



Gyroscope Review

fine poetry to turn your world around

Issue 24-1
Winter Issue 2024

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Constance Brewer

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Submissions: *Gyroscope Review* accepts previously unpublished contemporary poetry submissions through our online submissions system, gyroscopereview.submittable.com/submit. Please read our guidelines before submitting.

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This issue's cover art:

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From the Editor

Here we are in 2024 when 2023 just got started. I'm always amazed at how fast time passes. Winter is traditionally thought of as a time of introspection, but it's also a time of renewal in ourselves as we contemplate what will happen in the upcoming year. One thing we can count on is all the great poetry that appears every month of the year. Poets never take a break. And we're happy about that.

Several of you wondered how the editors would answer the cover letter conversation starters we have on our submissions packet. Fair enough. Here are the questions: "What is one thing you love about winter? If you could have any band, from any era show up to give you a private concert, who would it be? Favorite pizza?"

Constance—I love that the world slows down in winter. Even the cold has its appeal. But not for long. The band I would like to give a concert to me would be the David Bromberg Band. They play an eclectic mix of bluegrass, blues, folk, jazz, swing, and rock and roll. As for pizza? Pepperoni, mushroom, and black olive. Although I once had a broccoli and white sauce pizza I would love to find the recipe for—just to see if my memory is playing tricks on me about how good it was.

Elya— One thing I love about winter - the lights decorating so many homes inside and/or out during the darkest days remind me how magical holiday lights seemed to me as a child and why Lite Brite was one of my favorite toys. Private band concert— I think I'd pick the Beatles since I was too young to see them live, and I hear their energy was electrifying. Pizza— I do occasionally enjoy a good gluten-free crust pizza with goat cheese, light on the tomato sauce and heavy on the veggies. A dash of prosciutto or pancetta is good, too.

Betsy— What do I love about winter? That one is relatively easy. Boots. Or books. Private concert— I am struggling with choosing among the Beatles, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, and Joni Mitchell. Trying to choose is sending me into a state of decidophobia. I looked for a German word to describe it but the best I can do is this:

Keilbatscheidungenverwirrung— "*That inner confusion of what kind of kielbasa you want as you look at the menu.*" Pizza— My favorite pizza has basil, garlic, spinach, and sundried tomatoes.

Lorenzo declared he only likes pizza crusts although he wouldn't pass up a piece of sausage or two. The other felines were busy sunbathing and refused to chime in. A new round of questions on the Spring submission form. See you there.

Constance

Table of Contents

Section One	7
Reflected	8
by Judith Taylor	
Grandmother	9
by Maureen Clark	
Winter at the Olson Brothers’ Orchard	10
by Peter Serchuk	
Yellow Kayak in Winter	11
by Emily-Sue Sloane.....	
Adamantine	12
by Mary Kay Rummel	
What We Don’t Say When the Log Boom Breaks: 20 Questions	13
by Susan Shaw Sailer.....	
Small Sounds	14
by Ralph Stevens.....	
The Photograph: 1-Year-old birthday	15
by Abdullah Jimoh.....	
When I Knew	16
by Shaun R. Pankoski	
Time and Matter	17
by John Cruze	
emerging adulthood	18
by Rowan Tate	
You’ll be reborn	19
by Samantha MacIlwaine.....	
How Do You Say, “Mother?”	20
by Yoda Olinyk.....	
<i>Quarreling, For Us, Was A Kind Of Intimacy</i>	21
by Michael Salcman.....	
The Danger in Meeting Your Lover for Lunch	22
by Merna Dyer Skinner.....	
Weather-withered	23
by Laurie Rosen	
Constraints	24
by Rohan Buettel.....	

