

Gyroscope Review

fine poetry to turn your world around



Fall Crone Power Edition 2023



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Fall Crone Power Issue 2023

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Constance Brewer

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Baba Yaga in the Magic Forest ©2023 Constance Brewer

From the Editors

After previewing the marvelous cover that Constance has created for this special issue, I researched the story behind it, contemplated the archetype of the crone. I grew up in an era where we often read fairy tales, and some had depictions of fearsome and ill-intentioned older women. And yet in my experience, it was the older women who paved the way and provided models of what an older woman could aspire to be. In my own sometimes oblivious way, I have tried to do as advised and look for the opportunities, find the open doors, and slide through them. Sometimes I missed chances by following the path of least resistance, through indecision. And yet, when I stumbled at last into my courage and/or confronted my mortality, I returned to my childhood love —writing, specifically poetry.

Since then, it has been a succession of blessings. In hindsight, I have no regrets. I am increasingly conscious of my responsibility to provide a model myself—to openly acknowledge my age, my struggles (physical, mental, parental, and so on) to attempt to de-stigmatize them. Reading these submissions has re-affirmed my faith in my peers, as well as the healing power of poetry. As isolating and disheartening as the world can be, we find our common humanity in this generosity of sharing. Thank you to all who allowed us into their lives. Let's continue to trust our intuition, our collective wisdom, and together find beauty and meaning in all the stages of our lives.

Betsy Mars

Every year I look forward to fall and the annual Crone Power Issue. The depth and sincerity of the poems can't be beat. I love the way older women are embracing the aspects of the crone, and no longer letting people define the word as a negative. Crones can be many things; their opportunities and enthusiasm are boundless. This issue explores the depths and heights of being an older woman and the obstacles faced, along with the good to be found. It's a time of reflection and everything in life (and death) is fodder. Take your time reading these poems, savor them, listen for the underlying messages. Poetry has a way of lifting us up, and we hope you find the poems of this issue as inspiring as we did.

Constance Brewer

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Section One

VESSEL

BY PAULA J. LAMBERT

You hold my hips in your hands
and drink. I am a bowl, a chalice,

Moon sending down silver light.
You are the earth, and so thirsty.

WHATEVER ONE LOVES MOST/ IS BEAUTIFUL
BY WENDY TAYLOR CARLISLE

Let's call love horses—
the big, slick gelding, the tiny mare,
their feet circled by bracelets of wooden balls
the bracelets painful so the horses would lift
their feet higher, so they would be damaged
into loveliness. Call it also the years
of hoof picks and heated bareback afternoons,
horse sweat against my thighs, wetness like new life.

·
Call this love children, open as a first crocus
pale, perfect slowly hardening into the world
and its soreness, into the beauty of their wounds.

And this the surprise of growing old, of reaching
for the last small helping,
remembering less and less of the horses.

IN THIS MAN THERE ARE RIVERS
BY ELAINE HANDLEY

deep enough to sail, wide enough
to never reach the other shore.
Winds that blow in him shake
the ground, push me into white
water, adrift and disoriented.
But he comes for me, every time,
brings me cool water to drink, pulls
me back to the land of him.
The water leaves no tracks,
we drift here with no proof of us,
my head on his shoulder
contentedly warm and floating.
He teaches me to swim the dark
craggy pools of grief, eddy around
sharp edges of myself, be ready
for undercurrents, boulders
that bruise. Sometimes we rest
peacefully, an island,
the current dividing around us,
the sun scenting the world pine.
Steady, steady, my love
the way a river winds around
its cold places and wide turns, open,
sunny, luxurious in our confluence.

NOT EVERYONE HEARS THE VOICE OF A GOD
BY SARAH DICKENSON SNYDER

What if the *Don't*
eat from the apple tree
was misheard though—
that *Don't* swallowed
by the wind & there she is
taking a bite, thinking
she is doing everything right—
without doubt,
without shame,
she reaches again
& again for the apple
as though a painting
stays inside her—
honeyed light
touching the red skin,
her jungled desire,
& the way Adam smiles,
his dark hair almost polished,
how they barely
need words.

Now, we reach
for the paring knife,
quarter an apple
on a wooden board,
slice out the seeds,
know what is toxic
& what is not.

CARING FOR SMALL THINGS
BY CATHERINE NAISBY

a stone-built stable, pantiled, old green door
hangs on rusting hinges—
this is where she lives
where she tends the small things, the grasses,
herbs in the hedgerow, a scuttling beetle

let others care for the sky; it's not her concern
she refuses to see the great oak tree,
even when branches fall through the roof
disturbing the wasp
which sought shelter beneath the eaves

she finds a new home for the wasp, but the tree?
no, others will take responsibility for that
and the distant hills

she refuses to look at the fields
with their ridges and furrows
their hints of armies

she buried her son's sword a long time ago
he will not kill again

MENDING THE SHAMIYANA
BY PATRICIA ROCKWOOD

On a rooftop in Kashmir
I sit, legs crossed, in the sun,
surrounded by mounds of green-striped cotton.
With even stitches I mend
the wind-ripped edge while mynahs
clatter and burble in the yard below and
buses howl in the street and
the familiar odors of dust and dung
and cooking oil settle in the air.

All at once I feel as if I'm growing larger,
encircling the house, the market, the bund,
the choked green lake,
the distant circle of secret peaks—

and instead of a torn canopy, in my lap
I'm holding one of those small mountains
fragrant with summer flowers,
young with exuberant edges,
whose springs make music on the rocks.

And I'm gently mending it:
healing the bulldozed pines,
the red gouged meadows,
the crushed green passes.
And—for a moment—
it does not seem strange, or futile.

IN THE EXPRESS CHECKOUT LINE AT THE LA PLAYA SAFEWAY
BY JANICE BRESSLER

We all stand here stranded with the candy bars of yesteryear,
Big Hunks, Butterfingers, Three Musketeers, the whole rack of root
canal, speed & disease wrapped in corporate cartoon goodness. All
of us aching but abiding the rules—no more than 15 items in our carts,
no more than vague misgivings in our consumer hearts. Fully vaccinated,
underinsured, insecure, all of us still willing to stand up and be used, all
of us confused about the latest understanding of masks, of distance, of infant
mortality rates & even occasionally questioning the sanity of the entire enterprise
but for now waiting our turn to take out our plastic or be strangled by it like the dead
seagulls on Ocean Beach just beyond the condos and across the Great Highway, the dead
seagulls noosed, winged but flightless things who diving into the dark water were just trying
to get something to eat.

MARILYN HARTMAN: STEAL THIS FLIGHT
BY LEA GALANTER

Only a woman over sixty
would have the nerve
to get through security
with no boarding pass
and stow away on a plane
without getting caught

I root for Marilyn every day
she deserves to visit panda bears in China
wander ghost towns in the Wild West
and eat pasta incognito in Rome
maybe she'll write a book
Steal This Flight
in honor of Abbie Hoffman

I imagine her former life
marriage to a beer-guzzling chauvinist
her voice imperceptible
above the day's football scores
a ghost in her own home
he finally keeled over
after only forty years

Marilyn donned her natural superpower
her cloak of invisibility
packed a plain brown suitcase
pinned on her favorite spring hat
and took her show on the road

MIDLIFE

BY MARJ HAHNE

The fake eucalyptus up for grabs on the Boulder Freecycle listserv
won't wake up this room, though they're green, yellow, and red,
the colors of breakfast: prosciutto di Parma, walnut pesto, two
poached-egg yolks broken over a fresh-baked English muffin.
Who will feed me better than this?

Certainly not the prick who peed in the women's restroom and left
the seat up. And didn't flush. Not the Libertarian so afraid of free
women he asks them all to marry him so no one will. And not
the Buddhist who gets on the cushion because he can't get off
the hedonic treadmill. Darling, I have my own disenchantment to stalk.

Everyone knows the blue whale's the largest living mammal. But who asks
about the smallest? The bumblebee bat has the smallest
skull and length; the Etruscan shrew, the smallest
mass, as imperceptible as a raspberry in your palm if its heart
weren't beating fifteen hundred times a minute.

I've never been called a shrew. I've never been held as if I were that
small, rare, endangered. Yesterday, the waiter comped my coffee
because I waited too long to be served.

TWICE I'M MISTAKEN FOR A BIKER
BY DIANE LEBLANC

Twenty years ago, I wandered
crispy in a black tank top
through downtown Spearfish
looking for a cup of coffee
and found a small place with bikes
parked like dominoes ready to fall,
where a guy spread on a bench by the door
nodded, so I nodded back
and he asked if I was on a bike
headed for Sturgis, and I paused,
knowing I could say "you bet"
and he would never know,
but I shook my head because
already I was claiming a life
of monogamy further east,
tomato plants and a snowblower,
50 SPF, decaf after 11 a.m.,
and I saw myself in his face,
dwindle from fantasy into a woman
tired and breakable, always
surprised anyone might think
I could handle such a machine,
meaning the lie, not the bike.

Then today, a grandpa at the gym
asks why I'm using a walker,
and when I say "bike accident,"
he wants to know if I laid
my bike on the pavement,
so I explain I was on gravel,
hit something just wrong and flew sideways,
which makes him wince, and even though
we're puffed up like warriors ready to share scars
the conversation gets a little weird
when he asks if I was wearing leather
and I say "no, just shorts and a jersey,"
when his deflating *ooobbbbbb* signals
he imagined me on a motorcycle,
and for a moment I want to believe
I could be some kind of biker poet,
all chaps and sonnets tearing up
American highways, leather loosened
to show a little ink above my left breast,
maybe an outline of Wyoming
where I was twenty then thirty,
just a rectangle of open space
to keep people wondering.

