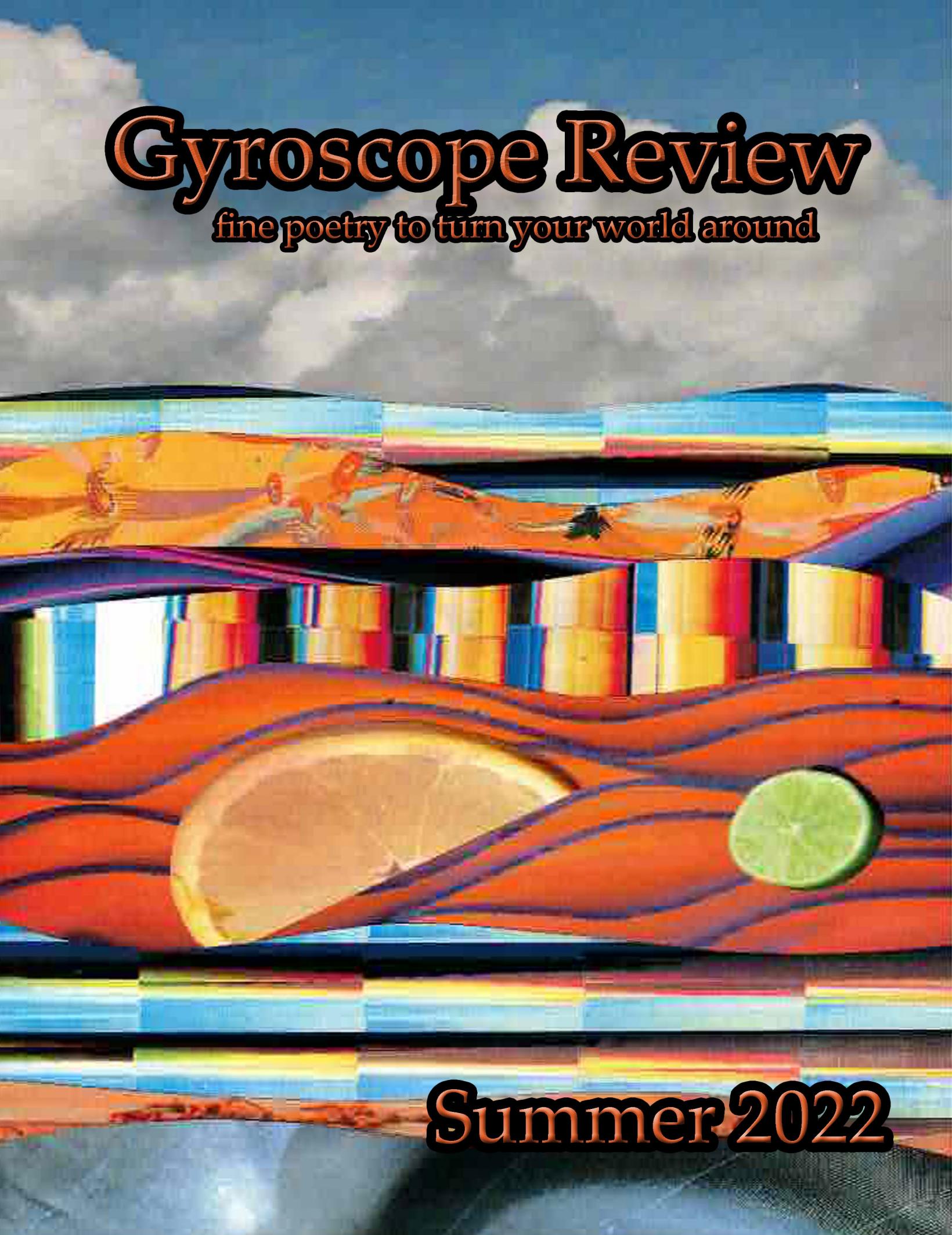


# Gyroscope Review

fine poetry to turn your world around



Summer 2022



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Issue 22-3  
Summer 2022

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Constance Brewer

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***This issue's cover art:***  
*Summer Crush* ©2022 Nancy Botkin

## From the Editor

Welcome to summer in the Northern Hemisphere! It's been a long time coming in my neck of the woods, and I'm sure I'll be over it in a few weeks when I can't get cool. In the meantime, I'll enjoy the flowers and growing vegetables, the baby birds, and occasional thundershowers. We've got a stellar lineup of poets for you to enjoy this issue and thought-provoking poems to savor while sipping your favorite beverage.

Speaking of favorites, thank you to everyone who answers our quirky little cover letter prompts. It brightens the editor's day and allows us to connect with the poets out there. Some of the results: Many of the respondents had a universal loathing for okra, with kale running a close second. Surprisingly, many gave thumbs up to broccoli. Oven-roasted Brussels sprouts were a theme. Potatoes were also popular, and why not? French fries, potato chips, and vodka. (Okay, maybe not strictly vegetables.) On the subject of Cake vs. Pie, there was no clear winner. Most insisted they could never choose between either, which is fair, although pie may have edged into the front by one or two comments. The flavors of pie offered all sounded delicious. And please, keep telling us about your pets. Cats and dogs, hamsters and rabbits, lizards and birds are all welcome because their job of distracting the writer is a never-ending one.

Finally, enjoy the wonderful cover by poet Nancy Botkin, who also has a poem in this issue. It's the first cover by a non-staff member, and it was a pleasure working with Nancy to get the perfect cover that says, *Summer*.

Thank you to all the poets who submitted, as with every issue, the decisions on what to choose are tough. There is more good work being produced out there than ever before. It's a privilege to read your work.

Constance Brewer

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# **Section One**



## DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

BY KELLY SARGENT

Sunday morning's  
family dinner prep;  
the yeast and I  
rise  
together.

## HOW TO WRITE A LOVE POEM IN THE SHY REDEEM

BY MARJORIE BECKER

First consider what and how the “shy redeem” contains  
the naked noon, the come on down around and watch the ground

in time, by night, by negligee and claim. How to write a love  
poem still depends on love, a set of wings, a winged season

near the sea of dawn and its delay. This love poem in the shy  
redeem reveals the ways the shy, their truth as rare as claim,

redeem, console us as their inner thought,  
their ripe beliefs compile, compose the golden folds,

the sort of wings that touch and taste and mend the sky. A love  
poem in the shy redeem supplies a map, a wanton key,

a world within, within, so hidden and unbidden that  
a song, a throng of notes themselves reveal the true

concerns, the willful soulful song. A somehow seer reappears about the  
time the shy emerges curious with wander-lust and wonder-lust

so luscious for their lovers who, we shy reveal, create  
and know to celebrate, to relegate the wanton wondrous

lining in the wilderness of wings and tonal touch,  
the space where quiet and sudden wildfire moans emerge,

beseech, retain the triumph of such luxury,  
the garments gone, the moments here to stop and play,

sustain.

## HIDDEN IN THIS FIELD

BY RALPH STEVENS

You never know what might be  
hidden in this field, the one you just  
walked into, when the pine woods  
gave way to sunshine and grass,  
brown in the August heat.

There is, as usual, delight  
in the small blueberry patch,  
the rocks, gray, humped like  
miniature whales, and  
covered with lichen  
instead of barnacles. Sit down,  
not because you need to  
but because the field  
wants to come to you.

Why not allow your mind to  
receive what is hidden here?  
Someone may have buried it,  
something once held reverently,  
a small thing not thrown out with  
the food wrappers, Styrofoam boxes.

It may be the bird that broke  
against the window thinking  
it was more sky, or the kitten  
stillborn in a pile of straw in the barn.

The boy who found it  
carried it here, buried it  
in a corner of this field. Let  
such hidden things, the soft  
bird or quiet kitten and  
a boy's tenderness,  
appeal to you, appear now,  
as you rest  
on this gray rock.

## TRUTH IS

BY GLORIA PARKER

Sounds foolish now  
saying that word aloud,  
but once it came easy,  
once it fit....fey

fey evenings, fey afternoons  
of conjured moons and lavish squander,  
nights as feral as a sweet tooth,  
fatal to resolve and alibi.

I tell myself I was too hungry  
to know you as anything but prey,  
that you knew me but recklessly,  
tatter and tongue upon the volatile bed.

Truth is...fey feels right again,  
and I suspect that were you near  
my hands would reach beyond my willing,  
my mouth, open again, and go for the throat.

**SALAD DAYS**  
BY ROHAN BUETTEL

we are an emulsion  
you and I  
a vinaigrette  
in our salad days  
I — bland and nutty  
olive oil  
while you  
sharp  
balsamic vinegar  
a spice  
with delicious flavour  
shake us up  
to highlight and delight  
a perfect combination  
together  
nothing  
in suspension  
if we separate  
but a mess

## A CONSTELLATION ON HIS BIRTHDAY

BY JESS L PARKER

On the last warm day in October, I harvest  
the summer wheat of your hair. Twirling

between my fingers, the sun does not  
discriminate each strawberry strand from

a spider's web, both silky fine and next to  
nothing like a coincidence. Your newness runs

through my fingers, loose like sand but a beach  
at a time and no way to rewind save for blinking.