Section Two.....	25
On Being Asked By The Academic Dean My Rationale	26
For Having Students Memorize Poems.....	
by Richard Hague	
I've never read Allen Ginsberg's poem <i>Kaddish</i>, either	29
by David Colodney	
Warm Ember.....	30
by Wess Mongo Jolley.....	
Instructions for Mindfulness.....	31
by Natalie Marino	
From the Perspective of a Terrarium at Home Depot.....	32
by Shannon K. Winston	
Conversing with cattle	33
by Joe Cottonwood	
Praise the Surgeon, Praise the Anesthesiologist, Praise the IV Nurse	34
by Sarah A. Rae	
Souvenir from St. Bernard's Parish.....	35
by Connie Soper.....	
Ghazal For My Hometown.....	36
by Molly Lanzarotta.....	
One Drum	37
by Jeremy Griffin.....	
A Guide to Old-School Navigation	38
by Sarah Carleton.....	
Pipefitter	39
by Margie Duncan.....	
Covet.....	40
by T. R. Poulson.....	
In Love	41
by Sourima Rana.....	
°sc@r D°m!ngŁez's Mannequin	42
by Ruth Towne.....	
Diving Deep.....	43
by E. Rhyme.....	
Caravaggio's 'Bacchus' at the Uffizi.....	44
by Marc Alan Di Martino	

Section Three	45
Hate Pain Love Sting	46
by Dick Westheimer	
Terraced	47
by Lavina Blossom	
He Had a Green Thumb	48
by Elaine Mintzer.....	
Shaffer Road	49
by Cynthia White	
Louder than Laughter	50
by Alison Stone.....	
Aztec Calendar	51
by Eugene Stevenson	
Specifics	52
by R.T. Castleberry	
Trespases	53
by Bonnie Proudfoot	
Ease	54
by Frank Brosius	
Postpartum Brines	56
by Michelle Hendrixson-Miller	
Poem for My Son	57
by Dianne Stepp.....	
Ark	58
by Robbi Nester	
Red Dog Haibun	59
by Dawn Terpstra.....	
The Ghost of Agnes Alice Cole 1895-1983	60
by Jude Brigley	
The Shirt	61
by Martin Willitts Jr.....	
Grandfather Mowing	62
by Lynn Gilbert.....	
Contributors	63
Announcements	70

Section One

REFLECTED
BY JUDITH TAYLOR

The white napkins
print themselves on the dark street
with the tealights and their little apricot flues

as if the plain glass
was really a collodion plate
memorizing our solitary evenings' meals in silver salts:

a gentle image, old-
fashioned and
difficult to fix.

The picture's broken up, at intervals
by the headlights as a car
sweeps round the turn and into Hill Street

for a moment making visible
—instead of our own reflections—
the quietly-falling snow.

GRANDMOTHER
BY MAUREEN CLARK

I.

in this flickering candlelight make shadow pictures on the wall
while northern lights ripple green and purple skirts

over Shetland Orkney and Skye
tell the story of animals who shed their skin

when they need to grow humans who wear the pelts of others
against this harsh cold

II.

after the knife cuts and before the bandaging let the skin open
and original goodness sink in

as though it was always there
make a book of bridges between the Bhagavat-Gita

and the Icelandic sagas heal our family with myth
magic words that will sew-up our self-inflicted wounds

III.

on that beach where the full moon pulls the strands of ocean
into each other's arms become the oracle

who saves us all chant the words you were given
from the beginning of human time

remember to show your teeth of small white fenceposts
to dazzle the cataclysm before us

IV.

sing the hymn of creation as you make the leather pouch
gather sage the bones of tiny birds

sweetgrass and feathers twigs smooth stones
the tongues of lizards who will not stop talking

now all that remains is to spin the world
to the fatal moment and let go

WINTER AT THE OLSON BROTHERS' ORCHARD
BY PETER SERCHUK

The peach and cherry trees are fast asleep,
the muscled arms of the pear trees heavy with snow.
And down below, the sawmill silent, the lone witness
to the whispers of the Columbia River.

Inside, we sit around the fireplace drinking beer
and talk about the sweat-filled days of August;
hours spent high in the trees, mosquitos jabbing at
our faces, fingers raw from stems not eager to let go.

It was a good season, we say. The orchard broke even
and then some, with enough left over to fix the sprayer.
Sure, we'd hoped for more, but still a hell of a year,
remembering our sore backs and baskets full of jewels.

Now it's time for us to let go, drink one more beer
and think about winter work down in Spokane or
across the Cascades. We've got months to dream
before spring, to let the snow fall where it may.

YELLOW KAYAK IN WINTER

BY EMILY-SUE SLOANE

Beyond tall feathery sea grasses where
the crayon-colored kayaks of summer
lie helter-skelter on a snow-swept rocky beach
a splash of yellow glistens in the middle bay.