READING PLATH AT GOODYEAR
BY JESSICA D. THOMPSON

The tulips are too excitable.
— Sylvia Plath

When a blonde god at the tire store
checks my pressure, I cannot help

but notice his lips—
how delicately they part

as he starts to speak—
like two petals of a perfect tulip—

as if they had been waiting
there all afternoon, in a tall

vase on a windowsill,
for a sudden rush

of summer wind to stir
just so, and all at once,

they found themselves within a spell,
broken only by the knelling of a bell.

ODE TO VIBRATORS

BY ROBIN DELLABOUGH

Thousands of naked women, heavy breasted,
unbreasted, wrinkled, taut-skinned, ankle-
thickened, sparse-haired or furry,
lie head to toe, a multi-colored chain
stretched across fields, backyards,
parks and parking lots. Each one holds
her soft purple sculpture aloft, like a Statue
of Liberty that stands for sex & freedom:
Give us your longing, your fear, your lack.

Now they are in a country of pleasure,
moaning and shouting and coming
in one vast climax, a chorus strong enough
to lift them until they're beyond men, children,
chores or chatter, a sisterhood of soaring thighs.

APFELSTRUDEL

BY ALEXANDRA FÖSSINGER

How Oma spread the dough
in the air above her head,
her spidery fingers moving too fast
for my eyes to follow— a circus game

of spinning—
expanding it to the impossible
size of her kitchen table,

this paper-thin sheet she filled
with the ingredients
of her harsh love: cut apples, cinnamon, sugar,
pignoli, and a half glass of rum.

I watched, caught in the heavy weight of
inheritance, its simple inevitability.

For years, my mother tried to learn it,
yet never mastered
its secret technique. The dough
kept tearing. All those holes

made by her even harsher not-quite love,
quiet indifference, betrayed her lack of kinship,
made it impossible to achieve an intact
Apfelstrudel, to attain belonging;

while I learned, right there, how to be an orphan,
that the beauty of things sometimes
lies in being taken to the grave.

THERE

BY HEATHER DUBROW

T
H
E
R
E

are other poems about *There* out there.
Another *There* poem or maybe more
before and at the edges of this one
trying to reclaim air time
in the here and now below my heading and title

Don't Go There

I

Don't go there

In one of the standard versions the wolf eats Grandma
shortly before Hansel and Gretel show up,
and as for H. & G. themselves, hey, depends on the version,
but sometimes they received warnings
not to wander into the dark woods of *There*
(and G. half-heartedly suggested they check Twitter again
instead of going out for the evening,
but got out-voted).

OK, in one splendid variant said wolf chokes
on Grandma's knitting needles
and H. & G. live happily ever after
and take up knitting themselves.

That version is more tempting
but still not persuasive enough
to fatten up this poem with a happier story
and distract it into wandering merrily
in the more benign versions of that fairytale.

II

Don't go there

My slippers remember their assigned parking places by my bed.
And I remember the side of the bed and of my body where I sleep
in the here and now of a happy new marriage.
But dreams and the first moments of waking
lure me from the bed while I still lie in it
to walk on broken glass and broken promises
from the present straight back to *There*.

III

Don't go there

Pulled back into *There* now,

I rehearse the words we each repeated

in our repeated quarrels,

while admitting that said ex-husband's *There*

no doubt follows a very different script

and mine might have if only. . . .

"Rehearse" is what you do before the play?

OK, but in the melodramatic aftermath of a bad union,

it's in what I said what I should have said what I can't stop rehearsing now—

that the big bad wolf remains

long after the marriage has ended,

licking its lips in anticipation

of tasty hearts and bodies,

while I lick my wounds.

An exit visa from *There* is what the lawyer doesn't hand you

with the divorce decree.¹

For the *There* of unmuted words,

spoken aloud then

and rehearsed mutely now,

cozies down within me

to eat up good sense.

Here and now loses to *There* and

heartlessness swallows heart.

¹ Though given his fee he damn well should have

LIONESS

BY ELINOR ANN WALKER

I think about how cats drape themselves over
furniture, loose and lissome and lithe, boneless almost,
and how I could not arrange myself just so if I tried, not

my body, unless deliberately posed by an artist:
barely breathing, arm thrown overhead as if with abandon,
a nude, an odalisque, trying to occupy a form that I am not,

that is—svelte, smooth, and impervious to gravity's
pull. I do know how it is to be directed to hold still, bare
breast pressed on dark plates by a mammographer.

She's taped my surgical scar with an X so it won't
interfere with a clear image. Now hold your breath,
she says, then okay... breathe.

The instructions make me breathless
though I know they're coming. I'm a gasp
waiting to happen on a cold metal slab.

A gloved hand rearranges me again. Lean in, forward,
but not *that* far. My elbow higher on the frame, my chin up
more. I am what is squeezed, clamped, irradiated,

imaged, screened, staged, this mammalian me, past
childbearing. My inhalations so deep they fill
my belly like a balloon. I may rise soon despite

the sagging down, except my mind is fun-house mirror;
through wide angle lens like a fish or pinhole distortions,
my eye sees. I wind the clinic halls again, looking

for the right door, horror-movie imaginings of the wrong
one, terror not of what I might find but of what might
be found in me. Back in the dressing room, shedding robe

to floor, I dress and dare myself, level my gaze like a lioness,
amber-glow-steady; I saunter to check out, low-slung,
stealth-hipped, and fierce, my feet like velvet paws.

Permission granted. I breathe. If I could arrange myself
like that under open-skied savanna, without before or after,
I would sway free of days. As I waited for results, I would roar.

BATTLE SCARS

BY HELGA KIDDER

after Ada Limon

Standing at the edge of the pool
after the oncologist served good news
on a silver platter,

Gone, Erased,
words that tasted like delicacies
I savored, embellished with mint,
rue, and basil,

my favorite herbs,
a must in the garden of mercy.

For nearly a year side effects
of the miracle drug
kept my body energy-leached,
coughing, quivering

in polar air
or the heat of the Sahara desert
while friends kept telling me,
You look good.

Walking the circle
of the pool, birds singing praise songs,
early traffic rushing the road below,
I see the neighbor's black cat
strutting along the yews
as if this garden belonged to him.
Still mine, I think, clapping my hands
so he sprints into the woods.

But look on these glitter globes
that will light the pool's edge tonight,
five moons I can hold in my hands now
or tomorrow watch elephant ears push
through at the gazebo.

After months
of living in limbo, I breathe in
the fragrance of lavender and oleander,
a woman, at the pool, victorious.

MY LONELY DREAMS (BY AGES)

BY TRICIA KNOLL

15

I fly over my school field hockey pitch
and goal cage, my stick left on grass. Over
an oak forest – into communion
with a cacophony of crows.

18

The deck shuffles. Face cards flash
in front of me. I must decide who
is real. None are. I am either
alone or abandoned.

23

In my lap lies the head of a son.
His curls are dusty. I move my legs.
A fly rises from my knee.
I have no son.

30

My green canoe runs aground
in fog. I hear voices upriver
charging me as selfish
and sad. I reverse the oars
in the shallows to beat them downstream.

35

I give advice to a young woman
parked at the mall. She faces a small Toyota
crammed with wedding gifts, dinner plates
and goblets rimmed in gold. She tries to squeeze
in a German Shepherd puppy. She tells me
her mother says her groom is too immature.
We agree she must let go of something
to avoid cramping the dog.

50

I break one of the magician's toys – her little stone dragon.
She begins a circle dance, sprinkles out a pond, ridges
and valleys, places of gathering. From above I see
people walk into openings in the woods, through gates,
into meadows as if each has a place in the community of things.
Even me with that broken dragon in my pocket.

55

We watch rusted train cars pass below the bridge.
The Judge fingers a blue scarf around her neck.
Then we count cars. She reads a graffiti on a boxcar:
As for time travel, some
will go back to a place and some won't.

58

I struggle to keep up with the peloton, college kids
on fancier bikes than mine. They joke,
point to shortcuts around the bay.
Before us rises the climb to an observatory,
then the descent to the desert. They pull ahead.
I hear their cries of *god willing*.

60

A steel suspension bridge crosses the river.
This man and I barely catch the bus
that first heads west, then south, then east winding
through a part of town I know the least,
north to my old home that he has never seen.
He calls this joyriding.

65

My red dog and I cross a frosted field
toward where the toll boat heads downriver.
Coins jingle in my overall pockets.
The man who owns the gate never says whether
to leave it open or shut. In a wind the gate
swings with a *creak-raap*, metal on metal.

75

I fly in a wood air-sleigh that cruises
over ruins – faded factories, parking lots
sprouting trees, peeling onion-dome cathedrals,
and unfinished high-rises. No green.
I am sailing toward blank concrete walls,
without slowing. An ending, I fear,
smashed like a June bug. Then I dissolve. Pass
through. Reassemble emerging. Reborn.
What fun this could be
with a friend.

Section Two

RED IS JUST A SHOE
BY ADELE EVERSHED

I was always brittle
My positives closely bonded with my negatives
So one nudge and the roar of traffic
Could sound like the sea
Or the gekkering of a red fox
Slipping into my shadow

Now my darkness ripens
Pouring itself into my tea
And steaming my face red

I dream about mud
(sticky and black as old blood or new questions)
About burning
A fleet figure leaving footprints in the ash
And when I wake I find a poem in my body

So I put the darkness in red stiletto shoes
And dance it away to Fleetwood Mac

I have found the space between the words
To hold my rage

Now red is just a shoe
Or the lines I draw round my lips

Maybe that's why they call it the change...