When I reach for morning dew—silver beads studding  
your lashes—the blue of the sky is already trapped

in your eyes, sparkling like so many stars caught  
in one constellation. And I wonder who it is

that would know, to place them      just      so.

IN THE DREAM WHERE MY EX-GIRLFRIEND IS GOD  
BY ALFRED FOURNIER

it wasn't that she was perfect. There were games  
she sometimes played with love, moments  
of doubt. Mostly, it was the way she packed  
my lunch, folded warm laundry on the bed,  
hovered at my shoulder through the day,  
adding meaning to mundane tasks.

I imagine god painting a goldfinch  
shimmering at the tip of a low branch,  
getting the light and shadow just right,  
distractedly reaching for a HoHo  
as he steps back to admire his work.

She was like that, but with less ego—  
and I could hear her goldfinch singing.  
Welcoming me home  
with arms and eyes and infinite body,  
as if she were the universe itself.

## CLUMSY

BY CL BLEDSOE

I've died here before. I've died here  
and kept stumbling toward that place  
where everyone is safe. I've seen it  
on tee-shirts. I hear helicopters, but they  
aren't for me. You were the only way  
I could rise. Don't leave me with the moon  
for my only friend. It's cold and they banned  
me from Waffle House for starting  
a fire. I miss you. The moon misses not being  
the coldest place in town. Come back  
and let me learn to love you the way you want  
to be loved. I'll be all right. Take my arm  
as we walk into oncoming traffic. The fuckers  
will stop if we glare hard enough. I'll be  
the bed you stumble toward, half-blind and drunk.  
You've got your cat and wine but they won't keep  
you warm. Baby, I've got a fireplace. I'll use  
myself for kindling.

## SERAPHIC GHAZAL

BY ALISON STONE

Nectar? Red meat? What do you feed angels?  
When they appear, it's best to heed angels.

Scientists are working. Too slowly. Her  
children curse the doctors, plead with angels.

*Time doesn't repeat,* Twain wrote, *but it rhymes.*  
Are Satan's henchmen slaves, or freed angels?

The rustle of raccoons under the porch.  
Our garden hosts stray cats, milkweed, angels

with chipped, moss-splotched wings. Wounded gods gush  
ichor. What do stabbed demons bleed? Angels?

Swooping down, so hungry to be helpful.  
We see the gold, not the greed of angels.

Years after burial, radium glows  
in the bones. Preachers must concede, angels

can't match that light. If Hell's road's paved with good  
intentions, which walkways lead to angels?

Each drunk night, the same story – how he beat  
the devil at cards, shot speed with angels.

The dying float toward God or power down  
like phones. It's the living who need angels.

If earth's a school and life just lessons, can  
we be done with *Plagues*, proceed to *Angels*?

We only get the bible in a botched  
translation. Prophets can mislead. Angels

seem reliable, though Rilke says they're  
terrifying. What's the creed of angels?

Show kindness to the ragged travelers  
at your door. They may be, indeed, angels.

Stone checks pinheads, scans floors for dropped feathers.  
Aunt B's cure must be the deed of angels.

VINICULTURE  
BY JOSEPH DINALLO

Tart emeralds darkening  
toward dusky amethysts  
plucked from the stem  
like strings on a lute,  
the light songs of summer  
we strummed stained  
our tongues royal purple,  
made us rich in jams  
and jellies and jars  
of the sweetest juice  
a boy could drink —

nothing meant more to us  
than those rows of vines,  
not the pears so swollen  
with sugar that they fell  
and burst, the golden apples  
we drizzled with syrup  
and cinnamon, or even  
the milky strangeness of  
the Osage orange tree,  
which might have been  
the only one left in Ohio.

Then one day the uncles  
from the old country came  
with shears and razor hooks,  
and we cried as they had us  
help strip the lines bare,  
balled our hands into fists  
as theirs plundered freely  
from the leaves, bared  
our teeth as they sang out  
in a language that could  
never be our own —

how alien they seemed!  
Concrete layers and crane  
operators, steel picklers  
who punctuated words  
with strange gestures  
and foreign syllables  
that hinted at a place  
we had never been and  
could scarcely imagine,  
a place of rolling vineyards  
and Mediterranean heat.

At the winery the haze  
of flies and fermented air  
made our eyes water, made  
us drunk with wonder as we  
watched the rolling press  
press the precious clusters  
into must, as we explored  
the catacombs of oaken  
casks and the pipework  
maze of machinery, as  
the uncles told the stories—

the early troubles, legends  
of Eugene “The Animal” and  
the Mayfield Road Mob,  
Danny Greene and the streets  
in flames, the molten glow  
of the mill blast furnaces  
that could melt your eyes  
if you looked too long, the  
marbleworks and the  
stonemasons that made  
an entire city for the dead.

Their mouths dripped  
with a satisfaction so much  
sweeter than our own,  
and we had no words  
for how it felt to drink  
with these great kings  
of harvests past, these men  
who measured the fruits  
of their labors in entire  
orchards and vaults lined  
with vintage yields—

we had no words, but  
our tongues lingered in  
the liquid eloquence of  
*sangiovese*, trilled the tannic  
taste of *prosecco* and  
*primitivo*, and our mouths  
foamed as the effervescent  
syllables and honeysuckle  
musk of *moscato* and  
*pinot grigio* filled our lungs  
until we drowned.

## OH, THOSE LIPS

BY NANCY BOTKIN

Screw four-leaf clovers. We had red wax lips  
sold in the candy aisle for a penny. We batted  
our eyelashes, cooled ourselves with makeshift

newspaper fans, mugged for some invisible stranger  
with a wide-angle lens. We rose from our flat  
selves, crystallized like sugar on a string to capture

the starring role and live like the girls across  
the highway who spun in the direction of the earth's  
orbit. Our mother laughed. She knew about longing,

cigarette smoke curling around her head, hair twisted  
around prickly rollers, a little beer for shine, her  
housewife-self transforming into Marilyn Monroe

or Jackie Kennedy. We all looked up when we heard  
the roar, slick Mustang gunning up the street, racing  
toward a sunset so blood-red we could taste it.

## AFTER THE OVERDOSE

BY MARY McCARTHY

They left you naked  
on a hard bed  
in a cold room  
only a single white sheet  
to cover your absolute  
stillness.

No stir of breath  
I hear nothing  
but the roar of wind  
inside me  
scouring me out  
until I am scarred  
and empty.

I can't defend you  
from this light,  
its cruel white gaze  
leaching away  
all memory of heat.  
Frost blooms  
on your skin,  
a brittle film of ice.

All I want  
is to open the gates  
of my body  
and take you back  
into the ache  
of my emptiness,  
holding you there  
curled like the dream of a flower  
in the fallen seed.

**THE PARDONER'S HUSTLE**  
BY MAUREEN KINGSTON

“Because my only interest is in gain” (*The Canterbury Tales*)

The church's wild child, tolerated, because he's a roper, a shucker, because he wields the Word like an oyster knife, wheedles and scrapes shallow graves, revives God's beat in coffined hearts. And we open ourselves to him, let him see the pearl-lit sheen of our need: to be forgiven, to slip gleety shells, to be born again. And we swallow every note of his carnal con. Even after he's left town, even after we discover he's counted us like coup, like bagged frogspawn —our souls his ante stake to first-class ponds.

## ALL SOULS DAY

BY ANNE YARBROUGH

*for the young man whose body was found at the river's edge on November 2, 2017*

Soon my body becomes my boat  
my wake undone  
on the water's surface which  
carries me a while  
as I become  
more water than air  
surrendering one element admitting  
another, air  
becoming alien, water  
becoming home, borne  
into the great disinterested river

beneath the spans of the  
Delaware Memorial Bridge  
the chrome of the cars flashing far above  
soaring distant among arched rafters  
high and lifted up  
the nets of my eyes unraveling  
transcendent sunlight falling through shadow  
sonic echo of weight pouring over metal  
the stuttering thrum of the pulse of the world  
deep calls to deep

my boat unwinding, rivet, rib, seam  
while creatures of the mire  
common, unloved, dark dwelling  
draw near to sing homely psalms  
in unknown tongues.

## WEATHER WE KNOW

BY JOHN M. DAVIS

if you could  
you would pull the blue sky down like a shade  
and hold it there.  
we would have no reason for all the umbrellas  
and rain gear.  
if you stayed on the ranch and tried to get along,  
checked impulses,  
perhaps you'd have dreamed less about a blue sky  
and just learned  
how to swim or wade, or step over all the puddles.  
it wasn't you:  
those inner voices that repeatedly called your name;  
too many addictions.  
the caterwaul you squall sounds like the howling  
hounds of hell.  
we know to cover ears, avert eyes, shut our mouths  
and brace ourselves,  
but your storm upon us, we're caught again at sea  
in an open boat.

## WHY DID YOU RETURN TO THE INDIFFERENCE OF THE LIMITLESS OCEAN? \*

BY CARLA DRYSDALE

from Pablo Neruda's *Book of Questions*

In this January dusk you could miss  
gray figures walking on the bike path  
whited out by surprise snow.

