



Gyroscope Review

fine poetry to turn your world around

Crone Power Issue



Fall 2022

Issue 22-4



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Constance Brewer

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From the Assistant Editor

As another decade-marker birthday arrives for me this month, I've been thinking about what it means to be "a woman of a certain age." This is my third "Crone Power" issue as Assistant Editor for Gyroscope Review and each year I've seen the range of responses from women friends who I've suggested send us poems for this issue from "Oh, yes! I love that Gyroscope Review has an issue featuring older women!" to "Crone?! I'm no Crone!" Years ago, before I joined the editorial team, I remember sharing the later response. And why not, when the Oxford Languages Dictionary tells us that a crone is: "an old woman who is thin and ugly"?

Now, I'm particularly curious as I read submissions for our Crone Power issue to see how each woman interprets the theme through her poetry. We always get our fair share of rants masquerading as poems, and I can't deny that there is plenty to rant about in this imperfect world of ours. However, I've noticed that what lights us up as editors for this issue are the wisdom poems, the celebration poems, the poems that find gratitude even in the aching knees, the slowing gait, the softening belly, the hair that's gone white and wild, be it sprouting from our heads or from our chins.

These are poems that could only be written with the pen of experience, tallying our losses, embracing our growth, taking a moment to stop along the path to not just smell the roses, but to write an ode to the turn of Summer into Fall, the cooling days warmed with cardamon-spiced cookies and honey turmeric tea. These poems embody Bonnie Raitt's insight: "Life gets mighty precious when there's less of it to waste." These poems remind us that Crone was once a word meaning Wise Woman, the Crowned One, the Holy One, as they work a kind of magic on the reader, illuminating the gifts of time, rather than its subtractions. Reading these poems, I am grateful to be among this sisterhood of Poet-Crones, parting the curtain of a new decade with a sense of wonder and curiosity as to what lies ahead.

Elya Braden

Table of Contents

Section One	7
The Soul, Complete with Claws and Tail	9
by Linda Scheller	
Another Poem in which I Bitch about Being Called “Young Lady”	11
by Tina Barry	
Cento to Mark the Contradictions of a Daily Love	12
by Cheryl Martone.....	
Blue Topography	14
by Judith H. Montgomery	
A Word For It	15
by Laure-Anne Bosselaar	
Dying Plants.....	16
by Tina Lear.....	
The Arc of Trying	17
by Katherine M. Clarke.....	
Ode to My Facial Hair	18
by Pamela Wax	
Ode to my Belly	19
by Rhett Watts	
World Of Time.....	20
by Susan Johnson.....	
When My College Roommate Visited Peru.....	21
by Joanne Durham.....	
I Dream Of Your Body	22
by BJ Buckley.....	
Bone.....	23
by Patty Ware	
If I’m Home After Dark These Days.....	24
by Anastasia Walker.....	
Tell it to the Bees.....	25
by Whitney Vale.....	
Mouth Art of the Bald-faced Hornet.....	26
by Betsy Bolton.....	

Practicing Chaos	27
by Pat Daneman.....	
Section Two	29
Cedar Shakes.....	31
by Ann E. Wallace	
The Engraved Stone Read: <i>Imagine</i>	32
by Susannah Winters Simpson	
Nuisance Property	33
by Patricia Davis-Muffett.....	
Seduction.....	34
by Martha Bordwell.....	
Ode to Our Old Oven	35
by Karen Paul Holmes.....	
Keeper of Ice, Tomb of Celery, Mortuary for Eggs.....	36
by Carrie Albert	
Inheritance.....	37
by Ann de Forest.....	
Downsizing.....	38
by Peggy Liuzzi.....	
What to Save.....	39
by Andrea Livingston	
Ferryville	40
by Anne Myles	
Valentine's Dinner at Wren & Wolf	41
by Mary Specker Stone.....	
When You Are Gone	42
by Mona Anderson	
If I Could Use the Wind Phone... ..	43
by Judy Kronenfeld.....	
Hands	44
by Annamaria Formichella.....	
Birthday Gift on Medicine Lake.....	45
by Wendy Brown-Baez	
Relative Velocity.....	46
by Prartho Sereno.....	

The End of Horses.....	47
by T. Clear.....	
I Have Felt There Is Something More Wonderful—	48
by Jacquelyn Shah	
Section Three	49
Sublime as Intransitive Verb.....	51
by Jacqueline Jules	
The shadows a woman casts.....	52
by Marge Piercy.....	
I wonder if the opposite of death is fever.....	53
by Lynn Pattison.....	
I Want Milkweed Hair	54
by Jessica Purdy.....	
Nothing Displaces.....	55
by Nancy L. Meyer.....	
Proud Mary.....	56
by Melinda Goodman	
All this time you thought Avril Lavigne was Taylor Swift	57
by Babo Kamel.....	
Lotus Flower with Twelve Petals.....	58
by Fran Markover.....	
Self-Portrait at a Torture Wheel	59
by Barbara Lydecker Crane	
Annunciations	60
by Susan Kress.....	
The Silk Kimono Jacket.....	61
by Laurie Kuntz	
All Souls Day	62
by Kate Marshall.....	
Distinguishing Between Political Systems Over Sushi With My Son and Grandson	64
by Virginia Smith.....	
When All Else Fails	65
by Sharon Scholl.....	
The Perseids.....	66
by Melanie Du Bose	

Creation Tale Fire.....	67
by Barbara Rockman.....	
Dreaming of the Irish Sweepstakes on the Motorcoach to Donegal	68
by Gloria Heffernan.....	
Chimera	69
by Tina Carlson.....	
Baba Yaga Barbie	70
by Serena Fusek.....	
Contributors	72
Announcements.....	80

Section One

THE SOUL, COMPLETE WITH CLAWS AND TAIL
BY LINDA SCHELLER

She is a creature of two minds, one secretive,
commandeering silence, and the other arrayed
naked in the window.

She is the chasm that opens at your feet,
the falling and the levitation that make you
a bird between worlds.

A cynosure, she lies in light and fits herself
into boxes, a gift of time arrested.

She is contemplation's blanket
woven from your theories of pain
and the simple joys of someone else's garden.

When shadow spills from your heels
she smiles, and the wind in your eyes
is cause for abandon.

Her pleasure is a matter of course,
her hunger the unveiling of purpose,
her thirst the axis of blood and fire.

She is furred with delusions of permanence
and balanced on the finger of an unacknowledged goddess.

When rain intrudes on your dreams, she knits
a purple distraction and clothes your tossed sleep
in flattering excuses.

Her wish is your echo, her path
your riddle, her death the pill
that waits in your pocket.

Once she played with little lives,
twice she sought forgiveness, and now
she waits for majesty to perch on lofty branches.

She is not your familiar
despite the habits that bind you; nor is she
a remnant of the forests in your nature.

Whereas she knows the hidden name of water,
nothing can prevent her from breaking the chains
that circumscribed your mother.

You must believe that what she finds is sure to be her truth,
and what she loses wasn't worth the keeping.

She dozes in the framework of necessity
and rubs against the suffering of others
unless bitten or beguiled.

What stories she spins are apt to circulate
among the flowers of reproach, the characters
a mask to wear as camouflage.

She dwells in the fine print below your signature,
a clause fatal to the prophets of futility.

She is a star in the sand that shines
from a certain angle at a certain height
at a certain time.

ANOTHER POEM IN WHICH I BITCH ABOUT BEING CALLED “YOUNG LADY”
BY TINA BARRY

This time it's the salesman
shelving chardonnay, “*Hello, Young Lady!*”
I've heard that salutation, suffered
its implications, its snide smirking subtext.

I squint in silent judgment.
He shifts from one Croc to another.
Call me small for the thrill
of his discomfort.

I have wondered who to blame for this mocking erasure.
This ever-smaller pinhole to peer through.

I have blamed Charles Dana Gibson for the Gibson Girl,
a walking, down-filled mattress with a great plume of hair. I have blamed
Nabokov for Lolita. And I have blamed the Grimm Brothers for the young maid,
pure, a pale sapling, and the wrinkled queen who felled her.

I have longed to seize those Grimm grifters in their soiled suits,
push my face against theirs, a harbinger of the grief
they'd rend with bumptious feathered pens.

Let me tell these boys who'd reduce me to the jolly helpmate,
ala *Snow White*, forever orbiting the friend zone.
Let me appear in the boys' dreams, an angel aloft a honeysuckle cloud,
who holds a mirror to their ancient faces, the horror
of their swinging jowls.

Let me tell the wine wranglers, cake decorators, the derm who touched
the creases on my cheek with an expression not unlike heartbreak —

I have tasted power.
I have tasted power the way a medium scribbling
on her pad brings forth the dead.

I have tattooed my heart with a bully's slur.
I have watched my father vanish.
I have lain for months between dank sheets, until my daughter, an acrobat
in my womb, wrestled from my belly.
I've watched her daughter, messy with birth, blink into being.
I have sat my mother on a commode and dumped her shit.
I have held her hand in mine and kissed it, as if she were a child.

And I am claiming my old, my battle-burned, my very queendom
right here.

CENTO TO MARK THE CONTRADICTIONS OF A DAILY LOVE
BY CHERYL MARTONE

Spring, with five to ten degrees to go,
the rooster with one leg raised, a pair of deer
feeding at the wild last hedge.

A remembered story from a faraway
history: blue sky in wind
swept our hearts clean. Wings clip

the brief air between us. It was always
here, but in the past, a silent
question in our sudden presence.

Wouldn't talk, then talked too long.
Learn the healing of talk, the calming
of quarrel. Talk about hunger

& the absence of it. It swings back and forth
between us like a rope. Maybe
it's what we don't say that saves us.

To pray, you open your whole self,
begging for love from a small
red bird in your chest.

We mourn the broken things,
glued with the sting of hidden cuts.
Some mornings I walk upon them.

Sometimes what I feel has a difficult name.
I'm singing the best way I know about the way
I've run from one fire to another

a pair of hands upturned and burning.
You plead to the nuances of running away,
truth on a therapist's couch.

Isn't there something still singing?
Birdsong in the morning, the slow
swirl of a creek at dusk?

Wingbeats shuddering in the treetops,
laced with echo.
The unsayable in each.

Breathe in, knowing we are made of all this.
Nobody loves this way anymore.