HOT FLASH POEM #18, RED

BY LISA WENCE CONNORS

some random spin of the wheel, often at 2 AM
a pilot light near my heart ignites
fuel from the same lines as other things that burn

passion, anger, craving potatoes fried in bacon fat
throw back the covers, turn the pillow
there is no cool relief - roasting

in my own hormones
a fireplace. a grill. a crematorium
burning away what makes me woman

a kiln - reshaping, hardening
charring sheets, a carbon negative
inside the pocket straight up pays 35 to 1

but I've lost all my chips
no more bets on whether I sleep tonight
the croupier has passed his hand over the table

THE SUBMERGED CITY
BY WENDY MCVICKER

In the submerged
city, a woman in red

floats, suspended, her hair
coiling above her

like living tentacles.
Pillars with ornate capitals

hold up a ceiling
we cannot see.

What brings her,
and us, here

to the ruined city?
What flood, loosed

by river or sea,
took over this land,

remade it in water's
own image?

Water, the god
that lives within us all,

made the world
we came from, the world

that reclaims us
with every rainfall,

every rising tide.
I know there are places

that suffer drought
today, the earth cracking,

the unblinking sun
bleaching color from

the world, burning
all it touches

Perhaps that's why
this image soothes,

its abundance
of water, the way

the woman seems
to float, at ease,

in her red dress,
her eyes closed

in apparent peace,
and the way that water

clouds the walls, a promise
of resurrection, and life,

a promise to cool
every thirsting throat.

THE STRAYS OF INCHEON
BY JANE EDNA MOHLER

At 2 a.m. Korea time, my son roams the streets carrying
treats for stray cats. They run to him, weaving through his legs.

He wanders before returning to his single room sewed
into a slim alley crisscrossed by wires.

It's morning here when he calls, rants about the faults
and obligations of his world. I stay quiet.

I don't know where he's going
but I'm sure he isn't calling for directions.

His city cools, sloughs off days of tramping feet
and roaring motorbikes delivering bibimbap.

He sends video of a cat the neighbors call Little Miss Flower.
She darts from under a Hyundai plastered with emojis.

Unattached, they meet between the streetlights, breathing
the easy darkness.

But couldn't he do this someplace closer?

Then I remember a similar distance, and how it opened
a late-night knowledge that still comes running to me.

A REVISIONIST READING OF MY POEM ABOUT THE BEAR
BY TERRY HALL BODINE

The teacher, handing back my draft, says *this*
is not a love poem. She says, *look again*.

Scanning the stanzas, I reconsider
the swarthy man transmuted to a black
bear in trousers; the thorn-torn pads
of his outstretched paw; the woman (me)
in the yellow coat; winter, its fist unfolding.

If I tilt my head, I see the trees not newly
leafed but frangible, tines furred with frost;
that coat not yellow but yellowing; the bear's
proffered honeycomb pocked and studded
with the wings of bees still humming. *Look*
again, she says.

Squinting, I spy paving stones, linked like lengths
of knurled chain; the coat's raveled hem
scraping muscled calves like a stray's serrated tail.
A man-bear, mulch-stubbled, his hands tacky
with sap. *This is not a love poem*.

(I and the woman) open our eyes. We see
not a man but a dense pelt of bees, coating
a limb of hollow tree. *Look again*.
Look closely. At the swarm's yellow heart

is a queen newly-minted: reinventing a colony,
assuming her reign. Refuted, the bear
lumbers back to his cave. This, I say. *This*

is a love poem.

THE YEAR AFTER

BY CHRISTINE ANDERSEN

Crawling into bed alone
on the first night
after losing you,
I curled into a ball,
listening to the wind,
wondering if you were in it.
Sleep eluded me
without your breath pulsing the room,
the idle small talk about the storm brewing.

After a week of restless nights,
I hauled a mattress to the family room
and dropped it on the floor.
It was a cold March
but I opened all the windows
and camped with the four dogs,
most nights hanging off the edge of the bed
in my knit hat and sweater,
down quilts askew.
Friends shook their heads
as if grief demands decorum.

I spent a year
listening to nocturnal marauders,
quarreling with mortality.
When the dogs and I moved back
into the still, too empty bedroom,
I kept the windows open.
Watched.

Grief has a feral heartbeat,
voracious flesh, strong bones.

BURIAL

BY D. DINA FRIEDMAN

When I arrive, you're missing.
Not in the rough-hewn box.

Not in the prefab hole
with the perfect corners.

Not balanced on the conveyor straps
slackened for descent, then tightened.

Your silence interrupted
by thumps

worn prayerbooks dropped,
landing on the hinged wood.

Had you been there, you might have hurled one,
said, "See, I've still got my pitching stuff."

I don't look at the hole
when my turn comes to shovel, I take off

my mittens. It could have been colder
and I could have lied,

evoked the trope of black umbrellas,
but the truth is

the sky was so blue that day,
it sung.

THE WILD SWANS
BY PAULETTA HANSEL

When you read the old tales, you have to do the math. Find first what comes in threes—witches, wishes, dreams. Three toads turned to blossoms by the beauty of the girl. One crone who leads the girl to water becomes the fairy queen with ancient eyes who puts the girl's soft hands to work the blistering cloth as water works against the rock to meet its will. Eleven swans, or six bedeviled, depending on the version, waiting for the girl to plant their feet back to the ground. A foolish king or two redeemed. A year or three of stinging silence. Grimm's telling is the grimmest. One Queen Mother, fed to fire. Either way, the task left mostly finished. One bright white wing remembers flight. A girl myself when first I read the story, of course, I got it wrong. I thought it was about the princes, flown away, called back again. But it was always about the girl stitching herself together in the nettled dark. As metaphor the story is, at best, imperfect. We all know that after ever after, the girl becomes the queen, the pink of her a memory beneath the old tree's shade.

THE PATIENT PRESENTS
BY JAYNE RELAFORD BROWN

"The patient presents as a pleasant, obese woman in her 70s." --Doctor's notes

The physician presents
as a middle-aged man-boy,
balding, beefy if not obese,
baffled a bit by his middle-age.

Likely good at video games,
the physician likes his surgeries fast,
likes the Gameboy aspect of his craft,
his lightning moves
as he threads his way
through the femoral arteries
and into the heart,
as he revs it up
with a little shock,
and deploys the balloon
with its pig valve inside.

The physician remembers,
most of the time,
to include concern
in patient appointments.
Does she have someone
who can take her home,
who will look after her
till she's back on her feet?

"Yes," she smiles. "My wife
will be there."
He barely blanches--
she'll grant him that.
And while no other man
has made her heart race
in fifty-plus years,
the patient presents
as avidly smiling,
nodding, impressed.
She wishes him god-speed,
wishes him skilled.
She hopes he's at least
as good as he thinks,
as he explains
his technique
in minute detail.

HEARING TEST

BY MARDA MESSICK

In the soundproof booth a camera
surveys my ear canals, displays my eardrums
on a screen: twin timpani, whistle-clean.

I push a button when I hear three beeps,
some pitched clear, others faint
as weary angels dropping from a pin.

A moth's ears, pinhead size, detect the path
of bats. Pigeons know if a volcano sighs.
Elephants can hear clouds.

Astronomers tune the cosmic dial in search
of *are you there?* I am here, hearing
sound waves break in labyrinthine coils.

My unaided ears receive what's said. A different
sense perceives what's not, listens for
a clapping hand, the unwitnessed falling tree.

HOW WE MOVE CAN DEFINE US
BY MARGE PIERCY

Willow the white cat runs
along the railing over the pit
of stairwell. In my old age

I creep slowly downstairs,
placing each foot cautiously
not to fall, a fear haunting

me whose friend died like
that, neck broken. Such
a plethora of possible ends.

We go through our limited
days as if through a forest
of don'ts. I love to watch

Willow, fearless, quick going
exactly where she wants.
Once I too was fast and free.

MIDNIGHTS, MID-LIFE

BY HILARY KING

Nothing in caliginosity trips me anymore.
I know where the floor slopes down. How
one chair at the table always gets left

bereft. I slip through rooms holding only
attention, the blackness too complete to sip
from a book or to work the broom of ambition.

I pull silence around me like a sweater,
step past the waiting table with its bowl
of apples beginning to shrivel. I leave

the chair to its motherless loneliness.
At the long window, I watch the rats
come out of the ivy to do their work
as in the morning, I will do mine.

ADVANCE DIRECTIVE
BY NANCY HUGGETT

1. Bring me coffee. Strong.
2. Sing me songs. Use your opera voice or your best shower crooning. Mess up the melody and I will laugh and maybe hum along.
3. Say yes to my sudden cravings. Chocolate, black licorice, the overgrown path that may or may not have turkey toms strutting their spring regalia and chasing us over fences. We'll laugh! You'll carry a stick.
4. Fetch my friends. All of them. Let them run riot through the house. I don't know why we're all wild willful women, but let our voices rise, our laughter ripple through whatever peaceful place I might have confined for myself.
5. Let me wander far, alone. Turn the tracker off, let someone lead me home.
6. Don't say *calm down*. Don't remind me of my blood pressure or my medication, or when my library books are due. They don't charge late fees anymore and I want to take my own sweet time.
7. Spoil me with fountain pens and don't complain about the ink that leaks. Moleskin notebooks always.
8. Never mind the room. All I need is an open window, a tree that I can see, and cardinals at dawn.
9. Flowers every day. Wild cut. Learn their names. Now I'm making you work. Now I've tipped over the edge into
10. What I want: Love what's left of the world. Every last bit.

A HIKE IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS
BY DIANE MELBY

We pick our way up the rock-strewn trail, looking for the place
where we began. Our foundation, once anchor and fortress, gone
the void filled with the debris of passing years.