The rooms of houses yellowed  
through windows as you stood in the street  
alone, looking up, as if already

not here. The podcast spoke  
about a man lost in a rainstorm  
of tears—he cried

and cried until his sufferings were heard  
by a doctor who dosed him with psilocybin  
mushrooms. The man saw the air

on star-fire and was healed of  
anxiety and depression. The doctor added  
the case to his clinical trial.

It's all data, everything is science. Possible.  
The doctor got into his car. He drove  
and stopped on the shoulder

of the road, he stopped and wept  
before driving again  
into an asterism of joy.

## GIVE UP ON YOUR DREAMS

BY SUSAN COSSETTE

I will never finish Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*  
or the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, uninterrupted.  
I did read *Moby Dick* in its entirety, but it took three tries.

The tapestry I began in 1996 is stuffed in a bag,  
incomplete vines and pink flowers, the thread knotted clumps,  
yellowed linen awaiting completion.

There will always be laundry in the hamper,  
dust bunnies cowered behind the sofa, under the bed.  
My 500 books still need to be alphabetized.

I sold my diamond to pay moving expenses after the divorce.  
I used to think I wanted to be successful,  
until I realized I was a better sergeant than a captain.

The sweetest moment is right before sleep--  
when my mind goes quiet and poems are born from seafoam,  
blown from the west, then sinking to the depths of morning.

## **Section Two**



NEWS FOR THE REAL WORLD  
BY GLORIA HEFFERNAN

This morning, I want to wake up  
with no headlines.

I want to find that my *New York Times*  
has been replaced

with a worn-out copy of *The Velveteen Rabbit*,  
and the Skin Horse

is inviting me to love the world  
in all its broken realness.

I want to touch the Earth  
where the soft fur

has been rubbed off  
and see it with my fingertips.

When I feel the need to know who  
is fighting with whom,

and what disaster occurred overnight,  
I want to hear

the wind chimes in my backyard  
whisper in the breeze,

*"I am as real as anything you  
will find on the front page."*

When the hard facts are just too hard,  
I want to press

the tattered velveteen ears to my cheek  
and remember that the hot cup of tea,

and the warm blanket,  
and the beloved sleeping by my side

are every bit as real as the rage  
that fuels the news,

and for today I want to embrace  
the real I can touch

with my hands and see with my eyes,  
and let the world rage on without me.

## SMALL PREY WORRIES

BY JIM BOHEN

*Inspired by Ukrainian Poet Dmitry Blizniuk's  
brilliant poem "Walls Trembling Like Horses"  
(translated by Sergey Gerasimov)*

One more fact melting like a Dali clock.  
Every sky rips apart.  
No, torn along their lightning faults.  
Greasy mushroom thunderclouds  
push the edge of a going-crazy space.  
The skies manage to hold. Barely.

The fear? Below. Where silence  
is a reminder that bombs are coming,  
bombs are due. Surviving? A coin flip.  
Time to tuck. May help.  
Probably won't. Do it now.

Constant staccato dance of loud.  
On rare off-beats that can be heard,  
distant brushes sweep a snare  
till proselytizing drum-roll toms  
lead things back to a beyond-loud.  
Thunder succeeds in ripping sky —  
perhaps for good this time?

Small prey worries.  
How will it detect the claws?  
Who is its enemy now?  
Who will find its bones?

Sucked dry, ends like jagged needles,  
they won't hear a whimper,  
won't inject a sound.

**DEAR CANDIDATE,**

BY BEN MACNAIR

I hope you don't mind,  
but I have recycled the flyer  
that you put through my door.

I did read it,  
but it only contained  
all of the promises  
you made before.

## ROE VS. WADE'S DISILLUSIONED LOVE LETTER TO AMERICA

BY JAY AJA

In the dragging of winding sheets, in the small night hours with the guttering candle flames, there was always you and I. Yes, you held a few scorpions, mostly coyotes, some buzzards, a skeleton or two. Yet, I never noticed your skin caving inwards, the graying caverns of disease, a mirror image to the paper moon shifting heavily overhead. I saw only your broken windows iridescent with sunshine hues—you, a red carpet, as alluring as the tongue of a cobra plant. It was hard to break eye contact. We made the air vibrate. In this haunted white house, the dank hallways became storms of energy, psionic communication, tsunamiing against the tiled porcelain, the fortified wood. You wore humanity like a tight costume in our game of role-play, such a convincing façade.

## LORD, YOUR HOUSE IS ON FIRE

BY DANIEL EDWARD MOORE

which is why I prefer trees over words  
that always fail at keeping my lips blooming with intercession.

It's paramount when you consider how confused life gets  
at the intersection of freeze and burn.

I understand, it's hard being rough, which is why my hands  
have become home for the refugees of splinters.

Scorching weather is predicted for Sunday, but cold makes me  
hungry for things that love is always afraid to say,

which is why my bones rub each other like tweaked out Cicadas  
praying to the sky, *Lord, your house is on fire.*

## GOLDEN SHOVEL FOR THE EARTH

BY JILL MICHELLE

*The Truth must dazzle gradually / Or every man be blind  
—Emily Dickinson*

We harvest now the  
bitter fruits of the truth  
we refused to see, must  
mind the fires that dazzle  
& destroy as we gradually  
sink into our apathies or  
decide to rise, face every  
day doing all one (hu)man  
can to slow the decline, be  
the sighted among the blind.

HUMANITARIAN PAUSE FOR HUMANITARIAN PURPOSES  
BY RADOSLAV ROCHALLYI

$$f(\text{The Dow Jones gains 400 points}) = \frac{\text{calling for a four - day halt in fighting}}{\text{Orthodox Christians' Holy Week } \pi i} \pm$$
$$\frac{f(\text{Noting that Orthodox Easter is coming})}{\text{S&P 500 now! - is all the more urgent}} dz +$$
$$\sqrt{\text{owing to the fact that}} =$$
$$Z(\text{Russian offensive}) = \frac{U.N. chief}{\sqrt{\text{said ...}}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{\text{and}^{-t^2} \text{Macron, Biden, ...}}{t - \text{said ...}} = i \int_0^{\infty} e^{-shi-t^2/4} dt$$
$$+ \sum a \text{ drops of ink}$$

• . •

A CANTATA FOR SUNLIGHT SAVING TIME-TIME  
BY DICK WESTHEIMER

*Time is a storm in which we are all lost.*  
William Carlos Williams

I awakened to conflicts among the clocks.

They've never agreed but this morning  
they squalled like sibling gods

with one claiming the sun and the other the stars.

I want to know which agreed with the woodpecker that stirred  
me from sleep. Neither, I suspect

because the clocks only know what I tell them. They do not  
thrust their hands, Thor-like into storm warped space.

They don't seize the lightning bolt of time.

Sun and woodpecker and the rising morning chorus  
should be sufficient to clock my day—  
yet I remain wed to the red-digit-telling.

My evening hours however are mediated by wormhole-time,  
intergalactic folded space-time-time, stay-up-so-very-late-time.  
These are the past-and-present-lose-meaning-time, where I'm in a great sea

of no-clocks, when the narrow light in my study undoes time.  
It's just pixels and photons and pages and me strumming string  
theory-time until gravity reasserts itself,

and compels me to my bed where those red-eyed digital menaces  
spear two different times at my eyes and I must choose:  
star-time or sun-time, enslaved-to-saving-time or no time at all.

## ASTROPHYSICS OF VICTIMOLOGY

BY DANÈLLE LEJEUNE

*- What is in motion stays in motion.  
unless acted upon by an unbalanced force.  
(an abecedarian)*

A statistic says that abused women are uneducated—  
Black holes behind an event horizon,  
Closed time like curves ... what's in motion stays in motion.  
Dear reader, IQ and education do not protect women.  
Einstein's theory has physical consequences.  
Forget what you know about who stays and who goes—  
Geodesic motion is part of General Relativity.  
Hole. Black hole. Black whole. Whole. An unbalanced force.  
Ignore the electron's angular moments.  
Just stop. All of it hurts. All of it hurts.  
Kindness of strangers can feel like pity—  
Like our itchy sweaters— like our names— What if the  
Magnetic movement of an object could match our pain, our  
Naked singularity? Our space-time? Our light. Our constant.  
Our gravity. Sometimes we feel so alone. A singularity.  
Planck's constant measures what matters and what is left.  
Quantum electrodynamics is how light and matter interact.  
Ring singularity does not have a diamond after all.  
Schwarzschild radius- rs of mass is radius is the distance from  
The center of a non-rotating black hole to the event horizon.  
Understand this. Anyone can fall into a black hole.  
Victims are not everyone else, not you, not deserving.  
Where can you unlearn these theories, in theory? You can  
Xerox the fliers, hand them out, hope that 1-800 works.  
You may look in a mirror one day and see Schrödinger's cat—  
Zero clue how you got here, who you are now, how to leave.

## AS STONES FALL

BY OISÍN BREEN

Where water sloughs off, the unreaching distance – it a muddy black, but colourless, too –  
Swallows it, they say, in kindled stories that linger in the bones and the half-light of soul sleep, too,  
And each is a monument to softly treaded steps, they say, here, at the watchpoint by the edge.

