary Magazine*, her writing is published or forthcoming in *FOLIO*, *The Wayfarer*, *Rising Phoenix*, *Fever Dream*, and others. Outside of galleries, her artwork is featured or forthcoming in *3Elements Review*, *Bracken*, *Leavings*, *Bayou* and others. Excavate more at LindsSanders.com and on IG: @resounding_bell.

Rikki Santer's poetry has received many honors including five Pushcart and three Ohioana book award nominations as well as a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Her next, full-length collection, *How to Board a Moving Ship*, is forthcoming from Lily Poetry Review Books. Please contact her through her website: www.rikkisanter.com

Spencer Sapienza is an allegedly humorous writer from New Jersey. His mother loves him but often hates his work. If you'd like to encourage his behavior find Spencer on Twitter, YouTube or bandcamp.com.

Jan Seagrave lives north of the Golden Gate Bridge in California. Her poems have appeared in *Marin Poetry Center Anthology* 2016 and 2017; *Redwood Writers Poetry Anthology* 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021; and *Amore: Love Poems*, ed. J. Tucker. Before returning to her first love, poetry, she worked as a writer for Caltech and UC San Diego, a free-lance nonfiction, grants, and technical writer, a storyteller, and a librarian. She lives with her family between an oak and a redwood.

Sara Jeanine Smith is a lifelong Floridian. She is an assistant professor of English at Pensacola State College and the mother of two daughters. Her poems have appeared in *Barely South Review*, *Not Very Quiet*, *Pigeonholes*, *Roanoke Review*, *The Stirling Spoon*, *Psaltery & Lyre*, and *Hurricane Review*. Her chapbook entitled *Queen and Stranger* was published by USPOCO Books in 2019.

Connie Soper is a hard-core Oregonian who writes poems in her head while she's hiking or beachcombing. She has recently come back to poetry after a long hiatus and is trying to make up for lost time. She divides her time between Portland and Manzanita, Oregon, and is continually inspired by the time she spends at the Oregon Coast. Connie Soper's poems have recently appeared in *North Coast Squid*, *Catamaran*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Windfall*, and *Rain Magazine*. Publication of her first full-length book of poetry is forthcoming from Airlie Press.

Eric Fisher Stone is a poet from Fort Worth, Texas. He received his MFA in creative writing and the environment from Iowa State University. His poetry collection, *The Providence of Grass* was published by Chatter House Press in 2018. His second poetry collection, *Animal Joy*, is forthcoming from WordTech Editions in October 2021.

Richard Allen Taylor (Charlotte, NC) holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Queens University of Charlotte. The author of three poetry collections, most recently *Armed and Luminous* (2016) from Main Street Rag Publishing Company, Taylor co-founded and, for several years, co-edited the journal *Kakalak*. His poems, articles and reviews have appeared in many publications including *Pedestal*, *The Main Street Rag*, *Rattle*, *Comstock Review*, *South Carolina Review*, *Iodine*, *The Writer's Almanac* and various anthologies.

Debbie K. Trantow received her MFA from the University of Minnesota and was awarded the 2001 Gesell Summer Writing Fellowship. Her chapbook *Hearing Turtle's Words* was published by Spoon River Poetry Press. She's been published in *Gertrude*, *The North Coast Review*, *The Wisconsin Review* and other literary magazines and journals.

Beth Oast Williams is a student with the Muse Writers Center in Norfolk, Virginia and has attended Bread Loaf and VQR Writers Conferences. Her poetry has appeared in *West Texas Literary Review*, *Wisconsin Review*, *Glass Mountain*, *Into the Void*, *Poetry South*, *GASHER Journal*, *Fjords Review*, and *Rattle's Poets Respond*, among others. She was long-listed for Palette Poetry's Sappho Prize and nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize. Her first chapbook, *Riding Horses in the Harbor*, was published in 2020 by Finishing Line Press

Ellen June Wright was born in England of West Indian parents. She has consulted on guides for three PBS poetry series. She was a finalist in the Gulf Stream 2020 summer poetry contest and is a founding member of Poets of Color virtual poetry workshop.

Jonathan Yungkans is a Los Angeles-based writer and photographer who earned an MFA from California State University, Long Beach while working as an in-home health-care provider. His work has appeared in *High Shelf Press*, *Panoply*, *Synkroniciti* and other publications. His second poetry chapbook, *Beneath a Glazed Shimmer*, won the 2019 Clockwise Chapbook Prize and was published by Tebor Bach Publishing in 2021.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Fall 2021 Issue will be our Annual Crone Power Issue, a special issue for women identifying poets over the age of 50. We like to honor our veteran poets, those who've been in the trenches for years, as well as those stretching their wings, or just venturing into the publication world for the first time.

We're looking for poems that celebrate the Crone, the older woman with wisdom and life experience. The woman that refuses to be put in a box, or cave to anyone else's standards besides her own. Give us your brave, in your face, unabashed poems about life. Poems of celebration. Poems that rage at politics and patriarchy. We want the Crone to be seen, and valued.

Submissions open July 1, 2021 and run through September 1, 2021. We will close early if we get all the poems we need, so submit early. We also close to submissions early for the month if we reach our submissions cap. Put 4 poems in one .doc(x) or .rtf document, page breaks in between poems, please, and a bio for the magazine if selected. Please use the name you'd like to be published under.

If you are not a poet over 50 who identifies as a woman, please do not submit for our Fall Issue. For the male identifying folks, we will open Oct 1, 2021 for regular submissions. No theme, just fine, contemporary poetry.

Please read our guidelines on Submittable: <https://gyroscopereview.submittable.com/submit/>

Thank you for Reading!

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fine poetry to turn your world around



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