***“Cento To Mark the Contradictions of a Daily Love”** is comprised of lines borrowed from these poets:
Eavan Boland, Natalie Diaz, Cornelius Eady, Charles Simic, Paisley Rekdal, Carolyn Forché, Marie
Howe, Kwame Dawes, Reginald Dwayne Betts, Dorianne Laux, Natasha , Tretheway, Martin Espada,
Terrance Hayes, Tyehimba Jess, Richard Blanco, Ada Limón, Vieve Francis, Joy Harjo, Edward Hirsch,
Nikky Finney*

BLUE TOPOGRAPHY

BY JUDITH H. MONTGOMERY

Once a seamless landscape—*dorsum*,
sweet-skinned reverse to my creased

and callused palm. No more. Late sun lights,
heightens the bulge of blue-starved roads

as they rise above the frail map of my skin.
Each ridge a witness to urgency—that rush

as veins ferry blood cells stripped of oxygen
back to the forecourts of my heart, then on

to sip within the lungs' hollow bellows.
I rue this spider-rise of channels swift

under spotted skin, rough topography of blue.
But I know how my every body-bit hangs

from oxygen's plump hook, without which
no replenished arteries could travel to infuse

the flesh that clings about my failing scaffold
of bone. O faithful supply lines—vessels, vassals.

Praise be the ardent sap that inks my body-map.

A WORD FOR IT

BY LAURE-ANNE BOSSELAAR

I'm at the bare end of the bluff, blue sweater sleeves
pulled over my hands, the jays & waves the only sounds.

Miles away, barely visible, suspended in a shamble
of chiffon mist, Anacapa Island is almost transparent.

I lean against a parched eucalyptus, at this Pacific edge,
feeling gladly old in this young morning.

Is there a word for this?
Breathful. That's it: I feel *breathfully* old.

The marine layer frays in the east, shivers through the air.
Then, coming from nowhere, a wind-flaw whirls silver scarves

into the waves & wraps the young sun inside them.
This doesn't last longer than my gasp, no longer than for me

to turn around, hoping for someone — anyone — to be standing
here too, and to ask *wasn't that beautiful?*

DYING PLANTS

BY TINA LEAR

Outside the grocery store there's a rack of plants
going for half price. She picks one of the really sad ones.
It's drooping and browned at the edges.
Who else is going to choose it? she says.

With street tenderness, she brings it home and
two weeks later, it's jumping back up into life,
full of itself, full of its life, its leaves
puffed up and green from the infusions of her chi.

When we first met, I felt full and green
and upright and strong. I jumped in with both feet.
Confident and oblivious, I dabbed Musk on my pulse points.
I looked at her and didn't look away.

She wasn't fooled by any of that.
She saw my drying edges, the way I
could be present without really being there.
But she was too classy to point it out.

Roshi wrapped his mini-schnauzer paws
around her careful heart. Was that what made her
pick me off of the rack? Whatever it was, I've been learning
for twenty years how that moment saved me.

How she brought me home,
fed me her listening, watered me
with music I'd never heard, perspectives I hadn't
thought about. This new soil drew my roots downward,

and the sun of our continuing pulled my leaves upward.
I felt myself growing back up into life. Blossoming with connection,
no matter how much frowning and folding of arms there was.
Eating the new food of a new love in the new time of a new life.

As our coupleship weathers the droughts and floods
that illness and family and bills bring, I now practice
the faith in us that she had in me.
Every day,

I choose again
this struggling, thriving,
brave little plant
of our union.

THE ARC OF TRYING

BY KATHERINE M. CLARKE

—a variation on “The Art of Losing” by Elizabeth Bishop

Start by trying. Try hard. Then try it all again.
Try loving one woman for eight years. Try one for four.
Then try one who'll never love you back. Bomb
after trying your best. Compare loving a child
with brain tumors to loving a narcissist. Learn proportion.
Find a woman who loves you as if her life depends on it.
Learn that your life does. Try loving her like making pastry.
Don't overwork it. Try loving her like learning French.
Relax and practice. Try to position the tongue just so.
Try over again. Live small for a while. Try not trying at all.
Let somebody else try. Like not trying but different.
Then paintings flow, poems come and we picnic
under the maple, sip Prosecco, toss blueberries
to each other. Let the wind and the warmth do the work.

ODE TO MY FACIAL HAIR
BY PAMELA WAX

My mother (Harriette, daughter of Harry)
paid a pretty penny for your death
by electrolysis at the hands of the widow
Mildred—our appointments scheduled
back-to-back, a mother-daughter special.
You were not the inheritance of my dreams.
Impatient for quicker fixes, I took matters
into my own hands. Plucking. Shaving.
Waxing. Epilating. Burning my chin raw
with noxious creams named Sally Hansen
and Neet to kill you, my intractable roots,
invasive, hardy, perhaps immortal—
determined to see me as the bearded lady
at the circus. Face it. You've won the war,
showing up every morning uninvited,
sending me at midnight to 24-hour
Walgreens in distant cities when I forget
to pack my tweezers. But when I'm old
and dozing in the hallway of some
nursing home, like my hirsute Grandma
Sadie, tell me, who will tend to you,
my pretties, my offspring—gray
and wiry, virile and resilient—tendrilling
your way to eternity?

ODE TO MY BELLY
BY RHETT WATTS

Bell-shaped, you sound
growling with hunger.
Round me out from sternum

down to the space between hip bones.
Hitting bottom, you rest in the bowl
formed there

hammocked by pubic bones
you lie pliable as a sow's ear purse
silken, stretching to hold a meal.

Pour out enzymatic juices
break down bits of lamb and potato
pass along the more fibrous celery

and psyllium husks. Emptied, you fold in
on yourself, spasm with hunger again.
Mounded like yeasty bread dough

you ripen, skin thinned through the years
by kneading of a husband's hands, torso,
and babies that bulged like curled ferns.

You spill abundant over jeans, perhaps
over a dancing belt. Shall I wear a navel jewel
while you undulate, rhythmic,

corded with fat and muscle in striated layers
like so many colored scarves? Then roll you
swaying in sensuous movement

bordered by one iliac crest then the other,
snapped swinging in seismic shifts
pulchritudinous while I perambulate

with accented foot tap and spinal slip
to loll and laze luxurious in fleshy splendor.
Yellab, Habibi, Yellab!

I celebrate your appetites, my piquant friend,
always present yet always changing,
my belly, my own.

WORLD OF TIME

BY SUSAN JOHNSON

How to glue together these days that slip
like wet stones? A river mosaic, kaleidoscope
of trees reflecting the shine of leaves broken
free. Trunks inch upward into their own world
of wind and time which we can't measure
even if we watch long enough, which we
never do. Always this sense of urgency, of now,
as mosquitoes seek knees and sun rays seek lips
and blackflies make themselves at home in
our ears. Only wanting the life they were promised.
This will just take a second. A trail through
goldenrod blazes all flower and birch light.
Cloud shadows drift below as we temporarily
plant ourselves on a summit, above gravel pits,
corn fields lit up with themselves. They're all in,
and so are we in beat-up boots deep in dense green
firs against a blue jay sky. At stony ledge we peer
into the bowl of summer, the path burrowing
into a meadow of hare, dance of hay. Artists
set up their easels, the easier to focus, frame
the day already framed as they paint themselves
painting themselves and bees work the room.
We pause to take it all in, but never do, just keep
adjusting to the motion that keeps the world still.

WHEN MY COLLEGE ROOMMATE VISITED PERU
BY JOANNE DURHAM

she brought me back a two-inch figurine
of a llama. Surely female – though no
bronze or metal souvenir has testicles

or a penis to define it, I claimed
this one as a woman. Grayish brown,
with gold streaks defining fur on ears/

neck/belly, light reflected from the artist's
toothpick strokes. Her top side darker, I suspect
time has tarnished her. She still holds

her head erect, throat lifted, legs
balanced. A saddle humps her body,
but not her will. I've kept her all these years,

long after the miniature marble elephant
cracked, the origami cranes lost their folds.
Not much seems to harm the llama. Dust

clutches the bottom of her feet and laces
her ears, easily wiped away. Was she really
gold to begin with? What if after all

she was cast in feathers, not fur? Maybe
she's a flying llama, about to spring off
from bent knees. Is that what Kathi meant

to bring back to me—to assure us
our futures would be strange and wild
and satisfying? Would she be surprised

I still trace the contours of the llama –
and our friendship, that slipped
away as quietly as the dust?

I DREAM OF YOUR BODY
BY BJ BUCKLEY

I dream of your body, a man's body, landscape
underpinned with bone, my country of rivers,

horse rearing to cover a mare, tree
thrust for water into the red well of my belly.

I was solitary under the dark pines. Their boughs
were the walls of a room where owls were

my Inquisitors. Night drowned me. To live,
I pressed my lips to yours, breath of wind

that in autumn scatters the leaves from the poplars.
I became that angel who offers her yellow pages

to those who cannot remember letters. I loved you,
though my heart became one of the stones of your mountain.

Carnal moonlight, torso with hillocks of dark
curled grass. Oh, the teeth you have stolen

from tigers! Sweet milk that my tongue
teased out, a nectar of honey and bitter and salt!

How formidable, your body which is as hard
as absence. My belly, shipwrecked,

the tides of your longing flowing over the hull,
your wind that tatters the sails of my long hair.

You have put out my only compass, the cold stars.

BONE

BY PATTY WARE

(for Emily)

As a young girl, I never heard the word
patriarchy, was taught to fear feminists who nurtured
armpit nests, named themselves in shorthand
clipped and cool, Sid or Sal.

But her name flowered my tongue, her words slipped
like silk onto my skin, she spoke of stolen dreams,
of a self that the system subverted, strength severed,
rose snipped, placed in a vase to be gazed upon,
her fragrance shimmering like a thorn.

She said it soft before she swore
she would no longer stay silent.

Bone, she said as if our hard, wide curve
of pelvis cradled every power
we would ever need, as if mouthing it
unshackled our strength.

Bone—not bone of my bone, not words
spilled from Adam, not Genesis proclaimed
by collared celibates preaching without irony
of marriage—that melding of flesh and heart
and yes, bone—no

hers was the bone of breath, bone that girdles womb,
our womb that widens, unafraid to yield
bone that births without preference
for female or male—hard bone, bone of resistance,
spirit bone, bone of salt
bone of flame, bone of fist
bone of acceptance, bone of gift.

*Bury a bone, compress it, drown it
in sediment and it becomes rock.*

My bone is flint—strike.