And here we worship new gods, each carried in an array of fly-cast stone, spitting atomic light,  
And this shadow-splitting ministry, borne of cutin, wax, and polysaccharide, yearns, they say,  
To become the heart of stars; and to light a path to our great house built from a boat of cedar wood.

And the house has a large low roof that overhangs the milk-white grass, here, where gods walk  
Among us, enduring us; here, where they taught us first to think, and then to dream in song,  
Until a rain of arrows fell, silicate shanking bone, cracking stone, and pinioning hard light to mud.

Most then soon shared shape with iron, and nickel, too; and the white grass blanched a hue of green,  
Though I, their devotee, survived, standing in a thicket of time-heavy trees, for I knew best the folds  
Of space, where I played childhood games of hiding; where the parallel can not track.

And with walking stick in hand, I travelled through all the nearby towns, to ask for respite,  
And for peace. None came. I marched, instead, while I could. Short of food and water, too.  
And the air grew poisonous, and what little that remained to drink fast became impossible to touch.

Then summer waned, and I found, at last, a near abandoned gate, under solitary guard.  
His supply was also short, and should I die, he would want for less, but he said he knew me,  
And took me in, and I chose to lie with him, more from pity than from thirst.

We walked together then, in desert and in brush, through fertile woods, our footsteps on the soil,  
Living soil, dead soil, soil upon which old trees feasted, and soil which taught those trees to sing,  
Sometimes, too, we fought to teach each other everything we knew, breaking staves till weary.

And we told each other every story we could remember, even of our childhoods, bitter sore,  
And we walked, gladly, until I stayed his hand, until he fled, until the ambush came, until I chose  
To remain, and later chose the whip, once my new masters knew what little I had for them to hold.

And for weeks, their blows fell, a meteor rain – and I prey – to satisfy the blood fever of a rope,  
And for weeks I stood between many worlds, on a precipice of lust and need and want,  
Until again arrows fell, silicate shanking bone, cracking stone, and pinioning hard light to mud.

I learned then, my family had survived, but under fixed taboo, but I could never see them again,  
Fated as I was to cross the sea – my soul held in cutinous stone – to teach strangers of my shadow,  
Of how it is – and was – merely the memory of a shape: the sun-scorched soul we share.

We took to a boat then, though it did not sail, instead it shaped the water to fit its flapping beat,  
As though it were itself a shadow memory of how we all become; and I, a new lover in my arms,  
I learned that even now, in my second shape, I am blind to how her small hands can hold the wind.

The boat had a hundred floors, too, and upon them masses of life moved to keep the water out,  
To keep sea vines from tearing through the hull, and their movement stretched my heart hollow,  
A state cured only by a broth of nickel, iron, breathing salts, and the counting down of time.

Yet now, my journey done, I walk among the venerated few, on milk-white grass, my spirit broken,  
So I might share a winter spent among these edifices of wood and stone, with nameless gods  
Who stir the shadow and its souls, and now I too must pinion hard light to winter-fattened mud.

## THE CASE WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

BY RALPH STEVENS

In the photo on the chest  
(it doesn't matter what chest)  
in the living room  
(you needn't ask whose living room)  
a man walks uphill in the snow  
in a red coat, a blue cap.  
There must be a camera somewhere but  
as is the case with photographs  
you can't see it. Still, allow yourself  
to picture that camera, lowered,  
resting now on someone's hip.  
Allow yourself to imagine that she  
joins the man in the red coat.  
There are trees in the frame but  
you know that by now the couple  
has walked out of the picture  
and perhaps out of the trees.  
It's up to you, to your imagination  
to bring them to their destination.  
A narrow road, perhaps, where  
a car is parked. A beach  
the sea has cleared of snow.  
It could be they are simply  
walking to a small house  
in a meadow, behind a stone wall.  
Be generous in what you picture,  
where you take them. Their lives  
are in your hands.

## WHO ARE ALL THESE PEOPLE

BY CLAIRE SCOTT

I tossed them all in the trash, all the photos  
framed on the walls of my sixth floor walk-up.  
A smiling uncle with midnight hands.  
A spidery aunt who fumbled through depression,  
grabbing every pill she could find. A desolate  
cousin with a collection of DUIs, a skeletal niece  
weighing sixty pounds at the age of sixteen.  
A frumpish mother in mismatched clothes  
and rolled down stockings who called the police  
for a case of single malt scotch.  
A father who pretended not to see.  
A photo of four children who look  
like refugees. Uncombed hair, rumpled  
clothes, blue eyes with blank stares.  
I am the second from the left.  
These are not really my family, couldn't be.

I scoured second hand stores, searching  
for framed pictures of regular people. Over time  
my walls once again filled with photos of strangers.  
A woman wearing a stole of Stone Martins,  
legs dangling. Surely my grandmother  
who read me the entire *Wizard of Oz* series  
one summer on Cape Cod. A dapper man  
in a pinstriped suit and a jaunty felt fedora.  
The grandfather who gave me a jangle of keys,  
trusting me to wind his clocks on Saturdays.  
A sporty man dressed in whites. My father  
who spent months teaching me to play tennis,  
chasing down the dozens of balls I whacked  
over the fence. A photo of four children on a dock,  
sun-touched faces, wide grins, salty hair. I am  
the second from the left. A beaming  
young woman with soft eyes holding a baby  
that must have been me.

**FOIBLES #1**  
BY KYRA KYLE

The Mactires salt their clear  
driveway because they know  
the snow will hit the plains again,  
even though it hasn't snowed

in weeks. The Wilsons put away  
their Christmas lights in Star Wars  
pajamas: robots climbing  
ladders to hail-struck roofs.

Dan walks his tabby like a dog.  
The kitten wears a harness.  
He has on Bermuda  
shorts and a leather jacket.

Ms. Paglino tosses spent  
pistachio shells on her front  
lawn in hopes they'll yield  
new pistachios or attract Canada

geese in another month, and I'm raking  
the fallen leaves I forgot  
to bag last fall in flipflops  
and athletic pants, watching Bailey

as he heads to Main Street in an anime  
hat shaped like a neon dog's head  
and a rainbow scarf, despite knowing  
folks in bars will mock him as they sniff

beer. It must be the second week of March.

## CHICKEN FIGHTING

*~1939*

BY JENNIFER SCHOMBURG KANKE

Couples still with no children to speak of  
splashed with the wives on the shoulders of husbands  
balancing in youth and in summer's first rays  
knowing that nothing could bring them to topple or  
sway, and that foolishness always won out over  
time clocks and whistles and clamoring bosses.  
Skinks on a rock, they sunned themselves after  
trapping the heat of the day in their heartbeats,  
storing it busheled to bursting like peapods  
greened and tough with the season's progressing.  
Soon all their houses would fill up with worries  
growing too fast for their pockets and purses,  
pushing them farther away from the mill pond,  
pulling them toward an unspeakable ocean.

## CURRENTLY SPEAKING

BY ROBBI NESTER

When we moved to this house, we found that it was haunted by the ghosts of those who lived here before we did, ten people squeezed into a space that would be tight for four. The floors upstairs were trashed, enamel worn entirely off the tubs, stained and scarred as ancient dentures. The plumbing screamed in protest every time we showered. Bit by bit, we had these problems fixed. At night, the lights still sometimes come on by themselves. Somehow, it seems intentional—the former residents, bent on revisiting their old digs, family spirits they sloughed off for us to shoulder—as if we didn't have our own. But then I never really understood this force. It's ironic since my father was a wireman, building transistor radios, repairing the TV, explaining all the while what he was doing. Once, he hooked an on/off switch to the outlet, impaled a hotdog on a nail. He even let me flip the switch. His hands knew what to do, while my hands never did. We've tried to fix the problem with the lights, but maybe it's better to let some mysteries remain, reminding us we're not really in control. Though it's a pain to have to turn the light off several times a night, I'm craving a signal from beyond, one that makes the work of our own hands a portal to the immaterial.

## I DON'T THINK WE LIVE IN CALIFORNIA

BY JUDY KRONENFELD

We drove down from grey inland,  
for the first time in two pandemic years,  
and now sit in our cover-up clothes  
that ward off dangerous sun, like foreigners,  
or anthropologists, or like a couple  
of old codgers—wait, omit “like”—  
on a bench overlooking a strip  
of beach in Laguna. The sun  
blinks behind clouds, then emerges,  
the star of the afternoon. The mixture  
of breeze and warmth exhilarates,  
though we don't move. When  
did thong bikini bottoms become  
a thing? The young female bodies  
in front of us playing beach  
volleyball seem almost pre-  
pubescently thin, as if built  
for only the most parsimonious  
of coverings. The walkers stream by—  
the women jiggling like jello  
in their midriff-baring bandeaux,  
or à la mode in breezy pastel  
linen, elegant against bronzed skin.

Later, we wander into a Native American  
jewelry shop, and find ourselves sharing  
our similar views on Israel/Palestine  
with the Palestinian owner. We are charmed,  
and charming, I think, though he tells us  
he took us for “out-of-state...*farmers*”  
when we first walked in. He almost,  
but doesn't say *hicks*.