At its center, the shape of a man hunched
against the icy wind, his back to the shore.
He is unperturbed when a motor boat intrudes
then throttles down to draw up alongside.

The boat's driver stands, steadies
reaches across for the brown-clad bundle —
a surprisingly effortless lift.
After his rapid departure, the air settles.

Unburdened, the yellow kayak floats
impervious to the tide's gentle prodding.
Its secrets safely stowed in this storied cove
where pirates and rumrunners may yet roam.

ADAMANTINE

BY MARY KAY RUMMEL

Holding a stone in my hand —
a hard river stone worn smooth by water,
what a river does to granite over time.
Holding solitude in my hand.
Holding silence like a rock.

On my wall a Chinese painting —
clouds drifting over peaks, a waterfall tumbling
down a cliff. To the side, a little bridge over a creek.
A rounded figure crossing over, about to disappear into mists.

In a long ago autumn dusk
the crows called my name.
I rose from my life, left everything —
past, home, parents.
I almost turned back to my mother
had another destination beyond the frosted fields
filling with night.
Seeing the deer, ghostly in moonlight,
my first vision of solitude,
I moved into silence.

The sky thins.
The world tightens like a walnut.
Air snapped off like a twig.
I can count what I love
like stones in my hand.

WHAT WE DON'T SAY WHEN THE LOG BOOM BREAKS: 20 QUESTIONS
BY SUSAN SHAW SAILER

In the center of her web a spider waits
—what do you await?

Below her web, soil might be a century old
or newly churned from an earthworm's gut.

Have your guts churned lately?
—how long do you plan to live?

When you last kissed your love, did you live?
—did the earth quake? did you?

I quake when I consider blocks—
city blocks, Lego blocks, writer's block.

Plaything, will you unblock me? Let's play stars.
Shall we make gold stars worth more than silver?

A row of stars for good comportment
—four stars for those who lost a name, who died.

My name, changeless as a politician's taste for scandal.
Which school for scandal did you choose?

Was it fun? Inspiring? Did you graduate?
What good is your degree if you hide it?

We'll not hide today's specials. Will you have
cod on rye with mayo and mustard?

Tomorrow comes with ketchup, no substitutes.
Do you come? Come when called?

I call a spade a spade. What do you call clubs?
I dislike weapons but enjoy dance clubs with window dressing.

When dressing, do you wear leggings under slacks?
I'm slacking off now. Back to log booms:

When the boom broke, toward what sea did the logs make their way?
When you broke, did you find a nearby sea to empty into?

SMALL SOUNDS
BY RALPH STEVENS

At night I am in a small city
of small sounds,
one late bus carrying
three night shift workers,
a door opening down the street,
guests laughing their goodbyes.
There is a highway
still humming as highways do
but pianissimo. Our cars
tick-tick in the driveways
as engines cool.
One stops outside,
its radio still playing, muffled
behind closed windows.
A distant clang tells me
the raccoons have begun their
nocturnal feeding.
The sounds of my night city
don't intrude.
There are no sirens
no drunken shouts
nothing like the roar
of a police helicopter
sitting over us,
its searchlight searching.
Nothing louder than the hiss
of the bus door opening,
a low rumble as it
heads for the next stop.

THE PHOTOGRAPH: 1-YEAR-OLD BIRTHDAY

BY ABDULLAH JIMOH

A lot is wrong with these faces having absence-of-love imbued on the sheen foreheads like make-up. Apple cheeks bruised with red candidness. The caps, mine and dad's, and mum's headgear were the ones that posed well. You can tell there was something wrong with the house. Its paint, pale, whitish like a bloated wound. Yes, the house was sick, injured by absence-of-love. Waiting to be cured. How can you call this a birthday celebration when all the smiles in the world were nowhere to be found? My mother staring at the ground, her irises right-aligned, as if reckoning about the dwindling health of the house. Her silk scarf patterned with ash florals, the color of cremains, as though she was at a funeral. Well, I think she was, care died sometime way back. Me, in the middle, an inlet between a rock and a pyramid of sand. She was the pyramid, dissolving from the pressure of the ceaseless rain, rain of anger, until flattened into a plateau. Me, in the middle, what do I know? I flowed. I raised my right hand to touch the morose Coke and Fanta bottles on the table which my gaze was fixated on. I think of it as God wanting me to look away from the incendiaries in my parents' eyes reflected on the camera, flaming. Cabin-biscuits sprawled on the tray on the table like corpses of dead affection. I, bemused by the provisions, gave the table my attention. My father, as if angry with the photographer too, thrust a blazing gaze at his direction. Here, now I say *this ailment is way too critical for a home to survive*. Tetanus. It had eaten deep into the chest, into the heart of the house such that the only healing probable was death. Now I can stop asking my mother why or how the house died.