IF I'M HOME AFTER DARK THESE DAYS
BY ANASTASIA WALKER

If I'm home after dark these days
it's because the familiar routes
have been bombed out

If you catch me watching the skies
it's because of the funnel clouds
massing in my mind

If you catch me watching the door
throw the latch and I might
sleep tonight

If you see I'm not touching my plate
force my hand—it's far too easy
to starve in days like these

If you catch me drinking too much
blame it on nostalgia for nuance
blame it on nostalgia for bees
blame it on the weather

If I fall into your arms
it's because I hope perhaps
you'll keep me from flying apart

TELL IT TO THE BEES
BY WHITNEY VALE

So adrift in malaise
I set out a saucer;

watch honeybees cluster
& trouble the water

a swallowtail's shadow lazes
finches dart through fairy duster.

I remember my honey flow,
a gold fritillary time

when life, summer sweet,
felt eternal and I an omnipotent queen.

A bee lifts to the jasmine vine
a bee lifts to the chasteberry tree

a bee lifts to my thinning hair
lucent wings shimmer the air—

I am hollowing and collapsing,
even as bees hallow the water.

My parents died, I am no one's daughter,
my ovaries emptied, I am no one's mother.

Bright pendulums hover
over the water—

the blessing bees sway
their delicate ballet

affirming prayers,
absolving confession.

In the shadows of the tree
and the tracing of the vine

I speak to the bees who are wiser than me
who sip gracefully and leave.

MOUTH ART OF THE BALD-FACED HORNET
BY BETSY BOLTON

A solitary queen, eggs fertilized,
half-frozen, half-hibernating through winter

in a rotting log: she wakes, alone, to build
high in the canopy. Her raw material

—weathered fenceposts, rotted wood—she scrapes
with paired mandibles, toothed edges. Grating

wood, forcing fiber into mouthparts, spit-balling
her palace, she flies with pelleted pulp

to the nest she builds by crawling backwards,
laying fiber, retracing, compressing, stretching

the fiber, trimming edges as she goes,
curves defined by the mandibles that pinch and spread.

Some ten cells of comb once built, she lays eggs, feeds
her larvae well-minced crane flies; they pupate, emerge.

Now the queen lays eggs only; the workers feed, guard,
build their home as an ever-growing globe

of stippled curves, walls of layered paper torn down,
remashed to reconstruct their pendulous world.

Black and white themselves, they paint in subtle shades:
sepia longings, pebbled shores, a fawn

amid the fog, chestnut tree by hazelnut,
gunmetal rattling, smoke-silvered air;

walnut tinged with slate and flint, iron and ash,
mourning dove umbered amid autumn's ochre.

Still our human ears are deaf to their mouth art,
those unspoken words woven into shelter

above our heads, orchestral swelling
of the supra-organism; the soloist

hearing in the dark the harmonies she will shape
with mighty jaws: her many-faceted self, waiting

to emerge.

PRACTICING CHAOS
BY PAT DANEMAN

I've let housekeeping go—characters
of the Russian alphabet in the dust on a table
where a mug has left a fuzzy ring—
planet in a universe of clouds

and alien language. Rain slashes the windows,
leaves streaks the color of tired air.
I do not oppose the altered view—I am learning
the appeal of approximations—everchanging,

the shapes and sizes of birds, summer shimmy
of trees. How many weeks has it been
since I mopped the floor? It sparkles
with sticky tribute. From room to room,

the climate fluctuates. Sub-tropics
underneath the bed, lush blossoming
out of forgotten soil. On the stairs, a fallen pin,
a rush of hot wind—high desert. The day is coming—

let's call it the end of everything—
when I will erupt in a storm of brushes and brooms,
damp rags and chemical sprays.
I am a goddess, ancient, here. I create. I destroy.

Section Two

CEDAR SHAKES

BY ANN E. WALLACE

Mary Oliver was at her town dump
in Provincetown scavenging
for shingles the day she learned
she'd won the Pulitzer. I can see her now,
sorting through piles of refuse
for classic cedar shakes to protect
her seaside home, and I marvel
that she wasn't native to New England,
didn't come up on Saturday dump runs
or bred on the old Yankee wisdom
that there are well-worn things in this life
too worthy to be passed over as trash.

Every local has tales of wading
through the heaps of Cape Cod's castoffs,
of finding good stuff to haul home,
in concert with the plain brown skippers
who flit among the delicate St. John's wort,
wild rose hips, and purple thistle
that color the junkyard landscape.

For years, tipped off by a friend,
my mother scooped salty piles
of discarded scallop shells
into the back of her Volvo wagon,
like yard sale bargains, but better.
She drove home to bleach, shellac,
and attach the mollusk casings
to strings of tiny white lights,
to be gifted to family at Christmas,
each rescued shell glued tight to its cord
and glowing softly from within.

THE ENGRAVED STONE READ: *IMAGINE*
BY SUSANNAH WINTERS SIMPSON

Imagine that you are the peeling yellow plaster house
in the French Quarter and you are the elaborate verdigris balustrade
on the second floor, you are the view down over Market Street,
and when the summer rains come as they always do,
you are the floor-to-ceiling shutters, painted sky blue
which I close against the damp nights
and open just in time for dawn to light our bed
You are the bed, the sheets, the folding screen behind which I undress
you are the slow-moving fan above my sleeping form
and you are the chicory morning coffee, the cream, the fresh beignets,
and you are the serving tray placed beside me.

NUISANCE PROPERTY

BY PATRICIA DAVIS-MUFFETT

for Sarah

The house over the fence
so close its disrepair feels contagious
spray insulation bubbling through stucco
bulbous and organic like a growth, an infestation.

The garage leans toward the rickety stairs,
formerly white paint cracking, tar shingled roof.
Over its whole triangular face, Virginia creeper,
doing its best to wind green tendrils into rot.

This side of the fence, my sister has planted
a Japanese maple, a garden of roses, fills bird feeders
to draw the mourning doves and hummingbirds—
her oasis after twelve hours on her feet,
spinning sugar and flour into delights
her whole city craves.

Someone tells her to call the landlord:
complain and make him pull the creeper down.
But she sees, from her wicker porch chair
next to the ashtray filled with the butts of Virginia Slims—
the lush canvas that creeper makes,
ladder for the morning glories and honeysuckles
to scale decay, reach toward the sun; the way it shelters
the wild rose bush abandoned between fence and wall
that climbs, spills over her fence, wanting nothing,
asking nothing, simply blooming to make the world
a little more beautiful, a little more livable,
knowing nothing but this season—
its warmth and rain and sun.

SEDUCTION

BY MARTHA BORDWELL

This early morning silence seduces me
into thinking that anything is possible.
That this cup of black coffee, so bitter and primal,
will soothe my dry throat.
That today's sunrise will dazzle with stripes of pink and orange.
I will hear from an old friend out of the blue
and the wool sweater I bought in Scotland
twenty-five years ago, with the plum-colored flowers on the bodice,
will be unearthed in the bottom of a drawer.
When I walk I'll find a gold leaf among its
withered brown brethren crunching beneath my feet.
The elusive red-headed woodpecker
will visit the bird feeder my husband put up outside
the window.
And words will come easily this morning:
like the first customer of the day at a bakery,
I'll have my choice of the most delectable.

ODE TO OUR OLD OVEN
BY KAREN PAUL HOLMES

You're 22 in oven years, 82 in human,
says The Appliance Doctor.
You struggle to 170 degrees, then give up.
A second opinion by Mr. Appliance
confirmed The Doc's doom:
You're too sick to fix. New parts extinct.

Your replacement backordered for months
so it's Dutch-oven-on-stovetop time,
crock-pot time, microwave-
boiling-bag-or-barbeque time.
Or maybe the universe is telling us
we're better off with salads.

Yet Oven, how you've fed us—
pizza, pot roast, pies!
With hinges sagging, your door leaking heat,
still you crisped our biscuits gold.

Everything we own is growing old.
Mice teathed our brittle water pipes,
the septic field wants to fail,
a window frame (your sibling) fell apart.
No wonder I have that dream
I'm on a plane, knowing we're going down.

KEEPER OF ICE, TOMB OF CELERY, MORTUARY FOR EGGS
BY CARRIE ALBERT

It's lights off for
one more chill night.
The refrigerator purrs
like a post-menopausal woman
pushing a cart full
of songs of aging coolants.
She strains to motor her load along
a dim path. Her cart is of sound,
but heavy with the accumulated
weight of being unnoticed.
She is a native of the sea port,
living on the edge
of shallow waters. Bees gather
around her. She whispers
to mask the hungry
beep beep beep.
The beat quickens, like rocks
tumbling. She tries to forget the rhythm
of another body grinding against hers,
stroking private places, her hand
coursing across curls.
The lonely machine
with its groans, unable to stop –
until a final explosion:
c'est la petite mort.

INHERITANCE

BY ANN DE FOREST

You believed the past had value, held fast to every little thing. Tucked inside a cotton nest your darling's topaz ring. Stowed beneath the kitchen sink tangled coils of pearls. Deep within a bureau drawer your father's chestnut curls. Stashed in the shed, treasures, you said. I opened the moss green door. The roof had collapsed, water soaked in. Sealed cardboard boxes sagged, stank of must. What could I save? Termites fed on photographs, carved lovely lacy tunnels through faces, houses, gardens without regard for any family history they told. Smoked glass goblets, yellowed teacups balanced on tilting shelves veiled by spiders' gossamer. Squirrels followed your example, placed inside each cup a single acorn hidden under oak leaves waiting for redemption. I had to sell it all to keep you going. Inheritance enough the glint in your sapphire eyes, undimmed — my treasure. You thought you taught me how to keep our valued past — to shelter and to store. Instead loss leaved on loss, you taught me how to shed. Everything that is, but you.

DOWNSIZING
BY PEGGY LIUZZI

I wish I could shut up like a telescope!... if I only knew how to begin.
—*Alice in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll

We're moving to a smaller house, our many possessions—things we've amassed/ curated/ collected for a lifetime – will be scattered in a quick burst like yellow willow leaves in a gust of wind. We tell ourselves that the people we love don't live in the things we leave behind. It's all about learning to say goodbye.

Goodbye to 21 boxes of good books we'll never read again. Goodbye to the dress I wore to my daughter's wedding, my lucky socks, the red wool hat I bought on a whim. Goodbye to silver platters, cake-stands, a dozen ornate candy dishes, 10 decks of cards, 20 thousand-piece jigsaw puzzles, 17 screwdrivers & 9 Allen wrenches used to assemble furniture we no longer own.