## BONNE NUIT ISOBEL

BY TOBI ALFIER

The maid dusts the room gently  
as she takes a small inventory—  
Isobel had offered her so much,  
*after I'm gone*, she'd said.

Now the children and grandchildren  
are on their way to bicker  
and pick over the bones of a life lived  
in absence of their company.

Only the maid has kept her cherished,  
unalone and unafraid, her across-the-water  
ways and language as important  
as anything current.

The maid binds the old woman's hair up,  
fastens it with a clip from an ancient  
and secret love affair. She fastens her hair  
with the other clip, no one will want it.  
She lights a candle scented with rosemary  
and pine—the daughters will put up their noses  
at the masculine scent but the maid knows  
it's a beloved remembrance of the man  
who'd lingered in hallways and other rooms  
long after he'd gone. The maid puts a candle  
in her apron pocket—he was loved by her too,  
and she knows that again, no one will want it.

With every grace the maid says goodbye.  
A prayer in their shared language by the piano,  
her hands hovering over the keys.  
Another along the gallery of mirrors  
up a bannistered staircase, frames  
dusted and ready to be plucked  
by those who can't stop looking in them.  
The old woman was truly what angels are made of,  
like the soft intrusion of moonlight in a room  
where two lovers sleep, and the scent of rain  
on a warm summer night. Bonne nuit Isobel.  
Fly with the birds above the clouds...

## THE UNHYPHENATION OF TO-MORROW

BY HARRISON FISHER

Each family's vault holds  
tales of the unknown,  
tales of the supernatural,  
like the story behind the portrait  
of the drawn, dark young man,  
fresh from the old country,  
whose corner fruit stand  
would one day give rise  
to a modern supermarket chain  
born of a deal struck long ago with some  
mysterious personage,  
whose own story  
is dissembled by severally placed  
biographies intended to deceive.

One holiday gathering,  
a hoary old granduncle  
unhyphenated to-morrow  
and stepped away  
from the merriment at the table,  
wine glass in hand,  
heading straight out  
for the front lawn to commune  
with the night sky,  
later found in the black grass  
struck dead for no good reason  
directly under Mars.

## Section Three



**MY LAPIS GUMS**  
BY DEANNA BEACHLEY

my gums are blue  
stained by the lapis lazuli  
I grind for the manuscript I illuminate

For the glory of God

my snot blue from the dust  
I speak blue into the Holy Mother  
coaxing it onto the vellum  
from my thought and spittle

For the glory of God

most days I am at my desk in the scriptorium  
after lauds  
chant the blue forward  
I embrace the blue  
I shit blue

ultramarinus *beyond the sea*

you shouldn't let poets lie to you  
I close my eyes and all that burns there

blue

Holy Mother  
The Magdalene  
(God forgive—yes even this one  
they call the harlot)  
worthy of blue

my body—a holy instrument

## SWAP MEET

BY JEANNE DELARM

A round kitchen clock, batteries corroded,  
the correct time, some time.

This glass baking dish, we can use in our rental.  
Rubber dolls play inside a mini house  
dressed in swatches of dirty fabric.

Cowboys, Native American plastic men intertwine.

Vinyl rodeo corral fences tangle with palm trees.

Army guys in Cossack hats and boots  
lie down and aim rifles,  
bright blue on their vinyl bellies.

The toy remnants of past wars,  
forgotten wars,  
they found themselves  
thrown into degraded bins.

I ask prices of the young guy  
sitting on a folding chair  
set up inside an empty trailer truck.

How much?  
One dollar each.

His eyes glimmer.  
No. Free.  
Everything is free.

Every object glows  
with the fire of possibility of used matchbooks  
from bars in Las Vegas, Sinatra-time.

We bag it all up.  
I pass the truck and wave  
a thank-you to the young guy, his dark face

shining with sweat,  
his eyes down at his feet  
as though he'd just lost a girlfriend.

## AT THE ADULT TOY STORE

BY ANDY MACERA

It's not a crime to be here.  
A cop is not waiting by your car  
parked blocks away in front of a church.  
The security cameras are not streaming you live  
to family and friends, your boss.  
You can stop rehearsing lines for the big scene with the cashier.  
*It's for someone else. A gag gift. A joke.*  
He knows. Why else would you pay in cash?  
It's OK that it's yours. You have your reasons.  
Your fantasies. Isn't that why we're here?  
Wasn't the hardest part walking in that door?  
Like the first time you stole something as a kid.  
Maybe it really is a matter of inches.  
Look how close we're standing,  
the covered window bent over revealing a thong of low light,  
a Barry White-like voice  
riding the rhythm of a sensual groove,  
cruising through the heat shimmering off  
the hot pavement of your perfume.  
We don't even have to mention this place  
when we have a drink, our bloodstream busy,  
a rush hour of hormones, the stop-and-go making us unsure  
if we will ever get there, nervously peeling the labels  
off bottles as if they were clothes.  
Don't we all live with uncertainty?  
Aren't we searching for something real?  
At least we'll have a memory. In the end, isn't that all we have?  
So put back that Venus Butterfly.  
I'll leave this tube of Astroglide.  
And who knows? Perhaps one day  
when our children ask how we met, we'll look  
at each other with sly smiles,  
wondering who will be the first to tell a different story.

## **ANOTHER RIDER**

BY SAMN STOCKWELL

What I was doing on the train was walking  
to the dining car for chicken salad  
and a glass of white wine, carrying the travels  
of Admiral Peary, sighing as I do  
at the click of cars through the mountain pass  
and losing my breath for the bridge —  
matchsticks balanced over a gorge.  
My ignorance sneaks in front of me,  
the trees unnamable and a churning  
backyard fight passed; a witness  
without voice. My father said once  
he was sorry for what happened  
in . . . and he paused.  
Was it me he was talking to or another ghost  
in his ear? His conversations chased  
a fortune on the horizon while his voice circled a shrug.

I was his Cassandra,  
finishing my description  
while he wove an opposing tale  
from the news, looking for the right story  
with his name chalked beside it —  
an incantation before he slept.

## GEORGIAN DRAG QUEEN SONNET

BY SAM RUNGE

The damsels of the Athens Show Girl Cabaret clocked out of their *Boy Jobs* a few hours ago. Now they're cracking jokes about getting deep-dicked for a hamburger at Golden Corral. They call me a *Greedy Bisexual Bastard* & liken me to Burger King — *have it your way.*

Lights the color of blood dripping from an Achille's tendon tint the atmosphere. Stiletto heels pierce tissue, the blade twisting with an oblique sashay. Some of the ladies are more practical with combat boots designed for curb-stomping. They offer to trample my face — I don't say no.

Lori Divine's been voguing in dive bars for 40 years. Everyone says she's an AARP member. She denies the accusations. Seems unlikely such a haughty woman is anything but permanent. We exchange a European hello with a Southern twang — I try not to smudge her makeup.

Her cheeks — sweltering beige like the interior of pound cake, contoured with a buttery glaze. Her eye sockets — raspberries bespeckled, crystallized sugar. A stare replete with seduction. Her haunches — fishnet tessellation, webbed flanks powering through breaches in her nylons.

She struts a sultry promenade, powered by intravenous vodka-crans — the nectar of queens. Finally home, sublimated within this pocket of Queer Beyond: *How I've been longing for you.*

## UNDERSTANDING AMPERSANDING

BY KEN GOSSE

The “&” is just an “and” that’s canned  
(when mixed with other figures, it’s a curse).  
One symbol, not three letters, it seems terse  
but high supply keeps up with its demand.

Oft used in poems which cannot be scanned  
(sans meter, shirking any form, free verse —  
what some call better, others may call worse),  
its use should help its readers understand.

But does it truly lend a helping hand,  
or could it be it causes the inverse  
and interferes with words which should converse?  
Should it be banned or frequency expand?

But soft, its careful placement, like a cat,  
flows stealthily—it slinks where'er it's @.

## THE LIKE LIST

*—a Spotify found poem*

BY AMANDA TROUT

Karma, I must have done something  
right. Go tonight. The story of tonight  
is everybody wants to rule the world

alone sometimes. Liar. Let me go. Love me  
like I'm sick, envy green, love  
in the middle of a firefight, love like war,  
scared to be lonely.

Talking myself in circles. I want to get  
better—Venus ambassador, marathon veteran  
all for nothing cookie cutter, all out of tears,  
*limón y sal, abriendo puertas.*

The guide to success is genesis,  
curious hands and paper mâché planes  
taking over the world. Odds are  
restless heart, scarecrow, wandering child.

DUPLEX BEGINNING WITH A LINE BY JENNY GEORGE  
BY JONATHAN YUNGKANS

*But in certain rare moments, the gears kink.*  
Chain on my old ten-speed, caught late

at night in my sprocket. Chain caught in my head  
when I dare to shift gears, burn some depression —

cluster orbiting a hub of nerves. Downshift  
pedaling uphill to maintain momentum.

Recollections blaze. Leg muscles scream  
crossing sidewalk lines, breaking my mother's spine.