WHEN I KNEW

BY SHAUN R. PANKOSKI

The aquarium hadn't been open very long
that day we drove down the coast.
You held my hand in the car
a little too tightly.
We were two tourists, standing in line
at the used-to-be cannery.
The air was sharp, salty,
a little bit dreadful.

You went straight for the otters,
expecting to be entertained.
As if their sleek, wet bodies
were for your enjoyment only.
I couldn't stop looking up
at the gray whale skeleton.
I wanted to ascend, take shelter
in the cathedral of his ribs.

The moon jellies floated like sad ghosts.
The sardines flashed, silvery
and frantic in the roundabout.
I understood how they both felt.
There was a moment at the interactive exhibit,
as I watched you stroke the rays,
run your hands over the starfish-
that I feared for them.

Now when I look at the pictures
you took of me on the observation deck,
I don't see a sun squint.
I see a grimace.

TIME AND MATTER

BY JOHN CRUZE

until you cup her
in your hand
break that thin
tension of light
trapping her
on the water
right her on a rock
give back the time
she is owed
to dry her wings
and flutter off
the life of a moth
could be mistaken
for weightless

EMERGING ADULthood
BY ROWAN TATE

god catches on my teeth and gets stuck in my molars as i
go up the escalator through bakerloo's esophagus, choked
up into the kind of thursday with an unfinished
face. i want to ask my mother
why she made me, if she ever imagined
me collecting all my selves from the five o'clock shadows
that open in the streets like thighs, more out of instinct
than desire. the days
sit on me like sweat-wet sheets and
time watches me
taste the colors change in people's faces, i can feel
god's breath, drying my skin, losing patience.

YOU'LL BE REBORN

BY SAMANTHA MACILWAINE

they said. Sent backward to the twilight of an empire. But they didn't say it would look and feel just like the height of an empire: grass volleyball, window seats, pleated skirts for stadium concerts. Your four-year-old sister becoming fifteen and careful. They didn't say, hey, you'll learn to define your career by the metrics you're already kind of succeeding at. That you'll find footing in old memories of yourself—being young and lonely, walking around the West Village, taking photos of string lights. Bad things will happen in the media, and you'll fall in love and get a haircut. The bad things will become horrific, and of course you'll oppose them—loudly, spitefully, over spaghetti with your mom and brother. The urgency of making your skin clearer, your apartment cleaner, and your playlists more personal will tighten like a fist. In the end, you'll watch your friends' stories instead of the news. You'll learn to forget your mission, and even quicker, that you were ever chasing a legacy. But you will still have the three-act structure of a grocery run. Other young people trapped in elderly faces will smile back over the cash register. That, and the quiet will swell like an ocean.

HOW DO YOU SAY, “MOTHER?” *A contrapuntal*

BY YODA OLINYK

Black tea leaves
in the sides of the pot.

hug

cuddle

cinnamon stick, cardamon pods, cloves,
of ginger, exactly ten fennel seeds.

a thumb

Your mothers’ fingers
singing

in my hair

sanskrit hymns

in your gorgeous mother tongue.
mother tongue. I’ve never thought of it this way.
She holds me in the same spot, on the

Your mother’s

too soft

couch — the same way you often do when
she strokes my hair, tells me I can call her

I feel too much.

Amma, which means *mother*,
in her mother tongue.

And I do. The next day,

I run to

my own mother’s door. I try
harder.

Something inside me

softened. The horizon is a colour I’ve never
seen before.

QUARRELING, FOR US, WAS A KIND OF INTIMACY

— John Banville

BY MICHAEL SALCMAN

Is this not the case for all couples? We debate and sabotage the other
he or she who most resembles ourselves or the mother or brother;
we exclaim *fuck off* as if it were really goodbye and not a verbal kiss.

After so many years we two are falcons flying alone together,
enemy combatants or invaders of this house, like wishful revenants
who miss the magic of their original sin, the trick that sticks like glue.