Goodbye to kitchen gadgets purchased for one gourmet meal – the scary-sharp cleaver, cherry pitter, apple corer, melon baller, garlic grater, 2 cookie presses & 24 tart pans shaped like tiny hearts. Photos of beaches and mountains with no people in them – gone. Photos of zoo animals, blurry party goers and startled, red-eyed relatives – gone. Even my mother's crumbling black paper album disassembled, the white-inked captions in fragments, intact photos boxed.

What do I keep? The card deck I bought in Morocco when I was 21, my father's lucky coin, my mother's teapot, the framed photos of my parents and grandparents when they were impossibly young, cards from my kids and grandkids, the first poem I wrote in second grade, a few love letters light as dried flower petals, and you, dear.

WHAT TO SAVE

BY ANDREA LIVINGSTON

Today, the clouds swirled burnt orange, a Van Gogh painting.
Tonight, millions of red embers masquerade as stars.
I sit at my dining room table and list what to save

should the wildfire consume my home in a flash.
If the kids were still here, I'd forget the list, snatch them
from their beds, drag their sleepy limbs into the car,

head toward the Pacific. But my nest is empty now,
the only music, the loud coo-cooing of mourning doves
at the feeder on my deck. No evacuation alert yet,

so still time to grab my Albuterol, N95 mask,
slippery elm tea, sea salt bars, Alpine spring water,
down comforter, pillow to sleep, I know not where.

Must not forget proof of my existence on our ever-warming earth—
birth certificate, driver's license, vaccination card—
cash to replace the glittering rubble. Outside, ash blankets

the sidewalk like days-old snow, car painted with
powdery remains of what might have been pinecones
and needles, eucalyptus limbs, wood splinters from houses

fifteen miles away. Now smoke covers the living room window
like a soiled curtain. Better pack my cracked leather wedding album,
dad's WWII letters to mom, the diamond earrings she loved,

and the pre-smartphone photos: My arm clutching the waist of one son
wobbling on a two-wheeler. His brother showing off his front tooth.
Me, Christmas at Rockefeller Center, carrying the child I never had.

Let the helicopters come, let them douse my neighborhood
with foamy crimson water. But who will save the doves hiding
in the highest branches, their songs faint echoes through the smoke?

FERRYVILLE

BY ANNE MYLES

Driving along the upper Mississippi, jagged
bluffs jutting, thick trees and lemony stone,

I'm reciting a poem carried from childhood
a thousand miles east on a different river:

this is our lordly Hudson hardly flowing
under the green-grown cliffs. I pass Ferryville,

where flatboats once traveled back and forth
and horse-teams pulled sledges across the ice:

lost world of my own past, lost world of history,
both ferried out of sight. My parents, dead now—

what does it mean to think of them *across*?
And my whole life unmoored, in transfer.

The river tropes itself, incision winding down
into the heartland. Held by locks and dams

it pools and widens. Metaphor, another ferry
I can't stop boarding—as if it fixed things, as if

it could show me where I am. Heading west now,
I see a bridge arc upward to span the channel

to another state: one more green hillside rising,
high white houses shimmering in the dusk.

VALENTINE'S DINNER AT WREN & WOLF
BY MARY SPECKER STONE

We skirt the intimate, wonder aloud how the shrimp
gets to Phoenix from Rocky Point. Habit, now, to talk
of supply chains, however short. Your confabulation:
a priest who crossed the drug boss in Sonora forced
to broker seafood on the border as penance for mis-
baptizing babies of the corrupt devout. Write a book,
I tell you, I who once half-enjoyed your riffs, hereby
reject our disconnect. We're too old to waste time
and love, look at that gray wolf eyeing us from his
promontory above the hungry stomach of this hip
restaurant, his coat thick, not the least motheaten,
no decommissioned diorama dog, this toothy guy.
He's life-like as you and I, as our own aging canine
whose rear legs splay today when she tries to rise.

WHEN YOU ARE GONE
BY MONA ANDERSON

I will sleep in the middle of the bed
arms spread wide
window open to the icy wind,
the brook alive in the dark.

I'll speak in a soft voice
turn off subtitles.

Grass will grow
I'll forget to water.

I'll heat with oil
hoard the wood you chopped.

I'll plant only one garden bed
buy my tomatoes and squash

at the farm stand to say hello
to other humans before I feed the cats.

I'll read more, watch TV less,
turn on all the lights

wander down our long driveway then back
to study the silent house for shadows.

When you are gone, I'll sleep on my own side
arm draped over the empty space
where you snored and tossed and turned
where the cat purred on your chest
and got you up early so I knew
where you were when I awoke
and you were gone.

IF I COULD USE THE WIND PHONE...
BY JUDY KRONENFELD

Inside[the phone box] there is an old black telephone, disconnected, that carries voices into the wind....[P]eople who have lost someone...pick up the receiver to speak to the other side.

—Literary Hub, March 17, 2021

I think I would feel shy with Mom and Dad, settled
for decades in their grey subterranean country,
wandering passageways in their no longer new
shapes permeable as vapor, whispering
in their no longer new language—fainter
than air brushing past my ears—
and faltering, now, in the language
we once shared.

It might be easier to talk with my brother-in-law,
only three years gone, to finally return
his generous weekly calls inquiring after each
of the members of his brother's nuclear family,
even the dogs. Perhaps I could be
heartly with him, as if he were in for a brief
hospital stay, and coming home soon.
But my questions would stick in my throat,
as they do when I think of my uncles
and aunts, my sister-in-law, my cousins
and friends—all dispersed on the wind:
Are you sleeping comfortably?
Are you able to eat?

Those who manage to use the wind phone
must talk the way I talk to our living dogs,
patting myself with words as I move
through my day on those rare occasions
when you, my love, have traveled far from home.
*For my lunch—tuna on sourdough? Or cheese
and tomato? Chime in, guys.*

But, if you depart to Forever
before me, and silence buzzes
like static in my ears, and the house fills
with a viscous invisible fog
I self-consciously push through,
preternaturally alone—
your absolute Absence
will make all words withdraw.

HANDS

BY ANNAMARIA FORMICHELLA

My godmother's house smells of dark
tomatoes and little fish in a cast-iron
pot simmering for all the years she lived

cramped in a duplex, serving others
with a hand scarred by boiling water.
Always too close her claw-hand and

the plates and the plastic-covered chairs,
too many bodies around the sticky table,
restless shins bumping wooden legs.

Caged, we squirm, eat squid, try to ignore
the cat hair that descends through shafts
of dirty sunlight. I kick my brother, who

passes every platter, wait for my father's
rough serving hand—twice as much
if you don't take any for yourself.

But he looks past us, unfolds his body
upward into the dusty air, puts his hands
on Maria's shoulders. The lines fall

from his tanned face and he's a boy.
Later when we drive home, the car
bounces a familiar beat through the city

along the central artery—tha-wump, tha-
wump, tha-wump—rocking me to sleep,
my cheek cool against the vinyl seat.

My father reaches out, lays his hand
on my head. When I look up, his hair
glows—my mostly absent angel shepherds

us through streetlights cold and sharp,
like flashbulbs freezing us in place.

BIRTHDAY GIFT ON MEDICINE LAKE
BY WENDY BROWN-BAEZ

You walk through the lush grass
dampened by dew,
past the fire, past the drifting
threads of story and laughter,
to the edge of the lake.

Twilight and your aging eyes
smudge the place
where water meets earth,
and the pier is narrow and slick
so you stop

and look down at your feet,
the edge where waters caress rock and mud,
before stepping out onto the lake
just in time to see the full moon
shimmer on its indigo expanse.

The moon is a crystal marble,
that begins to glow
from behind the blackened
shapes of the tall trees
shuddering in a night breeze.

Up on the deck
music from the time when you first
learned the intransigent
names for longing
plays through the window

and friends dance wildly,
their hair silhouetted by
candles that turn the insides of the
house into magic,
as if awake and alive.

And a joy cascades through your
bones that you can not catch
or hold, though it is
gilding your heart all the same.

RELATIVE VELOCITY
BY PRARTHIO SERENO

I don't have forever, my friend
who was in need of a lover
told God... *like You do.*

Her garden was overgrown,
breakfast nook empty, feet
interminably cold. That's the way
it is down here where leaf-blowers
cough up dust devils and possums
ginger forth at dusk to stare in
with troubled pink eyes.

In these parts it's one
perplexing whirl from this to that.
She didn't need money she said or
a place to rest her head. She had enough
of just about everything.

But Time was something else and
though she reasoned the Eternal
didn't have much use for it, Time
was the only train in town. So she boarded
the milk-run and sent up her plea and

just like that a good-looking fisherman
blew into the yard sale —no projects
of his own (as specified) —
just an easy smile, warm feet,
and an almost unearthly eagerness
to get things done.

THE END OF HORSES

BY T. CLEAR

I lead them to the stable nose to tail
in a quiet procession of flank and fetlock,
iron shoes rustling up a nimbus of dust.
Not one of us is happy.
No bit in any mouth.

Settled in their stalls,
they grow drowsy with oats.
Tails swish at flies as they fuss
and shuffle, settle for the night.
Their hay-green scent.

I leave them to their lonesome
nickering under an ebbing moon,
deadbolt the door, pocket the key.
Who knows when I'll need it?
It may be months — no telling.

Or I could unlock my way back in,
rub behind an ear, stroke a starred forehead,
lean into muscled shoulders just to feel
that weight pressing back
against my need for comfort.

Such safety in locks, absent
the worry of fracture, the hectic bolting
rein-free over ditch & hedge.
My own swinging door slammed shut,
handle wedged with a chairback.

I HAVE FELT THERE IS SOMETHING MORE WONDERFUL—
BY JACQUELYN SHAH

some kind of relaxed and beautiful thing—
 noticing a leaf being carried down a stream
 finding a small bird's nest lined pale and silvery
 bee humming in the heart of a wildflower
 the sea streaming in like a mother wild with gifts
 a book of colorful paintings
 all shining fruits in eager hands
 a cluster of shade trees in the local park
 unimportant rustling in the yellow reeds
 a dog curled on the rug
 baby owl, ruffled and rakish
 the whole hippo look
 a person wanting to stand in a happy place, in a poem—
 [your name goes here]

Cento—alternating lines (with exception of last bracketed line) from poems
by Mary Oliver and Billy Collins, beginning with Oliver. Title: Oliver.

Section Three

SUBLIME AS INTRANSITIVE VERB
BY JACQUELINE JULES

Sublime: to pass directly from the solid to the vapor state.

Outside my window,
snow slowly slips
into vapor, vanishing
from the patio table
bit by bit.