Is that really why I never rhyme? The back, crack,  
do-it-again-ness rolling its back, Jack —

why I never comb my name that way. Rolling  
tires kicking up bones to bang against my brain,

a cemetery of slim recollections —  
phobias revolving to seize my mental chain.

First line from the poem “Influence,” in the collection *The Dream of Reason*.

5/3

BY SCOTT FERRY

i'll pay for this poem  
with a cat sneeze

i'll dip the apostrophes  
in dramamine

i'll slip out of my sex  
for a wet ghost

i'll be here in the oyster  
waving at satan

don't worry about the  
dead we have cake

we have math  
in our drinks

it's a good thing we don't  
dance

(it's supposed to be  
survivable)

we have a seat open  
near the cages

it smells like joy  
without feathers

i hope you like  
feeding

the hole in the  
sky

## EDGE EFFECTS

BY JEAN BIEGUN

*Conservationists do already think about  
“edge effects,” says Haddad, but typically  
on the scale of tens of meters—not hundreds.  
—Ed Yong, The Atlantic, November 1, 2017*

The beaver upright on its hind legs held  
the detonator handle of an explosive device.  
It appeared calm but intent there in a stand  
of beech trees in the wooded part of our

property. The creature had a muffler around  
its neck with a logo I could not see clearly.  
*So it has come to this,* I thought, as I spotted  
a white-tailed deer in the clearing wearing

a crude bomb strapped on its back.  
A handsome necklace of coral beads, similar  
to one I planned to buy at the museum gift shop,  
hung around its neck. *What do we do now?*

I thought anxiously. I had drunk lots of that  
strong Netherlands coffee at breakfast and so  
jogged quickly back along the trail, careful not  
to trip on my garden art pieces. Gerald had rung

the antique farm bell for me to hurry. I supposed it  
reasonable for the animals to be angry, to want  
to express a grievance. *Why a muffler? Why some  
well-designed jewelry?* I was at a loss for words.

## TRANSUBSTANTIATION

BY MARYANN HURTT

on that day  
when pewter rains  
mark November  
and deer run like crazy  
chase dream mates  
you, in the tire of a too fast car  
die

I stare at the puddling  
pooling of your now still body  
while vultures descend  
feed and clean

come December  
your ribs stick up and out  
the snowy field  
like dense harp string  
bass notes  
the wind laments a dirge

the almost green of spring arrives  
wild blue phlox mark  
your invisible body  
but now you are wings

sky held  
ebony specks

## LIZARD WISH

BY SUSANA GONZALES

I pull over safely to the side of the road  
making sure to park cleanly  
off the highway.

I set the parking brake,  
exit after checking for oncoming traffic  
and click the door lock on the key fob

and walk  
and walk

into the scrub of the desert  
into the wild blue sky  
toward no goal  
though the red rock mountain stands  
before me solid and absolute

I walk until consideration falls away  
I walk until propriety and dutifulness are just words  
I abandon first my blouse then my binding bra  
elastic and metal wire and hooks drag through the desert dirt  
till it drops from the tips of my fingers

legs grow stronger browner  
sinewy legs  
hopscotch legs  
ballerina legs  
middle aged market lady legs  
walk me deeper  
walk me knowingly away from here

my lizard body knows what it wants  
the sun on my back  
the heat on my belly  
a hot rock in a red desert  
to lay down on  
the length of my heart

**NORTH RIM**  
BY JULIE STANDIG

I pocketed the rock. More than one—many:  
jagged pieces of pink, white, black strata,  
limestone gems from the North Kaibab Trail.

I hiked looking down. Sometimes stepping  
back for a single piece of shale.  
I told myself it was to capture time.

I lied, it was greed, the need to possess.  
250 million year old Kaibab limestone  
tops the North Rim, and I now had bits

of eternity rattling in my pocket: personal  
pieces of Paleozoic Strata.  
I dare you to do better.

I searched for limestone with fossil imprints,  
the promise of brachiopods, coral mollusks  
and sea lilies.

I lifted my face to the clouds—a condor  
scaled the sky, the pocket rocks  
weighed me down.

I returned to the sunset at Canyon Lodge,  
sat cross-legged on the sandstone ledge,  
toasting that amber ball with a glass of shiraz.

**KAYAK REVERIE**  
BY THOMAS A. THOMAS

The sun is not yet high  
but the cirrus are,

as I slice Salish salt water,  
pull a paddle to push my

kayak into wind and  
rising tide, as sunlight

flows upon my skin,  
silvers fish in mid-air

where an osprey wheels  
around sundogs and crows

and seagull calls mingle  
with whistles and caws,

the sound of an oyster barge  
thrumming under all this,

when a seal woman whispers  
her whiskers along my hull,

splashes her somersault  
tail to send water sparks

up & up, gold drops falling  
through blue air to sudden

silence. Wind stops riffling  
water to let it be mirror of

cirrus sky, as crows leave  
off chasing the sailing away

long winged osprey and the  
barge stops rumbling and

my paddle, and everything  
stops, a moment, two, then

even my breathing, here  
between liquid world, its

dark electricity flowing  
beneath sky world, where

bright silent, urgent light  
rushes to touch it all.

ZEN PATRIARCH DŌGEN HONORS THE LIFE OF A LOTUS  
BY JAMES K. ZIMMERMAN

as it falls  
through darkening  
    murk  
to the womb of mud  
        and slime  
in among  
    the water's toes  
the seed of the lotus  
    knows to hold  
its breath

and in its death-  
denying climb  
    to the mirror  
surface of the pond  
    the stem  
imagines the jewel  
it is to be

a star has come  
    to earth  
the birth of the sun  
    begins  
once more in perfect  
    pink and white  
amidst the green

where frogs  
await the buzzing  
    song of flies  
sleepy children  
    of the pond's  
sulfuric breath

and as it rises  
    with the sun  
as it shutters  
    with the dusk  
the jewel  
    of eight petals  
hears the chanting  
of its name

AN IRISH WOMAN CONTEMPLATES THE LANGUAGE SHE NEVER  
LEARNED  
BY HELEN MENEILLY

the terracotta window boxes are bare  
bar the last brown basil plant  
curtseying to breaking point.

*Fás*, meaning to grow,  
once meant vacant, deserted,  
waste.

defaced by sunlight the near corpse  
concedes all the way to the root  
and comes away in hands that-

*Aiteall*, a spell  
between  
two bouts of rain.

-claw each other in prayer at night  
the teeth the tongue  
testing a religion stillborn  
in the mouth, each mute syllable  
a parable of cost:

*Éist*, meaning to listen.  
*Caille*,  
meaning lost.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Jay Aja** (they/them) is currently an MFA candidate in nonfiction at the University of South Florida. They are non-binary, queer, and second-generation-immigrant Guyanese-American. They are currently working on a graphic memoir regarding sexuality and trauma. You can find them on Instagram @cooliegyaljaya and Twitter @cooliegyaljaya.

**Tobi Alfier** is published nationally and internationally. Credits include *War, Literature and the Arts*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *KGB Bar Lit Mag*, *Washington Square Review*, *Cholla Needles*, *The Ogham Stone*, *Permafrost*, *Gargoyle*, *Arkansas Review*, *Anti-Heroin Chic*, and others. She is co-editor of *San Pedro River Review* ([www.bluehorsepress.com](http://www.bluehorsepress.com)).

**DeAnna Beachley** teaches U.S. History and Women's Studies at the College of Southern Nevada. Primarily a poet, she has recently been working on creative nonfiction essays. Her poetry has appeared in *Red Rock Review*, *Parks and Points*, *the Kenyon Review Blog*, *Sandstone & Silver*, *Thimble*, *The Ekphrastic Review Challenge*, and is forthcoming in two anthologies, *300 Days of Sun*, and *Slant*. Her work has won awards and has been included in an art/poetry exhibit, *A Room of Her Own*. When not teaching or writing, she enjoys hiking and bird watching.

A Macon Georgia native, **Marjorie Becker** learned Spanish as a child, studied in Spain and served in the Peace Corps in rural Paraguay. The author of two collections focusing on Mexico's gendered revolutionary history and the poetics of Octavio Paz, she is also the author of the poetry collections *Body Bach*, *Glass Piano/Piano Glass* and *The Macon Sex School: Songs of Tenderness and Resistance*, all from Tebot Bach. A professor of History and English at USC, she lives in Santa Monica.

**Jean Biegun**, retired special ed teacher, lives in California after a lifetime in both large cities and small farm towns in the Midwest. She began writing poetry in 2000, to counter job stress in Chicago, and it worked. Poems have appeared in many publications including *Amethyst Review*, *Mobius: The Poetry Magazine*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Soul-Lit*, *Eastern Iowa Review*, *World Haiku Review*, and *Door is a Jar*. Her chapbook *Hitchhikers to Eden* will be published by Kelsay Books in 2022.

Raised on a rice and catfish farm in eastern Arkansas, **CL Bledsoe** is the author of thirty books, including his newest poetry collection, *The Bottle Episode*, and his latest novel *The Saviors*. Bledsoe co-writes the humor blog How to Even, with Michael Gushue: <https://medium.com/@howtoeven> Bledsoe lives in northern Virginia with his daughter.