Goldenrod gives off the first perfume of fall, daisies wink in the breeze. We rest
on a sunny patch of grass. Overhead, frayed edges of cumulus clouds
fade into a milky blue sky like old pillows on a worn bed.

We gaze at the memory of us, young in our love, bracing against each other,
juice-stained arms stretching for the last apple on summer's tree.

He stands, pulls me up, his touch a coveted embrace.

The trail ahead is steep, climbing its way to an open summit,
illuminating a valley road that can carry us home.

Never too late to visit our ghosts, he says. I take his arm
as we start down the mountain.

CARRION

BY LOIS LEVINSON

I'm not thinking about death
as the five of us lumber
downtrail into the canyon,
weathered faces half-hidden
under khaki hats,
unwieldy binoculars and
spotting scopes stressing
our birdlike bones.
Trees become sparse,
spines of cactus protrude.
Aloft, a kettle of turkey vultures
soars, strung on a thermal,
wings raised in Vs
wobbling side to side.
The scavengers follow us,
then descend to perch
on a nearby ledge.
The committee convenes,
looks us over, confers.
Connoisseurs of decay,
what do they know?
Their bald red heads
poke out of black cassocks,
like Inquisitors.

IF I WERE FLORA, NOT FAUNA
BY KALI LIGHTFOOT

Sometimes I wish I could photosynthesize -- Robin Wall Kimmerer

Were I a plant, I would root
in a high mountain meadow, hold on
impatient for the brief light

of summer, when I could work hard
to create food for myself, living
in thin alpine soil. I'd breathe great gulps

of carbon and hope to make enough oxygen
to help the fauna survive this decade.
I would want to ask the mountain sheep

if they thought I'd made enough, but I'd not
want to draw attention to myself in case
they might nip off my small but lovely

purple flower and bright green leaves.
I'd go underground for winter
and worry that I didn't have the right

combination of food, carbon, water
and nitrogen to make it through the long
months of darkness. My questing

roots would mingle happily among
the holdfasts of grasses, daisies,
and paintbrush, forming a mat to grip

the fragile soil against scouring winds.
At last snow would bring peace, and
I'd lie quietly, my energy spent,

wonder if the others, their roots
holding ground in silence, thought
that I was doing enough.

MAGIC GARDENS
BY JULIE STANDIG

She read about them. Saw the ads.
When all else fails fill your basket with crystals,
potions, spirit catchers. Time to run. Oh my.

She grabbed her favorite—an Amish egg wicker
and stopped at the nearest Mystic Shoppe.
She knew exactly what was needed—Rhodonite

crystals—way superior to Carnelian and Rose
Quartz. Rhodonite, if not too late, kick starts
other senses when the mind runs out on you.

But she knew that was just a beginning—
time to get herbal. This mix was not likely
to be dangerous, but even so, she put that aside—

a particular perk of having not much
to lose. She added sage, turmeric, ginseng,
ginkgo biloba and a little ashwagandha.

His clock was ticking fast and she didn't want
to miss a beat. No time for talk. She sprinted
to the next aisle—iron cauldrons of all sizes.

And those wonderful glass orbs in all colors—
their insides had strands that reached out
from bottom to top—corals, azul, persimmon,

bottomless black. Witch's balls.
To be hung in windows or on front porches.
To catch evil spirits. Ward off ill fortune.

She knew her husband was out of time. Last stop—
Henbane. Mandrake. Because when all else fails
a good woman needs to know her poison.

Section Three

RING TALE

BY SUSAN LILLEY

Band of gold, big mf-ing solitaire,
promise prongs with chips of white sparkle,
manicure, camera ready, online
and out front, "got (got?) engaged,"
fine gravel of pave, heirlooms, vintage
knock-offs and modern classic.

It seems important at the time.

A friend once gave me her thick gold
first wedding ring for safekeeping
during her second divorce,
then called to instruct me:

"Take it to the nearest lake and
throw it in." Sorry, honey. I never did
because that ring is still somewhere
in my jewelry jungle, along with Mom's
pearls that will only fit the neck
of a starved bride.

And Granny's ruby, which I wear
anytime I need strength. My last
wedding ring went during a garage sale.

The woman said, "Any jewelry
you wanna unload?" She could
smell the bouquet of divorce
in the driveway. Hell yes,
as a matter of fact. Hold on.

Before I could think too much,
I ran upstairs and grabbed the blue
velvet box that once dissolved my heart
just to look at. I was happy for
that Sunday lowball 300 dollars,
and after all, who could I give it to?

Bad luck in a platinum circle.

Spent it all in a French restaurant,
the one where I once got engaged.

PREVIOUS ADDRESSES
BY KELLY MADIGAN

My birthplace is a blur of red brick details
held by others. I resided next in the smell
of caught insects—fireflies—
and the dust from moth wings
in a place where the phone numbers
began with a word. I dwelt in a cool cave

under my grandmother's overgrown
lilac after that, a house of flowers,
until I graduated to the pages of Teen Beat,
soda-scented lip gloss, the weekly countdown.
For a dark and wild interval I floated
in a glass of Scotch, then climbed out on a stair step.

I inhabited the window light of dusty plants
hung from macramé, and the sound of air bubbling
through a charcoal cartridge in the fish tank. I lived
in the thunderheads, and the narrow straight band
visible between the dock boards, green
and shot through with darting motion. I was relocated

by the teeth of a dog who broke
the logging chain used to tie him up,
and had to pack so hastily I left my childhood
books and navigation tools behind.

Now I live in the circling flight of the timber doodle,
the debris under the eagle nest, and the star-shaped
tunnel inside the cottonwood branch.

When it's time to go I will likely drag a drip torch
along the hem of the prairie
and rise up, transported, in the celebratory smoke.

TRUE NATURE
BY JUDITH A HANSEN

*A fish cannot drown in water,
A bird does not fall in air.*
—Mechthild of Magdeburg

You know you don't have much time
left, you know that
eating out with your husband
at the Mediterranean place will soon evolve

into a dear thing.

Modest tables and chairs dressed
in dinner light, teenagers serve you
filet of salmon with cubed tomato and cucumber
they forget to bring plastic cutlery, distracted by

the tight fit of their skin.

The way you bow your head
while you eat, the strip mall, the parched hills
palm trees— the way their funny feather heads
lean away from the wind—

evening sweeps the parking lot.

All these things
in the palm of your hand
the lines form the path
an end and a beginning
like a treasure map

or scavenger hunt.

We are all scavengers
like crows and stray dogs
searching for the thing that feeds us

along the way.

PROGRESSION

BY ELIZABETH JUDEN CHRISTY

1.

At night, a bush bowed at the side of a side street
turns into a troll with my cat's shoulders, bony wings.
My mother's hair appears in my dream, and my father
is a harp. His strings ache as my mother plucks him.
Inside my mother's mouth, her teeth are suitcases. They
gnash open and shut over the Mississippi, and she uses
the muddy water to clean carpets in our Army houses
from Fort Belvoir to Frankfurt.

2.

This morning,
the two-headed maple
hemorrhages its leaves.
When I swallow a sharp piece of ice,
it punctures the box in my belly,
what's left in my uterus puffs
out, no more blood, just air.

3.

My daughter's eyes: a forest when her friend yells
at her, *You're stupid if you don't believe in God!*

4.

When I bend forward now
to touch my toes
my skin falls away from my skull,
puddles in pale folds
on the kitchen's laminate flooring.
I grip the edges of my face,
shake it out—my winter
battered "Welcome" mat.
Flakes of me at twenty-one, thirty-six,
forty-five fly out into the yard
and seed the muddy grass.
I drape the old, mote-free mask
over bone and press it
against polished sockets and jaw,
peer into the mirror and find
my father's forehead, my daughter's eyes.

5.

So for tonight, I'll crawl
inside the cat's belly
and become the cat, the food,

the urge to claw.

PORTRAIT OF MY HUSBAND
BY PEGGY LIUZZI

Whose hair is a nest of warblers
Whose ears are gray dens for sleeping foxes
Whose face folds into origami cranes and stars
Whose cheeks are chalky limestone slabs
Whose mouth is a question and a prayer
Whose eyebrows are dusty moths
Whose eyes are dawn mist over water
Whose eyes are faded photographs locked reliquaries
An old man whose hands are earthenware cups
Whose hands are cupped leaves filled with dew
Whose fingers settle quiet then flutter like birds
rising at the sound of a dog or an owl
Whose arms are tree branches warm in the sun
Whose arms are stiff sisal ropes unraveling
Whose arms are velvet curtains gathering dust
Whose arms reach hold enfold and let go
Whose back rounds like a willow weeping
Whose back weeps from carrying heavy loads
An old man who stands on legs like weathered piers
Whose legs are paint-spattered ladders creaking stairs
Whose feet are wrecked engines red with rust
Whose feet are gnarled roots years deep in the ground
Whose feet are worn leather slippers scuffing softly
An old man whose heart is a spinning compass
Whose heart is a wasp encased in amber
Whose heart breaks at times and wanders far and wide
Whose heart is a clock that chimes the hours
a stopwatch that times the end of the race
An old man who is a house roofed with mossy tiles
He smells of pine needles and ashes
of mildewed books with frayed covers
This old man is yesterday
He is a lone siren on a city street at dawn
He is a tweedy wool sweater with frayed sleeves
He is a path that meanders and turns back on itself
He is the hour when sun makes long shadows
and birds grow restless for their nests

MESSY SONNET

BY PATRICIA L. SCRUGGS

I want to appreciate the man whose bald head gets cold,
who hears too much or nothing, whose trousers hang looser

than they ever did. I want to listen to him breathe,
lying next to me with that ridiculous watch cap pulled

down over his eyes. I want to reach into his skull to examine
his dreams folded neatly over dry cleaner hangers.