I could learn a lot
from snow, the way
it cycles from solid
to gas to liquid
and back again.

The world is soaked
with so much sadness.

But snow still sublimates
beneath a bright sun,
reminding me
that what falls
heavy and fast
can be expected
to lift
if just given
enough time.

THE SHADOWS A WOMAN CASTS
BY MARGE PIERCY

During my first marriage, when
I left grad school to work
as a secretary, I was astounded

to find I'd become invisible.
When I spoke, no one turned
their heads. I was used to being

known, a big shot on campus.
used to waking into rooms
and people noticing, greeting.

Established as a writer by 30
somewhat famous, used to
interviews and public readings

I took it all for granted. Now
I'm a little old lady and once
again I'm invisible as air.

I WONDER IF THE OPPOSITE OF DEATH IS FEVER
BY LYNN PATTISON

the opposite of bell is not vase it is gun
the opposite of air conditioning is mosquito, asthma, jock itch
the opposite of wildlife is the wild life
you'd guess frostbite for sunburn but it's albino skin, flaking bone
the opposite of tinnitus is omm or maybe throat singing
and butter is the alter ego of famine
obituary's opposite is "Happy Birthday"
not-God is probably a black hole
the opposite of cleave is cleave
the opposite of fire is blindness
earth mother is to cowbird as egg is to jawbreaker
and the opposite of alchemy is diminishment

I WANT MILKWEED HAIR
BY JESSICA PURDY

I have put my trust in the indifference of wind.

Now is the moment of my most wise. I have failed to calm down.
Now I lie in hypnogogic state. I didn't defend myself.

The children are getting too old. I have eaten too much sugar.
This is when I should get hired for all the jobs.

When I was young I didn't listen. Failed to plant with knowledge of the sun,
soil, or water, but saw the old women's parachutes glow

for a week in autumn—
their cottony heads, candy glistening in the bottom of a purse.

Wind sent them tumbling, snagging against brown
detritus of leaves, lives of loved ones.

I want their hair.
I defended myself. Daughter to a peacekeeper.

Their white silk bounced,
in little laughing bundles

bounded across the earth,
didn't need to ask for help.

I am a milkweed pod split open—
nine hundred silk-white hairs attached to my seeds.

NOTHING DISPLACES
BY NANCY L. MEYER

We are pebbles, yes stones that
glisten black, silver at the seaside sistered, curve to bend rolling and wet,
sotto voce we clack in the waves joined together, one element.
And if a storm roils in the night
tears us apart in the undertow buries others deep in the sand,
will the girl coming down the sun-baked steps with her yellow pail
notice the clefts between us, the gouges where we slammed into each other?
We appear a placard of rocks humps in the sand
nothing displaced. The girl cannot know how desperately we are reordering
every atom of our being stretching tendrils to the missing
adjusting our edges to lie now next to strangers.

PROUD MARY

BY MELINDA GOODMAN

Tina Turner—Final Tour Date: Dallas, Texas, 2000

Oh. When I walk out on stage the crowd goes insane.
Palms of galactic hands rain through my body.
Thunder-foot the wooden floor
rumbles under my shoes.
I remove my stilettos.
Yells and screams lift the roof off its hinges
flatten the corrugated aluminum
into wing flaps of a massive
red-tail hawk.

A cluster of women drummers
percolates the caves of a thousand chests.
Upside down
cartwheels jump on trampoline diaphragms
Someone pressures the ushers
to let in the line still waiting
outside in the newly paved parking lot
tar still soft and warm in the evening sun
I'm sure there's room in this room
where room is expanding
walls blasting into this desert night.
Sand dunes brushing back their cactus bangs
wipe the sandy sweat from their prickly brows
spread my arms to the arc of sky yipping
riddles at coyotes with questions answered
only by the prairie dog invention
of tunnels through liquid pyrite veins
rivering the core muscles of Earth's
unconscious contraction
determined to re-birth this planet
one more time.

<https://youtu.be/0UX78d6XOFs>

ALL THIS TIME YOU THOUGHT AVRIL LAVIGNE WAS TAYLOR SWIFT
BY BABO KAMEL

One day you wake up and you're a rectangle in Easy Spirit shoes.
Grey roots betray you every other week and ads on Facebook
implore you to anti-age every part you can. Then there's the horror
of discovering Barry Manilow is not half bad, and you find yourself
singing *Oh Mandy, you came, and you saw and you conquered*.
Or at Zumba class, Meghan Trainor's tremolo makes you think
It's all about the neck, bout the neck, bout the neck. Half the time
you're walking in circles, trying to figure out which direction
is straight ahead. On Tuesday, you read about an *elderly* woman
getting mugged and you realize you're the same age. Oh the indignities,
your car roof adorned with a hideous pink flower, the proliferation
of whatchamacallits in the kitchen drawer, your joints rebelling.
But it's night skies that leave you breathless, the recurring dream
of full moon, the stars burning through their long abandoned lights.

LOTUS FLOWER WITH TWELVE PETALS
BY FRAN MARKOVER

Chi is elusive during these viral days
so I Zoom with Amanda, acupuncturist.
She visits aged hurts on my old body, teaches
acupressure, explains inflammation, pain,
how to cool or heat channels that suffer,
blocked from chi. We begin with warm-ups,
bumblebee breaths. I place fingers on my
ears, head, eyes, then hum. My head thrums.
So this is how to become winged, to enter
the pink-tunneled cosmos, to busy myself
inside the honeyed petals. Gently, I thank
the flowers and practice butterfly hugs, my
arms across my ribcage, pulses from this
tender chakra reassuring. My fingers lift,
massage depressions between my thumbs
and first fingers. I rub Earth of the Heart,
channel calming rising storms. My hands
stroll—destination Gushing Spring, descend
toward my heel's center, gathering place
of Sinews, of Heavenly Stars.

SELF-PORTRAIT AT A TORTURE WHEEL
BY BARBARA LYDECKER CRANE

Self-Portrait as St. Catherine of Alexandria,
c.1615, by Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–c.1653);
Rome, Italy

By faith, the saint survived the torture wheel,
because that wood and iron horror shattered
just before its spikes could shred. I feel
pain still, remembering my dreadful matter—
thumbscrews pressed to test my truth that Tassi,
my painting tutor, raped me at eighteen.
I prayed he'd hang in that morass. He,
found guilty and banished from Rome, is seen
lurking about. But I refuse to cower.
My sales are brisk; I paint my works with grace,
and call on martyrdom as hidden power.
I paint a calm resolve into my face
while weighing my emotions and their uses,
be they crowns of halos or of nooses.

Image available here: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/artemisia-gentileschi-self-portrait-as-saint-catherine-of-alexandria>

ANNUNCIATIONS
BY SUSAN KRESS

*Veronese's *Annunciation* in the Gallerie dell 'Accademia, Venice

How they loved, the old masters, showing
how Mary took the news.
This time, no surprise, we're in a house of columns,
tiles laid neatly on the floor. Surely nothing untoward
can happen. But enter winged Gabriel on the left,
and there's the dove up high shedding
brightness. Now swivel right to Mary, just a girl turning
woman, flinching even, hand to breast, as if to say
But why have you picked me?
And I think how easily it could have gone
another way. How it all depended
on her being willing. And now I'm back
on that school trip to Venice. Seventeen, still wearing
pleated skirts and short white socks,
taking it all in for the first time, loving the word *gigolo*
in my mouth. But when I return, a ripe plum bursting
to tell my mother of a world she'd never seen
a world she gave me, saving coin by precious coin,
she stops me right there on the busy London street, stops
me with her own announcement. *Pregnant.*
And that other world—St. Mark's, the Doge's Palace,
all the domes and mighty columns—sinks
into the Grand Canal. I hear the cry of brakes
from heavy lorries and I'm still holding
my old suitcase full of cheap and silly souvenirs.
A baby. *What good news*, I lie, turning
my face away from hers.
When she's due, she takes my flaring coat—
hers does not button—climbs into the taxi by herself.
Unpitying, I watch her push
the grimy window down:
If I die, she says, *I'm putting you in charge.*

*Image: <https://www.savevenice.org/project/annunciation>

THE SILK KIMONO JACKET

BY LAURIE KUNTZ

has been tossed in this bargain box,
its sleeves tangle in waves
of faded silk swans and blooming
flower patterns, purple and peach run
from the horn of the iris's trumpet.

Many have worn it...
the wedding jacket of a milk maiden,
a gift for a mistress,
or a woman's city coat.

Balled lint lines the pelican pockets,
a crumpled tissue, a wooden button, a hairpin.
Women grew in and out of this fabric
like the billowing of sails on erratic seas.

Cranes and flowers reeled together,
a rhymed pattern of seasoned colors.
The musky silk shimmers—in my hand, a palette of lives.

The years of wear are many...
I could settle on a lower price,
but it is not the bargain I want—
only the tight weave of women's memories.

ALL SOULS DAY
BY KATE MARSHALL

1

Halloween. You sit in the dark. Imagine the moment your sister's last boyfriend pressed the Colt Easy Trigger against her temple. Did he warm the barrel? Brush back stray hairs?

2

Back. Growing up, she was forever spitting—boysenberries, bitter herbs, menstrual blood. Spitting and spitting, until some man told her not to spit anymore.

3

Anymore. You wonder about the boyfriend's thoughts as he entered the pawnshop. He was a bargain hunter. Did he have a coupon? Haggle with the salesman? Do a trade? He had a Ruger IC9. Three other guns. But this story's not about guns. Guns are easy. This story is complicated.

4

Complications. In the suicide note, he signed your sister's name and wrote that her daughter, Barbara, didn't care. That her boy, Charlie, didn't care. Barbara, now holed up in her room, drinking cheap rum and blasting "O-o-o Child" to drive out the memory of her last visit with her Mom when the boyfriend told her to go home if all she could do was cry.

And Charlie, once swaddled against your sister's chest, as she sang sotto voce, *Charlie Barley, Charlie Barley, Charlie Barley*.

5

Cry. Does it change things to know that the boyfriend had a kidney transplant four months before he entered the pawnshop? That his blackened index finger was a sign that it had failed. That soon it would be the thumb, then the hand. Did he worry that he would be unable to care for the woman he professed to love?

6

Love is never having to ask permission he may have thought. The Easy Trigger: an investment in their future.

7

In the future, will things be different if you remember your sister had MS, the kind you couldn't treat?

And remember that her shakes gave way to tremors, that put her in a wheel chair, that carried her to a care home, where she was signed in by her former husband, the children's father. Where she met the boyfriend.