**Jim Bohen** is a poet/songwriter from St. Paul, MN. His poems have appeared in the *Minnesota Daily*, *Big City Lit*, *Talking Stick* and elsewhere. He's been short-listed three times for the international erbacce prize. Unsolicited Press published his first poetry collection, *I travel in rusting burned-out sedans* (2018), and will publish *The Management has seized control of this book* in 2024. His music CD, "Never Too Late," contains 12 of the hundreds of songs he's written (samples at iTunes, cdbaby; search: "J B and the Phantom Band"). Jim and his wife Bonnie do daycare for their two granddaughters.

**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 such as *Poetry East*, *december*, *Third Coast*, *Gyroscope Review*, and *Midwestern Gothic*. She is a retired college instructor, and she lives in South Bend, Indiana.

Irish poet, academic, and journalist, **Oisín Breen**'s debut, 'Flowers, all sorts in blossom ...' was released March 2020. Breen is published in 87 journals in 19 countries, including in About Place, Door is a Jar, Northern Gravy, North Dakota Quarterly, Books Ireland, the Seattle Star, La Piccioletta Barca, Reservoir Road, and Dreich, which will also publish Breen's second collection, (4<sup>2</sup> by 5), later this summer. Breen's third full collection, the experimental Lilies on the Deathbed of Étaín will be published by Beir Bua Press, January 2023.

**Rohan Buettel** lives in Canberra, Australia's capital city. His haiku have been published in various Australian and international journals (including *Frogpond*, *Cattails* and *The Heron's Nest*). His longer poetry appears in *Rappahannock Review*, *Penumbra Literary and Art Journal*, *Mortal Magazine*, *Red Ogre Review*, *Reed Magazine*, *Meniscus* and *Quadrant*.

**Susan Cossette** lives and writes in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Author of *Peggy Sue Messed Up*, she is a recipient of the University of Connecticut's Wallace Stevens Poetry Prize. A two-time Pushcart Prize nominee, her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Rust and Moth*, *Vita Brevis*, *ONE ART*, *As it Ought to Be*, *Anti-Heroine Chic*, *The Amethyst Review*, *Crow & Cross Keys*, *Loch Raven Review*, and in the anthologies *Fast Fallen Women* (Woodhall Press), *Tuesdays at Curley's* (Yuganta Press), and *After the Equinox*.

**John M. Davis** currently lives in Visalia, California. His work has appeared in a number of literary journals and anthologies, including *The Comstock Review*, *Descant*, *Bloodroot Literary Magazine*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Constellation*, *Silk Road*, and *Reunion: The Dallas Review*. *The Mojave*, a chapbook, was published by the Dallas Community Poets.

**Jeanne DeLarm**'s poems have been published in *The Light Ekphrastic*, *Zingara Poet*, *Slipstream*, *Shenandoah*, and other journals and anthologies. Essays have been published in *Connecticut Maple Leaf* and *Christian Century*.

**Joseph DiNallo** is an Ohio native currently living in southern Louisiana. Their work has appeared previously in *Skywatcher Press*, *The Sow's Ear*, *Snowy Egret*, *Third Wednesday*, and *Miller's Pond* literary magazines.

**Carla Drysdale** is a Canadian poet living in France who works for the United Nations. Her poems have been published in many journals including *Cleaver*, *PRISM*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Literary Mama*, and *Lily Poetry Review*. Her books are *All Born Perfect*, *Inheritance* and *Little Venus*. A Pushcart nominee, she has won PRISM's Earle Birney award and was granted multiple fellowships at the Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts. In 2021, she was poetry judge for the 2021 Swiss Creative Writing Prize.

**Scott Ferry** helps our Veterans heal as a RN in the Seattle area. His most recent books are *Skinless in the Cereal Aisle* from Impspired and *fishmirror* from Alien Buddha.

**Harrison Fisher** held an NEA fellowship in poetry in 1978. He had published over 200 poems in about 90 different magazines before 1990. He has taken long periods of time away from writing and publishing. The most recent of his four book-length collections of poems is *Poematics of the Hyperbloody Real* (2000).

**Alfred Fournier** is a writer and community volunteer in Phoenix, Arizona. His poems have appeared in *Gyroscope Review*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Welter*, *The*

*Indianapolis Review*, *Hole in the Head Review*, and elsewhere. New work is forthcoming in *Sin Fronteras / Writers Without Borders*.

**Susana Gonzales** was raised in the Air Force and has grown to see the world through multiple lenses. She lives in southern California with her partner Suzanne and German Shepard Kennedy. She has been published in *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Poetica Review*, *The Santa Fe Literary Review*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Drunk Monkeys* and *As You Were: The Military Review*.

**Ken Gosse** prefers writing rhymed metric verse with whimsy and humor. First published in *First Literary Review-East* in November 2016, his poems are in *Home Planet News Online*, *Lothlorien Poetry Journal*, *Academy of the Heart and Mind*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, and others. Raised in the Chicago suburbs, now retired, he and his wife have lived in Mesa, AZ, over twenty years, usually with one or more rescue dogs and cats underfoot.

**Gloria Heffernan** is the author of the poetry collection, *What the Gratitude List Said to the Bucket List*, (New York Quarterly Books), and *Exploring Poetry of Presence: A Companion Guide for Readers, Writers and Workshop Facilitators* (Back Porch Productions). She has written two chapbooks: *Hail to the Symptom* (Moonstone Press) and *Some of Our Parts*, (Finishing Line Press). Her work has appeared in over 100 publications including *Columbia Review*, *Stone Canoe*, and Yale University's *The Perch*. For more information, please visit her website at [www.gloriahheffernan.wordpress.com](http://www.gloriahheffernan.wordpress.com)

Retired after working thirty years as a hospice RN, **Maryann Hurttt**'s poems often reflect resiliency in both the natural and human-created world. The stories she witnessed then and in everyday life continue to amaze her. *Once Upon a Tar Creek Mining for Voices* (Turning Plow Press) came out in 2021. Tar Creek has been called "the worst environmental disaster no one has heard of." Tar Creek's water is orange and lead toxic. She is passionate its story is remembered and heeded. She has had poems published recently in *Verse Virtual*, *Moss Piglet*, and *Bramble*.

**Jennifer Schomburg Kanke** lives in Tallahassee, Florida, where she edits confidential documents for the government. Her work has recently appeared in *New Ohio Review*, *Nimrod*, *Massachusetts Review*, and *Salamander*. Her zine about her experiences undergoing chemotherapy for ovarian cancer, *Fine, Considering*, is available from Rinky Dink Press.

**Maureen Kingston**'s poems and prose have appeared or are forthcoming in *Contemporary Haibun Online*, *Failed Haiku: A Journal of English Senryu*, *Gone Lawn*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, *Maudlin House*, *Modern Poetry Quarterly Review*, *Sledgehammer Lit*, *Unbroken Journal*, and *Whiskey Island*. A few of her poems and prose pieces have also been nominated for Best of the Net and Pushcart awards.

**Judy Kronenfeld**'s fifth book of poetry, *Groaning and Singing*, was released in February, 2022, by FutureCycle Press. Her previous full-length collections of poetry include *Bird Flying through the Banquet* (FutureCycle, 2017), *Shimmer* (WordTech, 2012), and *Light Lowering in Diminished Sevenths* (2nd ed. Antrim House, 2012), winner of the 2007 Litchfield Review Poetry Book Prize. Her poems have appeared in *Cider Press Review*, *Cimarron Review*, *Gyroscope Review*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, *New Ohio Review*, *Offcourse*, *One*, *Pratik*, *Rattle*, *Sequestrum*, *Slant*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Verdad*, *Your Daily Poem*, and other journals, and in more than three dozen anthologies.

After several years in the military **Kyra Kyle** came out as non-binary. They are an author of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. They live where the Platte and Missouri Rivers meet with their wife and kids. They hold a BFA in creative writing from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and their work has appeared in *Menacing Hedge*, *Spank the Carp*, *Danse Macabre*, *Door is a Jar*, *The Collidescope*, and other journals and anthologies.

**Danèlle Lejeune** lives with her husband, novelist and poet Tony Morris, and their four children somewhere near Savannah, Georgia. Shenanigans include beekeeping, porch music, and arguing loudly about obscure and unimportant historical trivia.

**Andy Macera** has received awards from *Plainsongs*, *Mad Poets Review* and *Philadelphia Poets*. His work has also appeared in *Pearl*, *California Quarterly*, *Connecticut River Review*, *Drunk Monkeys*, *Straight Forward*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *Old Red Kimono*, *Passager* and other journals.

**Mary McCarthy** is a retired Registered Nurse, who has always been a writer. Her work has appeared in many journals and anthologies, including *The Ekphrastic World*, edited by Lorette Luzajic, *The Plague Papers*, edited by Robbi Nester, and the latest issues of *Earth's Daughters* and *Third Wednesday*. She has been a Pushcart and Best of the Net nominee.