I want to know the dreams of poker, of friends long gone.
I want to see his dreams of washing underwear in a motel sink,

drying socks over the lampshade. I want his dreams of standing
in a field waving curious emu closer with his shirt, racing kangaroo

in his rental car. I want to unfold his voice on the telephone
after midnight when he calls me during a thirsty rain.

I want him to whisper, "Love . . . love . . . love,"
while the fragrance of eucalyptus rises in the night.

HOURLASS

BY AGNES VOJTA

The shadows on the sundials lengthen. Daylight leaks from the year.
The balance tilts to darkness. We tally the accounts of the year.

The trees acknowledge the season with the yellowing of their leaves.
Scent of impermanence on the wind. We sense the end of the year.

Bees mingle in the mint, tumble in the goldenrod. Last harvest.
Tenaciously, the leaves cling to the branches. We cling to the years.

Old wives' summer: golden days that smell of apples and wilting leaves.
My aged cat was still sunning herself at my feet this time last year.

Leaves sail on the breeze, land on the water and float down the river.
They are teaching lessons about letting go, I think every year.

Seeds fall, a raft to carry blueprints of life across the winter.
The promise lies patiently. The spring showers will wake it next year.

We try to row but we cannot steer, cannot decipher the map.
The sand in the hourglass remains hidden. How many more years?

For my father's birthday, I send flowers to cheer up my mother.
She ordered a bench to sit by his grave. Soon it will be a year.

WHEN A MOTHER DIES
BY SUSAN MICHELE CORONEL

When a mother dies, the dry dust of a broom sweeps out your insides.
When a mother dies, salty seas converge & sigh. When a mother dies,
bones crackle like fat on a skillet. When a mother dies, aspen & pine
bow down their heads. When a mother dies, daughters left behind
join hands. When a mother dies, light filters through leaves as if
for the first time. When a mother dies, apples taste sweet, then bitter.
When a mother dies, spending time alone is a suspect activity.
When a mother dies, hands smell of cracked dough & liver.
When a mother dies, moths frenzy into the forest, flickering around
a girl's braids. When a mother dies, the moon spins shadows into song.
When a mother dies, you become a dim fish, unable to catch lightning
in a bottle. When a mother dies, the desert shakes off its bright blooms.
When a mother dies, rainbow particles fade to black & white.
When a mother dies, the boneyard blackens the sun.

COMMUNION
BY GEORGINA KEY

Mossy gravestones list like the ravaged teeth of some giant,
all snaggle-toothed, one or two loose in their peaty cavity.
I graze my veined hand across weathered marble,
peer at letters engraved into ancient stone,
lichen obscuring their meaning.
Leaves rattle like voices of the dead and I cock my head,
listen for you amongst the choir.
Each one longs to be heard but only yours rings true.
Arthritic joints click as I kneel on the grass—a prayer mat facing Mecca.
The cloth napkin I unfold releases the yeasty scent
of bread I baked this morning, still warm.
I hold before me a piece torn off, cupped in my hands like an offering.
It won't bring you back, I know, but I hope it will honor you in some way.
On my tongue it rests lightly. I inhale so its taste reaches the back of my throat.
Then I chew very slowly until it turns wet and heavy in my mouth.
Bending over, hands folded, I breathe into you. Can you taste it?
Worn grooves naming the dead curve as I trace their edges like braille.
What do they tell, beyond your name, your first and last breath—
what about everything in between?
A bird calls from high above, a soundtrack to your too-short life.
High notes accompany the better days—
your first kiss, your first child born into the world,
the one I held in my arms.
So fragile. But not as fragile as you, it turned out.
The bird's cries turn shrill—
the pain of childbirth,
the heartache of losing your true love,
the first and the last.
I wail into the trees, my own voice joining the chorus.
Until all is silent, and I hear only your bones
decomposing beneath the wet earth.

AT THE MANLIUS SWAN POND
BY ELLEN AUSTIN-LI

death climbed over the chain link fence
dressed as a teenage boy. Under the half-
light of the waxing gibbous moon, he stole

Manny's lifelong mate. Wrapped in night's
anonymity, he also snatched her four progeny
from the town's Swan Pond. Who would steal

a female swan and her cygnets? I imagine Manny,
the male, must have caused a fracas, frantic
flapping, and squawking, feathers flying,

as Death fixed Faye inside his twisted mind. Faye's
fate? She ended up on the thief's dinner plate.
I found out about this hometown horror

months after it made the news. That's the way
the past reenters—these shocking events you hear
rekindle memories of one's earlier life. Fuel-fed

fire. Like hearing about my childhood
friend, Mary, whose beloved husband of 41 years
keeled over on his bike and will never come back

again. Another theft—and me at nearby Sno-Top
with my black raspberry soft ice cream, looking
for comfort in the cold, sweet cone. I remember

when my mother walked me to Mary's. I was four.
Over the years, it was always Mary and me. Our history
kept us in the same circle until she was wed.

How some of us have spent a lifetime together,
or our memories reach as far back. Sno-Top, I heard
at the services, was one of her husband's favorite spots.

Grief finds us so easily as we grow old. I see
the four cygnets recently returned to the pond, still
too young for their gray-brown down to turn white.

Manny's gone. He had taken to attacking his offspring—
without Faye, they say, he no longer recognizes his own.
Can swans be consumed by grief? Like some of us,

they spend a lifetime together.
Melancholy grows like the waxing moon. Soon,
we can see what sneaks towards us in the night.

IN LIEU OF EULOGY

BY TERRI WATROUS BERRY

Don't cry for me, hear? If I lie before you,
blood stilled within these veins, don't
dampen me with unrequited tears.
I was a child risen in a bowl of
Welcome—full belly, tucked in.
Spring gave me lilacs and a bed for sowing
seed, cradled within the cradles then,
life huddled close around me like a fire.
Baby cheeks.
A little girl's sweet-smelling hair,
two boys' wide tooth-missing grins,
the ever-spin of winters springs summers
falls all for me—so many!—all for me.
Suns have set in my eyes, stinging winds
kept me from selfish nearsightedness.
I have hurt and am grateful for that pain,
and I have lain beside a good man.
Cry for one whose life's not known
the privilege of these pleasures, or
one who never realized what she had.
Not for me, my friends, no not for me—
the world holds not one blessing I have missed.

DISFIGURED, AN ELEGY
after Éluard
BY SARA BURANT

The once-yellow roses turning
to parchment in red vases,
bland little teetotalers on a sill
are they roses still? Goodbye
sadness, I loved your smell
& wore your old clothes
just to be that close to it—
crotch-yeastiness, cold sweat's
salty acrid tang, over-chewed
gum—goodbye! goodbye! I said
I'm through, but you keep
hanging around like dusty
marcescent leaves hissing &
shushing all winter & spring.
Astringent as yesterday's tea
you're in my mouth, the way
my lips relax into a frown,
you're in my shrunken ovaries
& uterus, the slightly enlarged
right atrium of my slightly
sluggish heart. You're in the hive,
the chrysalis, Kincaid's lupine,
the last of the hill's white oaks,
but not wholly in the man
planting an orchard in the
upland meadow. You're in the
ground he plowed, the soil's
peds he broke apart with
shovel & pick, the many
holes, the tall fence he erected
to keep out deer and other
gleaners. You're in the hill's
own late shadow I pass near
but not through, the camas
& grass that grew here, grass
of late spring reaching over
our heads, that sweet rustle
we'd disappear into, the two
dogs & I, at dusk we'd go out
& in the dark return.

DOES IT MATTER WHERE MY BODY GOES WHEN I DIE?

BY KATHLEEN CASSEN MICKELSON

I have no plans for my used-up bones other than to not be embalmed,
not be filled with chemicals that only postpone the inevitable rotting away.
Not sure about cremation either, sending smoke signals that carry elements
from my dental fillings to share with anyone who breathes.
Maybe composting is the way to go,
like a dead tree that melts back into the earth as it lets go,
returning all the molecules it borrowed over its life span.

I haven't asked my children about this.
Not sure I will. They will grieve—or not—
no matter what disposal method I choose.
Maybe I should call it deconstruction, not disposal,
my final impact on this earth.
I might as well feed the garden on my way out.

OL' KOZAN GETS IT RIGHT

BY MARTINA REISZ NEWBERRY

"On a winter morning in 1360, Zen master Kozan Ichikyo gathered together his pupils. Kozan, 77, told them that, upon his death, they should bury his body, perform no ceremony and hold no services in his memory. Sitting in the traditional Zen posture, he then wrote the following:

Empty-handed I entered the world Barefoot I leave it.

My coming, my going — Two simple happenings that got entangled.

After he finished, Kozan gently put down his brush, and then died. He was still sitting upright."*

If I'm going to die
(which I have yet to accept),
I'd like it to be in late fall
when the trees are pissed-off
skeletons and the daytime sky
is near-white. It's just another
empty space for death
to slink into, that sky.

Maybe someone should shave
my head and strew my hair
like ashes over the lawn
or the sidewalks
or in the sand of the concrete urn
sculpted like a lion in front
of the public library.

Perhaps I could be part of a midden**—
neighbored to eggplant peels,
empty bbq bean cans, animal bone,
mollusc shells, stained pages
torn from old books. These are artifacts
I understand. Some of them
turn, eventually, into something else.

I prefer no attending music.
J. Joplin's *Take A Little Piece of My Heart*
or Queen's *Too Much Love Will Kill You*
could drive away what few customers
there are in eternity's acreage.
I don't like the idea of disappointing
anyone at such a serious event.