8

The boyfriend, who at one time wanted a woman who shimmied, but never in a way that got in his way.

9

The way. Halloween again. You switch on your porchlight. Feed your cat. Pick at a seven-ingredient organic salad. Drink red wine. Lay out Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. Sit in a straight-backed chair, cracked in the seat. Jiggle your leg. You're not good at waiting.

Wait.

A little cowboy and a ghost girl appear on your threshold. Light mist dampens your cheeks as the karambit moon abrades the darkness.

The boy points his gun. "Kabang."

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN POLITICAL SYSTEMS OVER SUSHI WITH MY SON AND GRANDSON

BY VIRGINIA SMITH

When the edamame lands among us, my son and I chart the rise of autocracies, the decline of global liberal democracies in the 21st century, while Adrian, eyeing both his 13th birthday and the just delivered Seaweed Salad, queries the difference between “just plain and liberal democracy,” so Jon and I talk over Sashimi and one another, me craving a seminar in roots, suffixes and prefixes, defining the Greek cracy to the pre-teen before mixing and matching auto-, pluto-, demos- and merito-, illustrate by moving fishy suffixes—Spicy Yellowfin and Callifornia Roll pieces—on to the Dragon Roll stem while his dad discourses on voting rights, threats to representative democracy, and I abandon my less than sexy seminar, say yes to another glass of white wine, no to dessert, and Adrian anticipates the joys of Air Buds and Air Jordan Retro Fire Reds (to his grandmother, remember that birthday) and we walk the block to his sisters’ Community Center Play, *The Most Epic Birthday Party*, in which a fifth grade erstwhile populist leader becomes a dictator overnight, replete with crown and scepter, and Adrian whispers in my direction: “Autocrat—prefix meaning by one’s self, suffix governing—autocracies here, there and everywhere...”

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS
BY SHARON SCHOLL

As the old gods die
people *in extremis* turn to prayer
as to a foreign language.

They assume the gestures
of rituals once stamped into the body
by mindless repetition

turn to half forgotten strategies—
the bargain with its promised sacrifice,
occasionally a postscript of remorse.

Like a coin tossed in a wishing well
their *amen* concludes a small hope tossed to chance,
as in *it won't hurt to try*.

They hear their words vanish into silence,
turn to vapor in the cavern of deep space
where something or nothing may reside,

feel the loneliness of a god-deserted world
where every bush and waterfall
once shone with sacred presence.

THE PERSEIDS

BY MELANIE DU BOSE

Half a sandwich doesn't seem like much, an easy give but the tomatoes were so thick and salty. Half a life doesn't seem like much, yours going up, mine down. More than half, I pass the other half over and your eyes shine, mouth opens happily. Half of everything and then the other half as well, who is counting? Every year around this time the Perseids fall, and every year I wonder how there can be anything left in the sky.

CREATION TALE FIRE
BY BARBARA ROCKMAN

We arrive strangers but it isn't long before
night we sprawl on our backs on the mesa

Sky bigger than any god named
Hot wind lifts white garments

There is no moon stars careen and fall
to shrieks *did you see did you see?*

into open arms onto our tongues
onto bare breasts how lit and meteor-flecked we are

Women of bleached hair hair gone snow kink and sleek
wide flabbed hips and tight faces gnarled

arms scarred muscled for fight
stretched toward delight

We need not be pierced and strung: one necklace
we are beads sundered broken upon the rock dry lonely earth

We roll into each other we heap upon become
boister of what the blaze-tailed goddess

sweeps her net above
empties her star clutch upon

What women need lessons in how
to gather tinder to stack

grain across grain
of our bodies

to ignite?

DREAMING OF THE IRISH SWEEPSTAKES ON THE MOTORCOACH TO DONEGAL
BY GLORIA HEFFERNAN

As we board the bus in Sligo,
the tour guide can barely contain himself.
Tonight is the drawing. What great timing.
Over three million pounds at stake.
He will tell us where to buy our tickets
when we reach the town square.

We watch the countryside roll by
as the winnings become our new reality.
Of course, we will win,
and the dreams become plans.

We will spread the winnings around.
Pay off the kids' college loans.
Set aside down payments for mortgages.
Trust funds for grandchildren.

I worry about the ethics of two Americans
absconding with all those Irish pounds.
So we vow to return for a month every year
and rent a seaside cottage in Dingle
because it wouldn't be practical to buy,
but we would have a moral obligation to
help the Irish economy.

By the time we reach Donegal,
we have spent the millions,
established a foundation,
decided which charities we will support,
and you, in a flourish of generosity,
have decided we should upgrade the flight home
for everyone in our tour group.

I bristle at the extravagance of First Class,
but I love your impulse to shower everyone
with our newfound wealth.
So I agree, reluctantly, to the plan.
It's only money, after all.

CHIMERA

BY TINA CARLSON

I am three parts woman—
fire, mulch, tongue. Bovid and cat,
reptilian hiss in the scrub. Birds
nest in my vents. Maned, I spew
faucets of forested flame. A goat
on my back: star-shod. Her hooves
legible as small moons. She lips the thrill
of a bite from my hind. Lifted
from early ash, I blazed my own
babies to stone. I am gong
in the clamoring, have flirted
the burn. Grazed the death
plots. Snaked your word
wounds to rubble.

BABA YAGA BARBIE
BY SERENA FUSEK

Barbie after six decades
no matter how new
your plastic appears
you have grown
into the age of the crone
can begin to sip the power
of Baba Yaga.

Lose the pink wardrobe
dress in purple
dress in ebony
wear beads of jet
around your neck.

Grow out the blonde dye
let your white hair
blow wild in the hurricane
let it become an antenna
that picks up star song
or prophecy.

Ditch the convertible
ride the windhorse
beyond the restrictions
of asphalt of the lines
on gas station maps

and follow Coyote
into the wilderness.

Like a cat a fox,
a ghost pale mare
you walk on tiptoes—
letting you sidle
through the nightmares
of the grown up girls
who kept you captive.

Barbie you've been a sweetheart
for too many years—now
take on your power:
let the lightning pour through you
let the night and its fires fill you
call your 99 cats.

Stand up
like a she wolf
the color of a storm of ravens
torquing down a winter sky

and make them kneel.

CONTRIBUTORS

Carrie Albert is a poet and visual artist. Her poems and visual art works have been widely published in anthologies and journals including: *Take a Stand: Art Against Hate*, *Grey Sparrow*, *Foliate Oak*, *Earth's Daughters*, *Ink Sweat & Tears* and *Plum Tree Tavern*. She lives in Seattle.

Mona Anderson is a retired mental health therapist living in the New Hampshire countryside with her husband, cats, and various other sentient beings. She is co-author of *The Art of Building a House of Stone*. Her work has appeared in *Penning the Pandemic* (An anthology of creative writing from the beginning of the COVID era), *Post Script* (An anthology of postcard poetry), and *Pleasures Taken*, a Writing it Real Anthology. Other poems will be published in the fall issue of *Constellations: A Journal of Poetry and Fiction*, and in the Spring 2023 issue of *Soul-Lit*, a journal of spiritual poetry.

Tina Barry is the author of *Beautiful Raft* and *Mall Flower*. Her writing appears in numerous journals, including *The Best Small Fictions 2020* (spotlighted story) and 2016, *Drunken Boat*, *The American Poetry Journal*, *the Lascaux Review*, *What Rough Beast*, *Nasty Women Poets: An Anthology of Subversive Verse*, *A Constellation of Kisses*, *Verse-Virtual*, *ONE ART* and upcoming in *Rattle*. She has three Pushcart Prizes nominations as well as Best of the Net. Tina is a teaching artist at The Poetry Barn and Writers.com.

Betsy Bolton's recent work has appeared in *The Hopper: Environmental Lit. Poetry. Art, and the New Croton Review* and is forthcoming in *Split Rock Review* and *Minnow*. Her chapbook *Mouth Art of the Bald-faced Hornet* was recently longlisted for the Kingdoms in the Wild Annual Poetry Prize. She teaches at Swarthmore College, on Lenape land, at the edge of the Piedmont and the coastal plain. Her poems are in conversation with the Crum woods, their crooked creek, and the communities embedded and fostered there.

Martha Bordwell is a retired psychologist who has reinvented herself as a writer. She is a regular contributor to the Community Voices column at *Minnpost*. Her poems have been published in *Motherwell*, *Korean Quarterly*, *Of Rust and Glass*, and *Amsterdam Quarterly*. In 2019 she published a memoir, *Missing Mothers*, which interweaves her experience of losing her mother when she was a child with her experience raising adopted children. She lives in Minneapolis.

Laure-Anne Bosselaar is the author of *The Hour Between Dog and Wolf*, *Small Gods of Grief*, winner of the Isabella Gardner Prize, and of *A New Hunger*, selected as a Notable Book by the American Library Association. Her latest book *These Many Rooms* is out from Four Way Books. A Poet Laureate of Santa Barbara Emerita, she is the recipient of a Pushcart Prize and the winner of the 2020 James Dickey Poetry Prize. She edited five anthologies, & taught at Sarah Lawrence College and at the University of California Santa Barbara.

Wendy Brown-Báez is the author *Heart on the Page: A Portable Writing Workshop*, the novel *Catch a Dream* and poetry collection *Ceremonies of the Spirit*. Her poetry and prose appear widely in journals and anthologies, such as *Mizna*, *Poets & Writers*, *Talking Writing*, *Water~Stone Review*, *Peregrine*, *Tiferet*, and *Wining Up Press*. Wendy was awarded grants to teach writing workshops in non-profits. She facilitates writing workshops in community spaces such as healing centers, state prisons, libraries, spiritual centers, and the Loft Literary Center.
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B.J. Buckley (she/her) is a Montana poet and writer who has worked as a teaching artist in Arts in Schools and Communities programs throughout the West and Midwest for nearly five decades. Her new chapbook, *In January, the Geese*, won the Comstock Review's 2021 35th Anniversary Poetry Chapbook Prize.

Tina Carlson is a NM poet. She has published two previous collections of poems: *Ground, Wind, This Body* (UNM Press, 2017) and, in collaboration with two other NM poets, *We Are Meant To Carry Water* (3: A Taos Press, 2019). Her third collection, *A Guide To Tongue Tie Surgery* is forthcoming in fall 2023 from UNM Press. She won second place in Cutthroat: A Journal of the Arts 2020 Joy Harjo Poetry Contest.