You are licking postage stamps and cutting out coupons of bliss,
those sticky papers of domestic gifts, an electronic cuckoo clock,
an automatic garbage disposal, the screw that squeezes the orange.

Who made me king, who crowned you queen, who gave a thought
to a new beginning? We were the cowards who ran with the crowd
like bulls in the street, because we were afraid of our feelings.

And now we are old, five decades on, and hardly as wise as stumps,
we seek what meaning means beyond the hump, beyond the thinking
and after dinner with a wine or two and the inevitable drowsy slump
I take your hand in mine and argue for love and a new beginning.

THE DANGER IN MEETING YOUR LOVER FOR LUNCH
BY MERNA DYER SKINNER

You'll consent to alcohol when he orders
Ouzo—even though you're to meet new clients
at 2. You'll repeatedly glance from him
to the door with the rhythm of a minute-hand
ticking off time, worried someone you know
will see him holding your hand, massaging
your fingers, signaling his desire to skip
dessert. Distracted, you'll miss him ordering
for you—a Greek salad—once again,
you'll realize he's forgotten how you abhor
olives—how he says nothing when you flick
them aside—how you plan to end *this* meal
with a whisper to his ear, *Mon amour, Plus jamais*,
yet knowing, he will silence your lips with his—again.

WEATHER-WITHERED

BY LAURIE ROSEN

Like the tin-man I ache for grease:
stiff joints, sore muscles— one pain runs
from my left shoulder to my fingertips,
another from my right butt cheek down my leg.
My flesh has turned flaky.
My lips could use a good balm, my eyes
are tearless and itchy.
Even my teeth are cracking.

One friend suggests massage,
another an ayahuasca trip,
my husband offers some home grown weed.
I lap olive oil from Sicily, dip chunks of ciabatta,
add it to salads, pasta, grilled fish.
It's in the conditioner I pour over my brittle hair,
in the soap I swab and suds with.

I drink cups of water to relieve
my parched throat. Before sleep I slather
my cracked heels with aloe infused cream,
yet my dreams fill with shriveled
sunflowers, sapless maples,
desiccated clementines.

In a season of extreme precipitation,
I am weather-withered and rain-rusty.
Unable to exploit even a drop,
I grow smaller, wrinkly, wizened.
The brine beneath my skin evaporates—
rendering me nearly invisible.

CONSTRAINTS

BY ROHAN BUETTEL

the last thing you expect on a major thoroughfare
in the early evening
lights on low-beam in a built-up area
are three kangaroos
sitting passively in the middle of your lane
nonchalantly watching

the lights of your car
coming close

suddenly you see them there caught in a searchlight
instinctively your foot jabs
hard against the brake and you thrust forward
chest and pelvis struggling
against constraints, the rear-end rising
as the car halts on its nose

and the kangaroos casually
turn and bound away

the threats to you and your family small and distant
grow slowly
the mortgage, the job, the household economy
but as they come closer
you sit there, spotlit, mesmerised, knowing
you must act, yet unable to rise

if only you could casually
turn and bound away

Section Two

ON BEING ASKED BY THE ACADEMIC DEAN MY RATIONALE
FOR HAVING STUDENTS MEMORIZE POEMS
BY RICHARD HAGUE

Because poems are beautiful,
and their beauty may displace
women-hating raps, curses, commercial
gibberish hawking beer, perfume, sex.
Poetry is healthy,
good to have in the head.

Because so many students feel weak,
undisciplined,
under-challenged.
Because in the classroom so many
have accomplished so little
they are proud of, really, so little
they can boast about—and knowing poems
by heart can be *seen*, and *heard*, and *shown off*,
immediately appreciated.

Because it makes them feel powerful
when they have mastered
several, because the mastery of several
requires mastery of self.

Because memorizing poems reminds us—
it *re-minds* us—
and we see as we have never seen,
live as we have never lived,
hear as we have never heard,
because we recall when there were no books,
no CDs, no libraries, no copy machines, no Internet, and yet,
still, there was poetry:
“In the beginning was the Word,”
“the most portable art,”
“the oral tradition,”
“learned at the knee.”