I think being dead in that true poverty
of the seasons is most appropriate,
for me. Keep it simple, I say.
Maybe only poems stay.

*<https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=18944959>

A **midden is an old dump for domestic waste

ON THE BANKS OF THE STYX
BY LYNN PATTISON

“How deep it goes, oar into water,” — Diane Seuss, “Fathom”

We stay back in the trees, watch bent figures
feel their way toward the creaky ferry, rocking. Alone,
or together, arms linked—a steady line of arrivals.

We’ve tucked dull coins under a hump of moss,
for when we’ll need them. Surprising, neither of us
known for planning ahead. We sink fishing lines

in the river but we’re not sure we want
to catch anything in these dark waters. We wave
to Charon and during a lull he lumbers over

to join us on the red, patchy quilt. He’s known
Di since she was a kid, and later that wild determination
when she pushed far down the path to pull

her boy back. He likes our red lipstick and stockings
with seams. He smells of scorched salt and the fog of fear
that surrounds the dead. He’s slammed,

he says, so many to carry across—*What’s going on
out there?* We tell him plague. Fire. Famine. Men with rifles.
He recounts the past: waves of war dead, the flood

of the beautiful young men. I can’t see
if he feels sorrow or it’s all about the timeclock.
He likes to throw dice. Never answers

questions about the other shore—won’t speak
of where he was born, his family. No questions about us,
either. Maybe he already knows. He has a side

that likes to flirt and sometimes more, but
when the ferry fills, he’s all business, washing up
in the river, pulling his robe straight

and setting oar and pole in place.
While he’s doing *ferryman* we do *sprites*—
splashing in the river in our underpants.

Later, dry, we chew lentils, drink
dark wine and try to conjure metaphors
for here. Last time, Charon asked

if we wanted to ride along but we've
never seen that skiff come back with anyone
but him aboard. Children clamber

over the ferry's gunwales.
Di says, *And Jesus wept*. I am glad
we are far from the landing.

Once, as passengers loaded, a shade
shook his fist at us, as if to say, "Your goose
is cooked," but by the time anyone boards

this boat their power has turned wispy
as mist. We just concentrated on our tiddlywinks
until we heard the scrunch of the boat

shifting off gravel and into the current,
circled by murk and ribbony vapors. We napped.
When Charon came back, we played Statues.

We called him C. He said, "Ladies"—
big wink. This time, though, no hint of play:
We'd have to leave, he said.

Boss doesn't like this—probably jealous ...
We packed up our ball gowns and tiaras,
our overalls and tutus—pink, tattered.

Grabbed the fingerpaints, the basket
of boiled eggs and pots of jam. I pouted
all the way back, sucked my thumb

and wrapped Grandma's fox around my neck.
Di winked, *I know*, she said, *we can stash this stuff*
at Wolf Lake! Now that's where we meet.

We play dress-up, pore over still lifes in art books.
We make paper dolls of ourselves as gray crones.
We add flirty limericks and mail them to C

on the backs of cantankerous crows. We decide
he's sent gifts when, returning, they bring
an earring or brass button, a shard of jade.

SOWING LIGHT
BY J.I. KLEINBERG

What cloth, what brocade bolt, what silken fray this living is, to lift and fold in ripple wave across the tabled land, to pattern cling, to scissors ring, to dress the night in light, in velvet dark, in woolen felt, all felt in heat, in chill, in each breezed breath, to fan just one more inch of life from miles of death, to wipe the landscape free of ash or flourish dew to heal the ground with grief, apology, or prayer, our greed, our hubris so profound to think that we could fortress light and make it ours, bright fabric, garment, passementerie of stars.

BURYING CROW
BY MARE HERON HAKE

on the day I give up waiting I find the body of a crow, his body as perfect in death as life, flat on the ground full of rocks by the mailbox. every ebony feather intact, his legs straight as a young tree's branch and his talons curled as if to perch but grabbing only air. I brush the fly away from the closed eye wondering what it can see now, and gently lift the body of darkness and of light, to carry him in one hand, one wrist supporting the spine as I once carried my newborn babes, careful of the weak head and midnight skull. the crows on the wires above called out, and I answered, *do you know what happened, come, follow, see what I do.* walking until the grave spot was clear, under the blooming lavender where the bumble bees dance, where the sun twirls returning day and night, light and shadow, where green-shooted growth returns a wild thing in the spring, there I thanked him for saying goodbye, here and now, with some pretty stones once saved, so given, and a sprig of the sweet bloom his body would become.

CONTRIBUTORS

Christine Andersen is a retired dyslexia specialist who haunts the Connecticut woods, pen and pad in pocket, hound dogs at her heels. She is living a writer's life in her golden years after children, work, chores, family commitments—all the stuff that fills up a life. Publications include *The Comstock*, *Awakenings*, *Evening Street*, and *Octillo Reviews*, *Dash*, *Slab*, *Glimpse*, *Her Words*, and *Ravens Perch*, among others. She won the American Writers Review 2023 Poetry Contest.

Ellen Austin-Li's work appears in *Artemis*, *Thimble Literary*, *The Maine Review*, *Salamander*, *Lily Poetry Review*, *Rust + Moth*, and many other places. Finishing Line Press published her chapbooks—*Firefly* (2019) & *Lockdown: Scenes From Early in the Pandemic* (2021). She's a Best of the Net nominee. A Martin B. Bernstein Fellowship recipient, she earned an MFA in Poetry at the Solstice Low-Residency Program. Ellen co-founded the monthly reading series, "Poetry Night at Sitwell's," in Cincinnati, where she lives with her husband in a newly empty nest. You can find her at www.ellenaustinli.me

Terri Watrous Berry's work has appeared for thirty-five years in anthologies, journals, magazines, and newspapers, accepted in 2022 for Wising Up's anthology *Adult Children*, *House of Zolo's Journal of Speculative Literature* devoted to climate change, *Oprelle's Bigger Than Me* anthology on compulsion, *Syncopation Literary Journal's* issue regarding age and change, University of Michigan-Flint's *Qua Literary Journal*, *Blink Ink's* #50 *Country Roads*, *We'Moon's Silver Lining*, *Ms. Aligned's Coming of Age*, *Wild Crone Wisdom*, an anthology by Wild Librarian Press.

Terry Hall Bodine is a graduate of the College of William & Mary in Virginia. Recent publication credits include *Plainsongs*, *Broad River Review*, *SANGAM*, and *Litmosphere*; her chapbook *The Something We Make from Nothing* will be published by Seven Kitchens Press in October. Terry lives in Lynchburg with her husband, Bill, and works with academic advising at the University of Lynchburg.

Janice Bressler is a writer and lawyer living in San Francisco with poems published in *Paper Crow* and soon to be published in *Beyond Words*. Her articles have appeared in the Richmond Review/Sunset Beacon and the San Francisco Bayview newspapers, among others. <https://muckrack.com/profile/portfolio>

Jayne Relaford Brown is the author of *My First Real Tree*, a book of poems from Foothills Publishing. Recent poetry publications include *Calyx*, *Passager*, and *Persimmon Tree*. She was the Eighth Poet Laureate of Berks County, PA, and taught English and Creative Writing until retiring in 2018. She lives in rural PA with her partner of 30+ years and their five rescue cats.

Sara Burant is the author of the collection *Verge*, a chapbook. Recent poems and reviews appear in various journals, including *Ruminate*, *Spry*, *Quartet*, *The Solitary Plover*, and *Ghost Proposal*. The grateful recipient of a 2023 Oregon Literary Fellowship, she counts a month-long residency at Playa among her life's peak experiences. Now she's happy to stay close to home, work on writing projects, learn the names and songs of birds, and be a grandmother. She lives in Eugene with her dog, Penn.

Wendy Taylor Carlisle is the author of four books and five chapbooks and is the 2020 winner of the Phillip H. McMath Poetry Prize. A chapbook-length selection of her work appears in *Wild Muse: Ozarks Nature Poetry*, (Cornerpost Press, 2022) and a new edition of her book, *Reading Berryman to the Dog*, (Belle Point Press, 2023) is out now. Find her work at www.wendytaylorcarlisle.com

Elizabeth Juden Christy is a poet, writer, freelance editor, and mentor to teen writers. She lives in Zanesville, Ohio, where for twenty-eight years, she's been trying to convince the residents that they need poetry as much as they need football. She holds an MFA in poetry from Ashland University and has poems in *The Naugatuck River Review*, *Centrifugal Eye*, and *The Stockholm Review of Literature* as well as other journals. She spends too much time reading about politics and streaming bad movies until 3 a.m.

Lisa Wence Connors retired from the US Army and is now a mercenary writer and poet. She divides her time between Salt Lake City, UT, Fruita, CO, and the open road. She facilitates creative writing workshops for at risk teens and the Grand Junction VA. She is the Editor of *High Desert Cadence: A Journal of Veteran Poetry*. Her work has been published in *Alexandria Quarterly*, *Proud to Be*, *Bluestem Literary Journal*, and *Atlas & Alice*, among others.

Susan Michele Coronel lives in New York City. She has received two Pushcart nominations. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in publications including *Mom Egg Review*, *Spillway 29*, *Plainsongs*, *Anti-Heroine Chic*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Redivider*, and *One Art*. This year, she was the winner of the Massachusetts Poetry Festival First Poem Contest. In 2021 one of her poems was runner-up for the Beacon Street Poetry Prize, and another was a finalist in the Millennium Writing Awards. Her first full-length poetry manuscript was a finalist for Harbor Editions' 2021 Laureate Prize.