Katherine M. Clarke has published in *Breath and Shadow*, *Wordgathering*, *The Sun Magazine*, *Northern New England Review*, *New Verse News*, and *The Poet's Touchstone*. She won the New England Poetry Club's Amy Lowell Prize in 2021. A professor emeritus of Antioch University New England, she now teaches at Keene State College's Center for Lifelong Learning.

T. Clear is a founder of Floating Bridge Press and a curator for EasySpeak Seattle. She has been writing and publishing since the late 1970's, and her work has appeared in many magazines and anthologies, including *Poetry Northwest*, *Sheila-na-Gig Online*, *The Rise-Up Review*, *Red Earth Review*, *Terrain.org*, *The Moth*, *Common Ground Review*, *The American Journal of Poetry* and *Take a Stand: Art Against Hate*. Her book, *A House, Undone*, is the 2021 winner of the Sally Albiso Award from MoonPath Press. She is an Associate Editor at Bracken Magazine.

Barbara Lydecker Crane, a Rattle Poetry Prize finalist in 2017 and 2019, has received two Pushcart nominations and several awards for her sonnets. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Alabama Literary Review*, *Ekphrastic Review*, *First Things*, *Measure*, *Montreal Review*, *THINK*, and many others. She has published three chapbooks: *Zero Gravitas*, *Alphabetricks*, and *Back Words Logic*. Her book of sonnets about artists and portrait paintings, entitled *You Will Remember Me*, will be published by Able Muse Press.

Pat Daneman's poetry is widely published, most recently in *Moon City Review*, *Poet's Touchstone*, *Atlanta Review*, *Freshwater* and *Typehouse*. Her full-length collection, *After All*, was first runner up for the 2019 Thorpe-Menn Award and a finalist for the Hefner Heitz Kansas Book Award. She is author of a chapbook, *Where the World Begins*, and co-librettist of the oratorio, *We, the Unknown*, premiered by the Heartland Men's Chorus. She lives in Candia, NH.
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Patricia Davis-Muffett (she/her) holds an MFA from the University of Minnesota. Her chapbook, *alchemy of yeast and tears*, is forthcoming from Alabaster Leaves Press. Her work has won numerous honors including honorable mention in the 2021 Muriel Craft Bailey Memorial Award and second place in the 2022 Joe Gouveia Outermost Poetry Contest, and has appeared in *Atlanta Review*, *Pretty Owl Poetry*, *Quartet Journal*, *Calyx* and *Comatock Review*, among others. She lives in Rockville, Maryland, and makes her living in technology marketing.

Ann de Forest, is a California native who has been living and writing in fairly happy exile in Philadelphia for more than three decades. Fascinated by urban landscapes and the resonance of place, she is a contributing writer for *Hidden City Daily* and editor of *Extant Magazine*. Her poems, short stories, and essays have appeared in *Coal Hill Review*, *Noctua Review*, *Unbroken*, *Hotel Amerika*, *The Journal*, *Pif*, *Cleaver Magazine*, and *The Best Short Stories of Philadelphia*. Her most recent work is an anthology of essays *Ways Of Walking* (New Door Books, 2022).

Melanie DuBose advocates for equity in arts access and teaches filmmaking and writing to teenagers in East Los Angeles. She received her MFA in film from UCLA. Her writing has been published in *Contemporary Haibun*, *Drunken Monkey*, *One Hand Pointing*, and other journals. She recently finished her first novella, *People Who Love You*.

Joanne Durham is the author of *To Drink from a Wider Bowl*, winner of the 2021 Sinclair poetry prize (Evening Street Press 2022). Her chapbook, *On Shifting Shoals*, will be published by Kelsay Books. Her poems appear or are forthcoming in *Poetry South*, *CALYX*, *Poetry East*, *Chautauqua*, *Quartet*, *Gyroscope Review*, and many other journals and anthologies. She was a finalist for the 2021 NC Poet Laureate Award and the Ruminant Broadside Prize, and won Prime Number Magazine's 2021 Summer Challenge. She lives on the North Carolina coast, with the ocean as her backyard and muse. <https://www.joannedurham.com/>

Annamaria Formichella received her M.F.A. from Emerson College and her Ph.D. from Tufts University. A native New Englander, she currently teaches in the English department at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. Her creative work has been published in the *Knight Literary Journal*, *Toe Good Poetry*, and *Wilderness Howe Literary Review*.

Serena Fusek was born in 1948. She is an escapee from New Jersey and now lives in Virginia with her husband, a varying number of cats and too many books. In addition to several poetry chapbooks, including two about motorcycling, she has two full length collections *Alphabet of Foxes* (San Francisco Bay Press) and *Ancient Maps and a Tarot Pack* which won The Bitter Oleander Press Library of Poetry Award in 2018. She teaches and conducts workshops about poetry.

Melinda Goodman is a poet who has been teaching at Hunter College since 1988 when Audre Lorde recommended her as her replacement when she went on sick leave. Goodman's work has been published in mostly Queer journals and anthologies. She is a former co-editor of *Conditions*, the first international Lesbian literary journal. She has received fellowships from The New York Foundation on the Arts, The Astraea Foundation, and The Key West Literary Seminar.

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*. 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 one hundred publications including Chautauqua, Magma (UK), Stone Canoe, Columbia Review, and The Healing Muse. She teaches at Le Moyne College and the Syracuse YMCA's Downtown Writers Center. You can visit her webpage at: <http://www.gloriaheffernan.wordpress.com>.

Karen Paul Holmes has two poetry collections, *No Such Thing as Distance* (Terrapin, 2018) and *Untying the Knot* (Aldrich, 2014). Her poems have been featured on The Writer's Almanac and The Slowdown. Publications include *Diode*, *Valparaiso Review*, *Verse Daily*, and *Prairie Schooner*. She's the 2022 "Poet Laura" for Tweetspeak Poetry.

Susan Johnson teaches writing at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Poems of hers have recently appeared in *Rhino*, *Into The Void*, *Trampoline*, *Steam Ticket*, *Front Range Review*, and *SLAB*. She lives in South Hadley MA.

Jacqueline Jules is the author of *Manna in the Morning* (Kelsay Books, 2021) and *Itzhak Perlman's Broken String*, winner of the 2016 Helen Kay Chapbook Prize from Evening Street Press. Her poetry has appeared in over 100 publications including *K'in*, *The Sunlight Press*, *Gyroscope Review*, and *One Art*. Visit www.jacquelinejules.com

As a dual citizen **Babo Kamel** resides in Montreal, Quebec and in Raleigh, North Carolina. Her work has appeared in the *Greensboro Review*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *CV2*, *Poet Lore*, and *Best Canadian Poetry 2020* among others. She is a Best of Net nominee, and a six-time Pushcart nominee. Her chapbook, *After*, is published with Finishing Line Press. She holds an MFA from Warren Wilson's Program For Writers. Her book, *What The Days Wanted* is published with Broadstone Books

Susan Kress, born and educated in England, now resides in Saratoga Springs, New York, where she lives close by her grandchildren – and a granddog of indeterminate ancestry. She has poems published or forthcoming in *The Southern Review*, *New Ohio Review*, *Salmagundi*, *New Letters*, *South Florida Poetry Journal*, and other periodicals.

Judy Kronenfeld's fifth book of poetry, *Groaning and Singing* (FutureCycle) came out in February, 2022. Previous collections include *Bird Flying through the Banquet* (FutureCycle, 2017) and *Shimmer* (WordTech, 2012). Her poems have appeared in over three dozen anthologies and in such journals as *Cider Press Review*, *Gyroscope Review*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, *New Ohio Review*, *Offcourse*, *One*, *Rattle*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Slant*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Verdad*, and *Your Daily Poem*. Judy is Lecturer Emerita, Department of Creative Writing, UC Riverside, and an Associate Editor of *Poemeleon*. She lives in Riverside, California, with her anthropologist husband. They have two far-flung middle-aged kids and four grandchildren.

Laurie Kuntz is a widely published and award winning poet. She has been nominated for a Pushcart and Best of the Net prize. She has published two poetry collections, *The Moon Over My Mother's House*, (Finishing Line Press), *Somewhere in the Telling*, (Mellen Press), two chapbooks *Simple Gestures*, (Texas Review), *Women at the Oven*, (Blue Light Press). Her 5th poetry collection, *Talking Me off the Roof*, is forthcoming from Kelsay Press in late 2022. Recently retired, she lives in an endless summer state of mind. Visit her at: <https://lauriekuntz.myportfolio.com>

Tina Lear has written since she could hold a pencil. She's completed four musicals (one of them published by Dramatic Publishing 2005), countless poems, songs, as well as some articles published in the Buddhist review, *Tricycle Magazine*. She's taught yoga to inmates at Rikers Island, driven cattle in Wyoming, and performed for thousands at folk festivals throughout the country. She's currently working on publishing a collection of poetry. She spent the first fifty years of her life running away from it. Now, she's learned to stand still and warm her hands by its many contradictions.

Peggy Liuzzi is a mother and grandmother who lives with her husband David and their rescue beagle Maizie in Syracuse, NY. Peggy finds inspiration and community at the YMCA Downtown Writers Center there. Her poems have appeared in *Stone Canoe*, *Ghost City Press Review*, *Nine Mile Magazine* and *Slippery Elm Literary Journal*.

Andrea Livingston is a writer, editor, and poet who lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her poems have appeared in *The MacGuffin*, *Marin Poetry Center Anthology*, *MockingHeart Review*, *Oxygen: Parables of Pandemic Anthology*, *Rise Up Review*, *Rust + Moth*, *Sky Island Journal*, and elsewhere. Her poem "Paper Cranes" was awarded honorable mention in the Barbara Mandigo Kelly Poetry Contest of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

Fran Markover lives in Ithaca, NY, where she works as psychotherapist and addictions counselor. She's been writing poems as a daily practice for over three decades.

Kate Marshall is a freelance author living in Boulder Colorado. Her previous flash and poetry has appeared in *50GS*, *The Selkie*, *The Ravensperch*, *Iowa Writes*, *The Daily Palette* and *Mused Bella Online Literary Journal*.

Cheryl Martone lives and writes in Rhode Island. Her writing is endlessly inspired by the outdoors, art, questions of perspective, and small moments of observation in the human and natural worlds. Her work has appeared in *River Heron Review* and other publications.