Because when we speak poems
from memory we take part
in the Great Conversation. We
belong to Shakespeare for a moment,
and he to us; we belong to Shelley,
and Marvell, and Whitman,
Dickinson, and Poe.
Because something of their
energy and genius
enters us, and lights us up.

Because Liz Allensworth once said
after reading aloud "Kubla Khan,"
"Those words taste good to say."

Because poetry is the Incarnation,
"The word made flesh and dwelling among us."

Because Ken Bloch recited
Blake's "The Tyger" and Shakespeare's
"My Mistress' Eyes Are Nothing Like The Sun"
while juggling bowling pins,
and it was rich and strange.

Because "beauty is truth, truth beauty."

I ask them to memorize poems
because they can.
Because it's good work.
Because it's difficulty that pays off
in delight.
Because only in poetry
can the silence be heard. Because only by poetry
can language be cleansed and renewed,
protected and saved.
Because only in poetry can we approach
"the expression of the inexpressible."

I ask them to memorize poems
Because John F. Kennedy said:
"When power leads man toward arrogance,
poetry reminds him of his limitations.
When power narrows the area of man's concern,
poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of existence.
When power corrupts, poetry cleanses."

Because Steve Fisk memorized "Ode On A Grecian Urn"
the ghost of Keats was made happy.

Because Katie DuMont memorized poems,
Poetry Theater happened at Xavier University.
Because Theresa Banis memorized "Barbara Allen"
she and I could give an impromptu public performance
under the Rotunda of the Union Terminal.

Because Amanda Lambdin memorized poetry
she may have remembered on her wedding night
that line she collected from Emerson:
"Every touch should thrill."

I have them memorize poetry because it is a worthy thing to,
 because it builds their spirits up,
because it can be recollected in times of grief or joy,
 trouble, or triumph,
because poetry is useful in every occasion,
 because it creates confidence,
because it decorates the mind,
 making it more attractive, more interesting, more full.
I ask them to memorize poetry
 because it's so rare a thing and
because it is how the gods would speak.

I'VE NEVER READ ALLEN GINSBERG'S POEM *KADDISH*, EITHER
BY DAVID COLODNEY

Again, I forgot to say *Kaddish* for you, Mom,
I mumble as I struggle to spark

a lighter dug from deep in a kitchen drawer
home to a minyan of utensils, corkscrews, chip clips,

and this at the bottom, each movement
rattling resting random items from their coma.

The candle wick twitches and fire shimmies
nearly out, almost like you taking your last breaths.

You can tell Dad I missed your *yahrzeit*
and he'd know because I missed his, too.

Then you two can complain about the son
you raised as the sun sets wherever you both are,

but you know I don't keep matches
in every room like you did, nestled next to

a black ceramic ashtray, or tucked
inside crackled packages of Winston 100s

as broken as you as you dusted ashes
from tables and mattresses,

cigarette simmering from your lips.
Yell and tell me how I've disappointed you:

I can still hear you.
You aren't that far away.

WARM EMBER

BY WESS MONGO JOLLEY

—*To Francee Jolley, February 2011*

How strange to find that death is not
the stranger that bursts through the door.

Rather, death is the abstract painter, whose canvas has no
meaning, until seen over our shoulder as we walk away.

Death is not the plunge into the icy lake—
it is the persistent mist that turns into rain.

Death is not the shattered glass, knocked from the counter—
it is the peanut shell in the compost.

It is the tide that covers the sand, the still warm
ember that has lost its cherry glow.

How strange to find that death is
not caught or flashed or startled—

that death is seduced,
teased into arousal.

Death has not taken you.
He has invited you out for a stroll.

And, as always, you took
some convincing.

Until at last you just smiled, put
on your coat, grabbed your keys,

and said yes—
it's time to go.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINDFULNESS
BY NATALIE MARINO

Imagine you are electricity,
bright as a sea monster.

Imagine your soul as a solo.

See it float through
an open window
of a stone cathedral in Rome.

Accept your strangeness.

Believe in beauty, believe
in spring's purple bat flower.

Fly like a gull
on the edge of red water.

Let out your cry
for bread and ecstasy.

Let the country
of your old letters burn.

Embrace the shadow
at the end of a street.

Let it come closer.