Robin Dellabough is a poet and editor with a master's degree in journalism from UC Berkeley. Her first collection, *Double Helix*, was published in 2022. Published poems in *Blue Unicorn*, *Fifth Estate*, *Maryland Poetry Review*, *Negative Capability*, *Stoneboat*, *Tiny Spoon*, and more. She has studied with Alex Dimitrov and Kathleen Ossip at the Hudson Valley Writers Center. She is currently the Projects Director for Publishers Marketplace/Publishers Lunch.

Heather Dubrow is the author of *Forms and Hollows*, *Lost and Found Departments*, and two chapbooks. Among the journals where her poetry has appeared are *Prairie Schooner*, *Southern Review*, and *Yale Review*. She is also a specialist in sixteenth- and seventeenth century literature, with publications that include seven studies in literary criticism and a Shakespeare edition. Director of Fordham's Poets Out Loud reading series between 2009 and summer 2020, she holds the John D. Boyd, SJ, Chair in Poetic Imagination there. Her previous appointments include the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Carleton College.

Adele Evershed was born in Wales and has lived in Asia before settling in Connecticut. Her prose and poetry have been published in over a hundred journals and anthologies, such as *Every Day Fiction*, *Reflex Fiction*, *Grey Sparrow Journal*, and *Anti Heroine Chic*. Adele has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net for poetry. Finishing Line Press published Adele's first poetry chapbook, *Turbulence in Small Places*, this year. Bottlecap Press published her second poetry collection, *the Brink of Silence*, in June. Her novella in flash, *Wannabe*, was also published this year by Alien Buddha Press.

Alexandra Fössinger is the author of the poetry collection *Contrapasso* (Cephalopress, 2022). Her work is published in *Tears in the Fence*, *Frogmore Papers*, *Oyster River Pages*, *Feral*, *Mono*, and *La Picciolotta Barca*, among others. She is mostly interested in the spaces between things, the tiny shifts in time and space, the overlooked, the unsaid.

D. Dina Friedman has published widely in literary journals including *Rattle*, *The Sun*, *Chatauqua*, *Mass Poetry*, *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Crab Orchard Review* and received two Pushcart Prize nominations. She's the author of two young adult novels: *Escaping Into the Night* (Simon and Schuster) and *Playing Dad's Song* (Farrar, Straus, Giroux) and one chapbook of poetry, *Wolf in the Suitcase* (Finishing Line Press). Her short story collection, *Immigrants*, is forthcoming from Creators Press this fall, and a second chapbook of poetry, *Here in Sanctuary*, *Whirling* is scheduled for publication by Querencia Press in 2024. Visit her website at www.ddinafriedman.com

Lea Galanter is a Seattle-area editor and writer with a background in history and theater. After writing plays for many years, she stumbled into the world of poetry and has never looked back. Her poetry has been published by *Really System*, *River and South*, *Panoply*, *Young Raven's Literary Review*, *Poetica Review*, *Unlost Journal*, and in several anthologies. She ventures regularly into the spaces between words seeking secret messages.

Marj Hahne is a freelance editor, writer, and writing teacher, and a 2015 MFA graduate from the Rainier Writing Workshop, in poetry. She has performed and taught at over 100 venues around the country, including public radio and television programs. Her poems have appeared in literary journals, anthologies, art exhibits, and dance performances. To make poetry hospitable, she reads poems to dogs and pairs poems with craft beers, spirits, and coffee for her YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/33lOqH1> Website:

Mare Heron Hake is a poet of the PNW, very near the Salish Sea, having earned her MFA through the Northwest Institute of Literary Arts before the program went into bankruptcy. Until very recently, she was a poetry editor and co-owner for *Tahoma Literary Review* as well as a founding member of Red House Writers, until her caregiving responsibilities demanded more of her time. Her work is available in various venues, including Amazon, and she believes all trees are sentient.

Elaine Handley is a published poet and fiction writer who lives in Middle Grove, NY. She is a SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor and Professor Emeritus at Empire State University and a three-time winner of the Adirondack Center for Writing Best Book of Poetry.

Pauletta Hansel's nine poetry collections include *Heartbreak Tree*, a poetic exploration of the intersection of gender and place in Appalachia, published in 2022 by Madville Publishing, and *Friend*, *Coal Town Photograph* and *Palindrome*, winner of the 2017 Weatherford Award for best Appalachian poetry, all from Dos Madres Press. She was 2022 Writer-in-Residence for The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and Cincinnati's first Poet Laureate, 2016-2018. Her writing has been featured in *Oxford American*, *Rattle*, *Appalachian Journal*, *The Anthology of Appalachian Writers*, *American Life in Poetry*, *Verse Daily* and *Poetry Daily*, among others.

Judith A Hansen is a poet living in San Diego, CA. She recently had a poem published in *Passengers Journal* (June 2023 issue). Her play "The Voice Lesson" was a finalist for NYC's Ensemble Studio Theatre's One-Act Festival. Judith facilitates creative writing workshops for women who are incarcerated in partnership with PoeticJustice.org. She received an MFA in Drama from University of Southern California.

Nancy Huggett is a settler descendant who writes, lives, and caregives on the stolen traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg people (Ottawa, Canada). Thanks to Firefly Creative, Merritt Writers, and not-the-rodeo poets, she has work published in *EVENT*, *Gone Lawn*, *One Art*, *Pinhole*, *Rust & Moth*, and *The New Quarterly*.

Georgina Key is an award-winning author whose debut novel, *Shiny Bits In Between*, received the Phoenix prize for Best New Voice of 2020 (Kops-Fetherling International Book Award) and was a finalist for the 2022 International Book Award. Born and raised in England, she currently splits her time between Texas and the UK. Georgina has taught writing for over 30 years at community colleges, private writing organizations, and one-on-one mentorships. Her poetry has appeared in several journals and anthologies. Georgina's second novel, *Syllables of the Briny World*, publication date April 2024, is a follow-up to *Shiny Bits In Between*.

Helga Kidder lives in the Tennessee hills with her husband. Her poems have recently been published in *Dragonfly*, *Orbis*, *LitShark*, and others. She has five collections of poetry, *Wild Plums*, *Luckier than the Stars*, *Blackberry Winter*, *Loving the Dead*, which won the Blue Light Press Book Award 2020, and *Learning Curve*—poems about immigration and assimilation.

Hilary King is a poet originally from Virginia and now living in the San Francisco Bay Area of California. Her poems have appeared or will appear in *Ploughshares*, *Salamander*, *TAB*, *Belletrist*, *SWWIM*, *Fourth River*, *The Cortland Review*, and other publications. She is the author of the book of poems, *The Maid's Car*, an editor for *DMQ Review*, and was a Steinbeck Fellow at San Jose State University.

J.I. Kleinberg is an artist, poet, and freelance writer. Her poetry has appeared in *December*, *One*, *Diagram*, *Pedestal*, *Psaltery & Lyre*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, and many other print and online journals worldwide. She lives in Bellingham, Washington, USA, and online at chocolateisaverb.wordpress.com

Tricia Knoll has crossed the three-quarters of a century mark and is grateful for all she's learned. She lives in Vermont in the woods with two dogs. Her poetry appears widely in journals, anthologies, and seven collections—the most recent being *One Bent Twig* (FutureCycle Press, 2023) with poems about trees Knoll has planted, loved, or worries about due to climate crisis. Knoll is a Contributing Editor to the online journal *Verse-Virtual*. She is busy working on a manuscript titled *A Muse of My Own* that pays tribute to the many women poets who have inspired her. Website: triciaknoll.com

Paula J. Lambert has published several collections of poetry including *The Ghost of Every Feathered Thing* (FutureCycle 2022) and *How to See the World* (Bottom Dog 2020). Awarded PEN America's L'Engle-Rahman Prize for Mentorship, Lambert's poetry and prose has been supported by the Ohio Arts Council, the Greater Columbus Arts Council, and the Virginia Center for Creative Arts. Her work has been nominated for several Pushcart and Best of the Net prizes. *How to See the World* was a finalist in the 2021 Ohioana Book Awards. She is also a visual artist, small-press publisher, and literary translator. More at www.paulajlambert.com

Diane LeBlanc is a writer, teacher, and book artist with roots in Vermont, Wyoming, and Minnesota. She is the author of *The Feast Delayed* (Terrapin Books, 2021) and four poetry chapbooks. Poems and essays appear in *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Cimarron Review*, and *Mid-American Review*, among others. Diane is a holistic life coach with emphasis in creativity practice. She is a professor and writer in residence at St. Olaf College. Read more at www.dianeblancwriter.com

Lois Levinson is the author of *Before It All Vanishes*, and a chapbook, *Crane Dance*, both published by Finishing Line Press. Her poems have appeared in *Gyroscope Review*, *Entropy*, *Canary Journal*, *Global Poemic*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, *The MacGuffin*, *Cloudbank* and other journals, as well as the anthology, *An Uncertain Age, Poems by Bold Women of a Certain Age*. She is an alum of the Poetry Book Project at Lighthouse Writers Workshop in Denver, Colorado.

Kali Lightfoot's poems and reviews have appeared in journals and anthologies including *Lavender Review*, *Star 82 Review*, and *Poetry South*. Her work has been nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize, and once for Best of the Net. Her collection, *Pelted by Flowers*, published by CavanKerry Press was chosen a Must Read by the Massachusetts Book Awards, and Best Dressed on the Wardrobe blog of Sundress Publications. Kali earned an MFA in Writing at Vermont College of Fine Arts.

Susan Lilley is a Florida native. She served as Orlando's inaugural poet laureate from 2017-2021. Her work has appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *The Southern Review*, *The Florida Review*, *Poet Lore*, and other journals. Her collection *Venus in Retrograde* was published in 2019 by Burrow Press.