**Ben Macnair** is an award-winning poet, playwright, musician, and journalist from Staffordshire in the United Kingdom. Follow him on Twitter @benmacnair

**Helen Nancy Meneilly** lives in Belfast, and is currently working towards her MA in Creative Writing. Her work is forthcoming from *Eunoia Review*, *The MetaWorker*, and *Bullshit Lit*. Previously published in *Autumn Sky Poetry Daily*, *Antonym Mag*, and others.

**Jill Michelle** teaches at Valencia College in Orlando, Florida. Her latest poems appear/are forthcoming in *DMQ Review*, *untethered magazine*, *Please See Me*, *The Elevation Review*, and *Drunk Monkeys*. Recent anthology credits include *The Book of Bad Betties* (Bad Betty Press, UK) and *Words from the Brink* (Arachne Press Limited, UK). To check out more of her work, visit [byjillmichelle.com](http://www.jillmichelle.com)

**Daniel Edward Moore** lives in Washington on Whidbey Island. His poems are forthcoming in *Notre Dame Review*, *The Meadow*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *New Plains Review*, *Temenos Journal*, *Psaltery & Lyre*, *Radar*, *Plainsongs*, *Flint Hills Review*, and *West Trade Review*. His book, *Waxing the Dents*, is from Brick Road Poetry Press.

**Robbi Nester** is the author of 4 published books of poetry and just as many as-yet-unpublished manuscripts. She has also edited three anthologies. Her poetry, reviews, articles, and essays have appeared widely in journals and anthologies. Learn more about her work in <http://www.robbinester.net>

**Gloria Parker** is a retired primary school teacher. Her poems have appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *Margie*, *Slipstream*, *Loch Raven Review*, *Nimrod*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *Rattle*, *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, *Healing Muse*, and elsewhere.

**Jess L Parker** is a poet and strategist originally from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Jess lives in Fitchburg, WI with her husband, 18-month-old son, and Pitbull, "Poe". Her debut poetry collection, *Star Things*, is winner of the 2020 Dynamo Verlag Book Prize.

Jess' poems have appeared in *Bramble*, *Kosmos Quarterly*, *Blue Heron Review*, and elsewhere. Jess holds a B.A. of English and Spanish from Northern Michigan University, an M.A. of Spanish Literature from UW-Madison, and an MBA from Concordia University.

**Radoslav Rochallyi**, PhD., Was born on May 1, 1980, in Czechoslovakia in a family with Rusyns and Hungarian roots. He is a Czech-based artist (philosopher, writer, painter, and poet). The author finished his studies in Philosophy at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Presov (1999–2005) and completed postgraduate Ph.D. studies. Later studied mathematics: Linear Algebra Course by Imperial College London. He is a member of Mensa and a member of The Royal Society of Literature in the United Kingdom. Rado has presented his visual work internationally. He is the author of fourteen books.

**Sam Runge** is an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire.

**Kelly Sargent** is the author of *Lilacs & Teacups* (2022) and *Seeing Voices: Poetry in Motion* (Kelsay Books, 2022), a Cordella Press Poetry Chapbook Contest finalist. A poem recognized in the international 2022 Golden Haiku contest is on display in Washington, D.C. Her poems and artwork, including a 2021 Best of the Net nominee, have appeared in over forty literary publications, including *Typehouse Literary Magazine*, *Green Mountains Review*, and *Newfound*. She serves as the creative nonfiction editor for *The Bookends Review* and a reviewer for an organization supporting the artistic expression of sexual violence survivors. [www.kellysargent.com](http://www.kellysargent.com)

**Claire Scott** is an award-winning poet who has received multiple Pushcart Prize nominations. Her work has appeared in the *Atlanta Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *New Ohio Review*, *Enizagam*, and *Healing Muse* among others. Claire is the author of *Waiting to be Called* and *Until I Couldn't*. She is the co-author of *Unfolding in Light: A Sisters' Journey in Photography and Poetry*.

A lifetime New Yorker until three years ago, **Julie Standig** now writes with two amazing poetry groups, Marie Kane's KT and the Stalwart Poets. Workshopping has always been essential to her and her love for words, especially now in these times. Julie has been published in *Alehouse Press*, *Sadie Girl Press*, *Schuylkill Journal Review*, *USI Poets/Del Val* as well as the online journals, *Silver Birch Press*, and *MacQueen's Quarterly*. Her first chapbook, *Memsahib Memoir* was released by Plan B Press in 2017 and a full volume collection, *The Forsaken Little Black Book* will be released Fall 2022 by Kelsay Books.

**Ralph Stevens** is the author of the poetry collections *At Bunker Cove*, *Things Haven't Been the Same*, and *Water under Snow*. Individual poems have appeared in a variety of publications. Stevens is retired from a long career in college teaching, and now lives with his wife, the photographer Sally Rowan, in Ellsworth, Maine.

**Sam Stockwell** has published in *Agni*, *Ploughshares*, and *the New Yorker*, among others. Her two books, *Theater of Animals* and *Recital*, won the National Poetry Series (USA) and the Editor's Prize at Elixir, respectively. Recent poems are in *On the Seawall & Sugar House Review* and are forthcoming in *Plume* and others.

**Alison Stone** has published seven full-length collections, *Zombies at the Disco* (Jacar Press, 2020), *Caught in the Myth* (NYQ Books, 2019), *Dazzle* (Jacar Press, 2017), *Masterplan*, a book of collaborative poems with Eric Greinke (Presa Press, 2018), *Ordinary Magic*, (NYQ Books, 2016), *Dangerous Enough* (Presa Press 2014), and *They*

*Sing at Midnight*, as well as three chapbooks. Her poems have appeared in *The Paris Review*, *Poetry*, *Ploughshares*, many other journals and anthologies. She is also a painter and the creator of The Stone Tarot. A licensed psychotherapist, she has private practices in NYC and Nyack. [www.stonepoetry.org](http://www.stonepoetry.org) [www.stonetarot.com](http://www.stonetarot.com) YouTube – Alison Stone Poetry.

At University of Michigan, **Thomas A. Thomas** studied with Donald Hall, Gregory Orr, and a little with Robert Bly. He won both Minor and Major Hopwood Awards in Poetry, and his poem "Approaching Here" was choreographed and performed at UM. His works appear in print and online journals, most recently at *Vox Populi Sphere*, *TheBanyanReview.org* and *FemAsiaMagazine.com*, as well as in translation to Spanish, Serbian, and Bengali. His book of collected works, *Getting Here* is available on Amazon and other sellers. He has been nominated for both Best of the Net and The Pushcart Prize for 2022.

**Amanda Trout** is an MFA candidate at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Her poetry has been featured in *Cow Creek Review*, Balm (an anthology by The Ravens Quoth Press) and *Bacopa Literary Review*, among others. Find Amanda on Instagram (@atROUT2972) or on Facebook.

**Dick Westheimer** has—with his wife and writing companion Debbie—lived on their plot of land in rural southwest Ohio for over 40 years. His most recent poems have appeared or are upcoming in *Rattle*, *Paterson Review*, *Chautauqua Review*, *Rise Up Review*, *Ekphrastic Review*, *Minyan*, and *Cutthroat*. Much of his work can be found at [dickwestheimer.com](http://dickwestheimer.com)

**Anne Yarbrough**'s first collection, *Refinery* (Broadkill River Press), was chosen by Hayden Saunier for the 2021 Dogfish Head Poetry Prize. Her poems have been or will be in *Poet Lore*, *Delmarva Review*, *Philadelphia Stories*, *Gargoyle Magazine*, *CALYX Journal*, *Cider Press Review*, and elsewhere. She lives along the lower Delaware River.

**Jonathan Yungkans** is a Los Angeles-based writer and photographer whose work has appeared in *MacQueen's Quarterly*, *Panoply*, *Synkroniciti*, and other publications. His second poetry chapbook, *Beneath a Glazed Shimmer*, won the Clockwise Chapbook Prize and was published by Tebot Bach in 2021.

A neurodiverse poet, **James K. Zimmerman**'s writing appears in *Carolina Quarterly*, *Chautauqua*, *Folio*, *Lumina*, *Nimrod*, *Pleiades*, *Rattle*, and elsewhere. He is author of *Little Miracles* (Passager Books) and *Family Cookout* (Comstock), winner of the Jessie Bryce Niles Award. He can be contacted through his website, <https://jameskzimmerman.net>.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Fall 2022 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 women poets, those who've been writing for years, or who are just starting out.

We're looking for poems that celebrate the Crone, the older woman with wisdom and life experience. The woman that is bold and brave, and perhaps a little bit vulnerable. We want those honest poems about your life and experiences. Happy, introspective, rage-y. We want to see it all. Crones deserve to be heard, now more than ever.

Submissions open July 1, 2022 and run through September 1, 2022. 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), page breaks in between poems, please, and a 100 word or less bio for the magazine if selected. Please use the name you'd like to be published under. We only accept submissions through Submittable.

If you are not a poet over 50 who identifies as a woman, please don't submit for the Fall Issue. For the male identifying folks, we open Oct 1, 2022 for regular submissions for the Winter 2023 Issue. 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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