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A TERRARIUM AT HOME DEPOT

BY SHANNON K. WINSTON

A sticky-fingered boy pokes your face and asks: *Mom, is this real?* As if the glass weren't there, you feel him stroking your maidenhair under the neon lights of Aisle 9. It's always the men (even the young ones) who trespass on your space. *Is this real?* the boy insists. His mother steers him in the direction of lawn mowers and *Miracle-Gro*, but not before he's left a smudge on your cheek. Alone, you dream of beautiful messes: of powder pink peonies sloshing in galoshes in the rain, of monkey flowers squinting in the sun, of leftover squirrel tails from a fox's feast, of unruly dandelions, and tipsy ivy staggering over brick. You're not supposed to want any of this. You're praised for the dragon stones at your manicured feet, for your pet porcelain hedgehog under your palms, and for the tiny swing tickling your back. Quiet, demure, you barely need any water. The clerk in her orange smock knows what's asked of her, too. Just look at her with her red curls and fuchsia nails. A man smiles at her and she blushes, but not before she swoops in to Windex the blemish from your face.

CONVERSING WITH CATTLE
BY JOE COTTONWOOD

I'm awkward,
never know what to say
to the mouth of a cow
but the dog, born social, likes to stop and chat
on our walks passing Bechwati's pasture
where mama Hazel and her gigantic boy Hazelnut
greet us at the fence.

Exchange is mostly silent
neck-lowering with deep huffs of scent,
ear-flick, tail-twitch,
eye-avoidance, front leg crouch
with farts for punctuation.

It is not my world
yet briefly is.

Never a hug,
never a handshake,
never a tip of the hat
until one of us will simply turn
and we all walk away,
richer for the day.

PRaise THE SURGEON, PRaise THE ANESTHESIOLOGIST, PRaise THE IV NURSE

BY SARAH A. RAE

(after Ray Gonzalez)

Praise the glamorous surgeon as she glides into my prep room
right before the show begins, still in her fashionable trench coat
with the trendy belt, having just come inside, her long blonde hair
coiffed just right, no tired bags under her eyes showing how *she's*
been up since 4 am with neither food nor drink, her bright pronouncement,
Are you ready to get this over with? as she uses a sharpie-like marker
to label the left side of my neck, the surgical side, the side with the cancer
she will cut from my breast, thankfully with no hesitation, and yes! — I know
she's good, has won awards for physicians under 40 at just a little
over half my age, but I'm not sure I trust her confidence to calm those doubts
raised by the anesthesiologist, who has just left the room minutes before,

And praise him, that older, grumpier, still attractive anesthesiologist,
his curmudgeon-like demeanor, his no-holds-barred declaration, *Well,*
I'm not going to give her that antibiotic if she's allergic to Cipro,
her meaning me, he will not be swayed by the hot young surgeon, he will
damn sure wait for pharmacy to weigh in and give the go-ahead before
he pushes drugs in my veins, if circumstances were different I could date
this man, at least have a titillating conversation with him in a bar, the kind
that doesn't go anywhere but still revs you up, we'd talk into the wee hours,
sing along to 70s hits, Gladys Knight and Linda Ronstadt, trade phone
numbers, write them sloppily on gum wrappers we'd lose the next day,
or mis-program them into our phones before locking our lips juicily at the bar
and probably leaving separately, he to get back to his kids, me to my cat, and

Praise the IV nurse, yes, that one, the one who sticks in the needle several
times before she gets it right, two or three times on the back of my hand, finally
settling on my soft inner arm, there are tattoos on her own arms and a date,
sometime in 2007, either the birth or death of a lover or child, reminding us how
we all could use a second chance, how great pain can come with great beauty, and
I'm thinking about my mother and her small veins and how nurses always had to dig
for them when they drew blood, I know the needle sticks will bruise
as they always do, staining my skin for days afterward, changing from black
to purple, melding to green, pink, yellow, lavender, gold, like the leaves outside,
their veins burnished in the autumn sun, light illuminating kaleidoscopes
of their own tender flesh, vibrant hues glowing in fiery intensity before they fall,
crumble to ash, become one with the earth.

SOUVENIR FROM ST. BERNARD'S PARISH
BY CONNIE SOPER

Little paintings are nailed to the walls
of this café still shored up with sandbags
and surrounded by vacant lots—
images for sale of coffins and crypts
like the ones I saw in Lafayette Cemetery.
Tombstones crumbling and dilapidated.
Vegetation sprawled over the upheaval
of fallen generations, creeping
into them, as if to pull the dead back to life.
All around me, a disrepair
so beautiful it's all I wanted to photograph.