Nancy L. Meyer, 2020 Pushcart nominee, avid cyclist, grandmother of 5. Nancy lives in the unceded Ramaytush Ohlone lands of the San Francisco Bay Area. Currently reading *An Immense World* by Ed Yong about animal perception and opening her mind to the unrecognized miracles of our fellow creatures. In many journals, most recently: *Book of Matches*, Porkbelly Press, *Laurel Review*, *Sunlight Press*, *Stonecoast Review*, *Halfway Down the Stairs*. Forthcoming in *BeZine*, *New Note Poetry*. In 8 anthologies, including by Tupelo Press, Ageless Authors, and Wising Up Press.

Judith H. Montgomery's poems appear in the *Bellingham Review*, *Taboma Literary Review*, and *Poet Lore*, among other journals, and in a number of anthologies. She's been awarded fellowships in poetry from Literary Arts and the Oregon Arts Commission. Her first collection, *Passion*, received the Oregon Book Award for Poetry. It was followed by *Red Jess* and *Pulse & Constellation*. Her fourth book, *Litany for Wound and Bloom*, a finalist for the Marsh Hawk Prize, appeared in August 2018 from Uttered Chaos Press. Her prize-winning narrative medicine chapbook, *Mercy*, appeared from Wolf Ridge Press in March 2019.

Anne Myles is the author of *What Woman That Was: Poems for Mary Dyer* (Final Thursday Press, 2022). Her work has appeared in *On the Seawall*, *North American Review*, *Split Rock Review*, *Whale Road Review*, *Lavender Review*, *Ekphrastic Review*, and other journals. A recent transplant to Greensboro, NC, she received her MFA from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. She has been nominated for a Pushcart and was co-winner of the 2022 ellipsis... Award.

Lynn Pattison's work appeared, most recently, at *Ekphrastic Review*, *Slipstream*, and *Moon City Review*, and earlier, in *Smartish Pace*, and *Mom Egg Review*. Her chapbook, *Matryoshka Houses* (Kelsay Press) debuted in 2020. Her book is *Light That Sounds Like Music*, (Mayapple Press). Her work has been included in several anthologies.

Marge Piercy has published 20 poetry collections, most recently, *On The Way Out, Turn Off The Light* [Knopf, September 30, 2020]; 17 novels including *Sex Wars*. PM Press reissued *Vida*, *Dance The Eagle To Sleep*; they brought out short stories *The Cost Of Lunch, Etc* and *My Body, My Life* [essays, poems]. She has read at over 500 venues here and abroad.

Jessica Purdy holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Emerson College. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in many journals including *The Night Heron Barks*, *Radar*, *One Art*, *SoFloPoJo*, *Harpy Hybrid*, *Feral*, *Museum of Americana*, and *Gargoyle*. Her books *STARLAND* and *Sleep in a Strange House* were both released by Nixes Mate in 2017 and 2018. *Sleep in a Strange House* was a finalist for the NH Literary Award for poetry. She is poetry editor for the anthology, *Ten Piscataqua Writers*: <https://www.tenpiscataqua.com/writers/>. Follow her on Twitter @JessicaPurdy123 and her website: jessicapurdy.com

Barbara Rockman is author of *Sting and Nest*, winner of the New Mexico-Arizona Book Award and *to cleave*, winner of the National Federation Of Press Women Prize and finalist for the International Book Award. Barbara leads community writing workshops at Santa Fe Community College and at Esperanza Shelter for Battered Families. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Linda Scheller is the author of two books of poetry, *Wind & Children* (Main Street Rag, 2022) and *Fierce Light* (FutureCycle Press, 2017) as well as a chapbook, *Halcyon*. Her poetry, plays, and book reviews are widely published. She programs for KCBP Community Radio and serves on the board of the Modesto-Stanislaus Poetry Center and the Stanislaus County Arts Council. Her website is lindascheller.com.

Sharon Scholl is a retired (age 90) college professor who convenes a poetry critique group, runs a workshop, and maintains a website of original music compositions free for the taking. Her poetry chapbooks, *Seasons*, *Remains*, *Timescape*, are available via Amazon Books. Her poems are current in *Switchgrass Review* and *Green Ink Poetry*.

Prartho Sereno's strongest creative influence was her 4 years' life and work in an Indian ashram. She also credits excursions into other art forms: counseling psychologist, vegetarian cook, mother of 2, meditation and yoga instructor at Cornell University, book and cover illustrator, and amateur singer-songwriter. Her prizewinning poetry collections include *Indian Rope Trick*, *Elephant Raga*, *Call from Paris*, and *Causing a Stir: The Secret Lives and Loves of Kitchen Utensils*. Poet Laureate of Marin County, CA 2015–17, she served as a Poet in the Schools for 22 years, and teaches The Poetic Pilgrimage online. www.prarthosereno.com

Jacquelyn "Jacsun" Shah, outlier, pacifist, has an A.B.–English (Rutgers U–Phi Beta Kappa); M.A.–English (Drew U); M.F.A.–creative writing–poetry; and Ph.D. English literature/creative writing–poetry (U of Houston). She has received grants and fellowships from U of H and the Houston Arts Alliance. Her publications include poems in various journals; a chapbook, *small fry*; and a full-length book, *What to Do with Red*. She was *Literal Latté's* Food Verse Contest winner in 2018. She loves all things quirky and/or surrealistic in literature and life.

Susannah Winters Simpson is a hospice nurse, and she facilitates Therapeutic Writing groups in treatment centers. Her work was accepted by *Cream Literary Alliance*: Her Voice Series and was read last November at the Norton Museum. Simpson has been published in *North American Review*, *Potomac*, *Wisconsin Review*, *South Carolina Review*, *POET*, and *Nimrod International* among others. She is a volunteer ESL tutor for DePorres Literacy Center, is the Co-Director of the Performance Poets of the Palm Beaches Reading Series.

Virginia Smith has dropped poetry into dozens of literary journals and anthologies, among them: *Blue Lake Review*, *Southern Review*, *Third Wednesday*, and *West Trade Review*. Kelsay Books published her first poetry collection, *Biking Through the Stone Age*, in May 2022. Her second collection, *American Daughters*, also published by Kelsay, will appear in January 2023. She is currently at work on a collection of travel poems, honing her poetic rhythms walking and biking, serving as a home chef/caterer, and loving on her friends, family, and dog.

Mary Specker Stone lives in the greater Phoenix area, where she serves as a spiritual director and facilitator of poetry and spirituality salons. Before coming to these vocations, Mary worked as a writer in the biomedical industry, a college English instructor, and a grant writer. In addition to *Gyroscope Review*, her work has appeared in *New Verse News*, *Paradise Review*, *Gila River Review*, and *The Healing Art of Writing, Vol. One*.

Whitney Vale, almost 69, successfully defended her thesis in Creative Non Fiction at Ashland University in July 2022. Essays have been published in *Entropy*, *The Rumpus*, *Essay Daily*. Poems have appeared in *Harpy Hybrid Review*, *Prospectus*, *a Literary Offering*, and others. A chapbook, *Journey with the Ferry Man* was published in 2016 (Finishing Line Press.)

Rhett Watts has poems in *Sojourners Magazine*, *Spoon River Review*, *The Worcester Review*, *Canary*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Passager*, *Ekphrasis*, *SWIMM*, *poetrymagazine.com*, and other journals as well as in the book *The Best Spiritual Writing 2000* (HarperCollins 2001). She won the CT Poetry Award in 2013. Her chapbook *No Innocent Eye* (Seven Kitchens, 2014) was co-winner of the Rane Arroyo Chapbook Contest. Her books are: *Willing Suspension* (Antrim House Books, 2013) and *The Braiding* (Kelsay Books, 2019). Rhett facilitates writing workshops in CT and MA. She lives in Central MA beside a brook with her husband and a Maine Coon cat.

Maine native **Anastasia Walker** is a queer poet, essayist, and scholar living in Pittsburgh. Her poems have appeared in several journals, and her first book of poetry, *The Girl Who Wasn't and Is*, was published in February 2022. Her essays have been published in *Shenandoah*, *Fourth Genre*, and *The Rambling*. She has also blogged on politics, social media, and LGBTQ+ issues for both *Huffington Post* and *Medium*. She's a passionate amateur photographer and musicologist, and a lover of long walks and (when she visits home in the summers) swimming in the ocean. Her blog: <https://anastasiaswalker.blogspot.com/>

Ann E. Wallace, a poet and essayist from Jersey City, New Jersey, is author of the poetry collection *Counting by Sevens* (Main Street Rag). She has previously published work in *Huffington Post*, *Wordgathering*, *Halfway Down the Stairs*, *Snaptagon*, and many other journals. Follow her on Twitter @annwlace409 and Instagram @AnnWallace409, or read her work at AnnWallacePhD.com.

Patty Ware stitches together her writing from the fabric of her life as a mother, wife, grandmother, caretaker and retired government employee. She is a fanatical believer in the power of practicing gratitude, and is convinced this is best pursued in the quiet solitude of early morning. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Literary Mama*, *Cirque*, and *Tidal Echoes*.

Pamela Wax is the author of *Walking the Labyrinth* (Main Street Rag, 2022) and the forthcoming chapbook, *Starter Mothers* (Finishing Line Press). Her poems have received awards from *Crosswinds Poetry Journal*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *Oberon Poetry Magazine* and the Robinson Jeffers Tor House and have been published in journals including *Barrow Street*, *Pedestal*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Connecticut River Review*, *Sixfold*, *The Poet's Billow*, *The Penmen Review*, and *Passengers Journal*, among others. Pam, an ordained rabbi, facilitates online spiritual poetry writing and spiritual journeying workshops. She walks labyrinths in the Northern Berkshires of Massachusetts.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **Winter 2023 Issue** is an open issue with no theme, just fine, contemporary poetry. We welcome all poets, whether emerging or established. We welcome all types of poems. Rhyming poetry is a hard sell, as are forms, unless done well, but we're willing to look at almost everything. No racist, sexist, anti-LGBTQA+ or any other -ist poems. We're not the magazine for that. Check our FAQ page and guidelines for more details. As always, read previous issues, they're available for free as PDFs on our website or buy a hard copy off Amazon or Book Depository or Biblio.

Winter Submissions open Oct 1, 2022 and run through December 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) or .rtf document, page breaks in between poems, please, and an up-to-date bio for the magazine in the Submittable bio section. No weird formatting. It makes the editors twitch. Do not submit poems individually. Only submit once. If you submit more than 4 poems in a doc., we will read the first 4 and ignore the rest, breaking their poemy little hearts. Please use the name in your bio you'd like to be published under.

We welcome poems that are seasonal. We welcome poems that are topical. We have eclectic tastes, so give us a shot. We'd love to see what you've been working on.

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

Thank you for Reading!



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