Peggy Liuzzi lives with her husband and their 10-year-old beagle Maizie in Syracuse, NY where she spends time practicing Tai Chi, learning the names of wildflowers and attending classes and readings at the YMCA Downtown Writing Center. Her work has appeared in *Stone Canoe*, *Nine Mile Magazine*, *Slippery Elm*, and the *Syracuse Cultural Workers' Women Artists Datebook*.

Kelly Madigan has received a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship in creative writing, and the Distinguished Artist Award in Literature from the Nebraska Arts Council. Her collection of poetry, *The Edge of Known Things*, was published by SFASU press. She teaches creative writing workshops with an environmental focus through Larksong Writers Place. Her work has appeared in *52 Poems*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Puerto del Sol* and *Plant-Human Quarterly*.

Wendy McVicker, Athens, Ohio Poet Laureate 2020-2022, is a longtime teaching artist, visiting schools, libraries, arts centers: wherever poetry can be groomed and bloomed. Her chapbooks include *the dancer's notes* (Finishing Line Press, 2015) and *Zero, a Door* (The Orchard Street Press, 2021). Her collaborative collection with poet Cathy Cultice Lentes, *Stronger When We Touch*, is forthcoming from The Orchard Street Press in 2023. Whenever possible, she performs with musician Emily Prince under the name *another language altogether*. Her children having grown and flown, she lives with her husband of many years and a Hemingway cat named Dora.

Diane Melby is an emerging poet who writes from her home in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. She culminated a 40-year career in education after serving as the president of a university in Texas. Her poetry reflects a lifelong interest in exploring the interconnections between the natural world and spiritual aspects of the human experience.

Marda Messick is a poet living with a potter, a dog, and two cats in Tallahassee, Florida on richly biodiverse land that is the ancestral territory of the Apalachee Nation. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Christian Century*, *Literary Mama*, *Delmarva Review*, *Radix*, and other publications. She has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Kathleen Cassen Mickelson is a Minnesota-based writer of poetry and prose. Her work has appeared in journals in the U.S., U.K., and Canada. She co-founded the contemporary poetry journal, *Gyroscope Review*, where she served as co-editor until 2020. Her poetry chapbook, *How We Learned to Shut Our Own Mouths*, was published by Gyroscope Press in 2021, and she is co-author of the forthcoming poetry collection, *Prayer Gardening*, to be released by Kelsay Books in late 2023. Find out more at her website, One Minnesota Crone oneminnesotacrone.com

Jane Edna Mohler is a Bucks County Poet Laureate Emeritus (Pennsylvania). She recently won second place in the 2023 Crossroads Poetry Contest. Recent publications include *Gargoyle*, *River Heron Review*, *One Art*, and *New Verse News*. Her collection *Broken Umbrellas* was published by Kelsay. She is the Poetry Editor of the Schuylkill Valley Journal. www.janeednamohler.com

Catherine Naisby is a writer, artist, and musician from North-East England, whose published works (writing as 'Catherine Edmunds') include two poetry collections, five novels, and a memoir. She has had numerous short pieces published in anthologies and journals including *Aesthetica*, *Crannóg*, *Poetry Scotland* and *Ambit*; has been nominated three times for a Pushcart Prize, shortlisted in the Bridport Prize four times, was the Platinum Prizewinner in the 2015 Creative Futures Literary Awards, and the 2020 winner of the Robert Graves Poetry Prize.

Martina Reisz Newberry's most recent book is *Glyphs*, available now from Deerbrook Editions. She is the author of *Blues For French Roast With Chicory*, *Never Completely Awake* (from Deerbrook Editions), *Where It Goes* (Deerbrook Editions), *Learning By Rote* (Deerbrook Editions) and *Running Like A Woman With Her Hair On Fire: Collected Poems* (Red Hen Press). She has been included in *The Sixty Four Best Poets of 2018* (Black Mountain Press/The Halcyone Magazine editorial staff). Newberry has been widely published in literary journals in the U.S. and abroad. She lives in Los Angeles.

Lynn Pattison's poems have appeared in *Ruminate*, *Pedestal*, *Moon City Review*, *Slipstream*, and *Smartish Pace*, among others, and been anthologized. She is the author of four poetry collections: *tesla's daughter* (March St. Press), *Walking Back the Cat* (Bright Hill Press), the full-length, *Light That Sounds Like Breaking* (Mayapple Press), and most recently, *Matryoshka Houses* (Kelsay Press, 2020). Pattison's work has been nominated for Pushcart recognition and inclusion in Best Small Fictions and Best Microfiction 2021. She has been supported in her writing by an Irving S. Gilmore artist grant, The Ragdale Foundation, and the AWP Writer to Writer Program.

Marge Piercy has published 20 poetry collections, most recently, *On The Way Out*, *Turn Off The Light* (Knopf), 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 575 venues here and abroad.

Patricia Rockwood lives in Sarasota, Florida, where she teaches creative writing and mosaic art at Suncoast Technical College. Her poems have appeared in *Split Rock Review*, *Plains Poetry Review*, *Hiram Poetry Review*, and elsewhere.

Patricia L. Scruggs is the author of one poetry collection, *Forget the Moon*. Born in Colorado, she spent ten formative years in Alberta, Canada before taking root in Southern California. Her work recently appeared in *Burningword*, *McQueen's Quinterly*, *Inlandia*, *ONTHEBUS*, *Spillway*, *Rattle*, *Rip Rap*, *Cultural Weekly*, *Crab Creek Review*, as well as the anthologies *13 Los Angeles Poets*, *So Luminous the Wildflowers*, and *Beyond the Lyric Moment*. A recent Pushcart Prize nominee, Patricia, a retired art teacher, earned her MFA at California State University, Fullerton. She and her husband are parents of two and grandparents of three.

Sarah Dickenson Snyder lives in Vermont, carves in stone, & rides her bike. Travel opens her eyes. She has four poetry collections, *The Human Contract* (2017), *Notes from a Nomad* (nominated for the Massachusetts Book Awards 2018), *With a Polaroid Camera* (2019), and *Now These Three Remain* (2023). Poems have been nominated for Best of Net and Pushcart Prizes. Recent work is in *Rattle*, *Lily Poetry Review*, and *RHINO*. sarahdickensonsnyder.com

Julie Standig has been published in *Alehouse Press*, *Sadie Girl Press*, *After Happy Hour Review*, *Schuylkill Journal Review*, *US1 Poets/Del Val*, and *Gyroscope Review*, as well as online journals. Her first chapbook, *Memsahib Memoir* was released by Plan B Press in 2017 and her full volume collection, *The Forsaken Little Black Book*, was recently published by Kelsay Books. A lifetime New Yorker she now lives in Bucks County with her husband and their springer spaniel. Giving up walks through Central Park and the 92ndY was difficult, but time on the Delaware River, and a great writing community make it all great!

Jessica D. Thompson's poetry has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and has been published in numerous journals, including *Atlanta Review*, *ONE ART*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Thimble*, and *The Southern Review*. Her work has also appeared in many anthologies, among them: *Circe's Lament: the Anthology of Wild Women Poetry* (Accents Publishing), *Women Speak* (Sheila-Na-Gig Editions), and *Next Indiana Campfires: a Trail Companion* (Indiana Humanities). Her first full-length collection, *Daybreak and Deep*, published in October, 2022, was a finalist in the American Book Fest Best Books of 2022 for narrative poetry.

Agnes Vojta grew up in Germany and now lives in Rolla, Missouri where she teaches physics at Missouri S&T and hikes the Ozarks. She is the author of *Porous Land*, *The Eden of Perhaps*, and *A Coracle for Dreams* (Spartan Press). Most recently, she collaborated with eight other poets on the book *Wild Muse: Ozarks Nature Poetry* (Cornerpost Press, 2022.) Agnes is associate editor of *Thimble Literary Magazine* and host of the Poetry at the Pub reading series in Rolla. Her poems have appeared in a variety of magazines; you can read some of them on her website agnesvojta.com

Elinor Ann Walker (she/her) holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, lives near the mountains, and prefers to write outside. Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in such journals as *Bracken*, *Cherry Tree*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Jet Fuel Review*, *Nimrod*, *Northwest Review*, *Pirene's Fountain*, *Plume*, *Shō Poetry Journal*, *The Southern Review*, *Terrain.org*, and *West Trade Review*, among others. She has recently completed a full-length manuscript of poetry and two chapbooks. Find her online at <https://elinorannwalker.com>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We can't believe it's coming up on 2024 already. It seems like we just put out the 2023 Winter Issue. For the 2024 Winter Issue, there is no theme, we're just looking for fine, contemporary poetry. What do poets ruminate about in the depths of winter? If you have political poems on the state of the world, send them along. (No rants please.) Nature poetry is always welcome. Start off right for the new year by getting your work into submissions!

Winter Issue 2024 submissions open October 1, 2023, and run through December 1, 2023, with the issue releasing on January 15, 2024. We will close early if we get all the poems we need, so submit early. We also close early if we reach our submissions cap for the month. Put 4 poems in one .doc(x) or .rtf document, page breaks in between poems, normal fonts like Times New Roman, and an up-to-date bio for the magazine in the Submittable bio section of no more than 100 words. You can have your Poem Title and under it put "by Author WXYZ, but we don't need headers on the page. Use the name in your bio you'd like to be published under.

Please, no weird formatting or underlining or other odd symbols and weirdities. It makes enjoying the poem difficult. Visual poetry is the exception. If you submit more than 4 poems in a doc, we will read the first 4 and ignore the rest, earning you the feline editors haughty disapproval. We welcome poems from new and established poets. We have eclectic tastes, so give us a shot. We'd love to see what you've been working on.

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

Thank you for Reading. See you in the submissions!



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