The coffee tastes both bitter and rich
with the essence of chicory root.
I sugar it and savor it. Outside, a percussion
of hammers, cacophony of singing saws.
The barista tells me the artists were the first
to come back, returning to this place
where the levee broke,
where streets became rivers, a new kind of hell.
Saxophone and muted trumpet commune
with each other, from one rebuilt porch
to another. Who knew the blues
could sound so happy? The way

this artist, whose name I do not know,
came back to create an exuberance
all Cajun and spunk. Painting as he needed
to breathe— graveyard chapels heaped,
perhaps, with the familial bones of ancestors
not his own. Blue sagging door
to let the spirits in or out.
I'm not sure which.

GHAZAL FOR MY HOMETOWN
BY MOLLY LANZAROTTA

Tragedy or trajectory—that all my versions conceal Los Angeles?
Every Angeleno casts shadows and angels, real or ideal—*los angeles*.

I climb the lone pine tree, rooted in asphalt and concrete.
At its swaying top see the ocean: can't even feel Los Angeles.

You can't explore the canyon: oak is poison,
bougainvillea thorny. Wild places conceal Los Angeles.

Stucco stairwells appear in films, dim-lit, standing in for someplace else.
Any flight could be the one I fled down: repetitive, surreal Los Angeles.

Police found my gramps after the funeral, trudging along the 405 freeway.
Not broken down, just angry at 2 a.m., trailing the ordeal of Los Angeles.

Transience smells of chlorine and hot pavement. The lack of roots repels me.
Is impermanence what pulls people the most, the very appeal of Los Angeles?

My aunt was christened Angela when my immigrant grandparents headed west.
If I had her name, I'd retell it—in Spanish, revealed: *loos and hell is*.

ONE DRUM
BY JEREMY GRIFFIN

By the time the brass band makes its second pass, only the bass drummer
continues to play, a husky kid, sweat-slicked face, mallets loose

in his fists like the flailing wings of a hatchling that has learned the name
of the earth too soon. Already the floats have trundled past, languid

as boats trawling the waters for something in need of capturing.
In their wake: lumps of horseshit and unclaimed trinkets, crushed cans

and ash. You can see the question on the kid's face, how much farther
he has to go. What is left after the soundwaves have been stripped away?

Skin, untouched, the promise of smoke and the music we call home.
Now the tipsy spectators drift away, listless, necks bedecked with plastic beads,

as if we are all royalty, all bound for faster spinning worlds. Now their toddlers,
teetering on the lip of a sugar crash, gear up for a good wail, the kind that sends

neurons scurrying for cover, sirens of unfounded longing. We listen
for the bugle's blast, the eager bleating of the clarinet, but all we hear

is the one-two rhythm of the drum carrying on the air the way you'd imagine
a bell's lonely gong, reminding you of what has passed, what is to come.

A GUIDE TO OLD-SCHOOL NAVIGATION
BY SARAH CARLETON

If you stumble across the cache of road maps
that used to live in the side pouch of our Volvo
behind Altoids and sunglasses

and rifle through Virginia, Rhode Island,
multiple Georgias, campground diagrams,
receipts and brochures

you'll find New York. Unfold the sheet
and drape it over your lap like a napkin.
Creases crisscross the paper,

whiting out *Rochester, New Paltz*, and *81*,
and that's okay. You're looking for
a crux worn away by folding

and unfolding, a pinprick hole
where you might drive through
to the middle of nowhere.

PIPEFITTER
BY MARGIE DUNCAN

Who knows what he's making
or unmaking while we watch
from the child-sized chairs he'd built,

the pile of us quiet for once.
His hands speak to the tools
and they always agree.

Upstairs, bad weather – grandma shouts a story
through her deafness, soup-steam peels the wallpaper,
while mom and dad are counting down the hours.

Dust hovers over his worn workbench, layered
with shards and splinters, cigarette ash,
and metal salvaged from old mistakes.

After dinner, grandpa will take our hands
along the street to the monkey bars,
sit on the bench while we climb.

His own hands will tap his corduroy knees.
When we call to him from the iron rungs,
he'll say *Hello*, as if we've all just met.

COVET

BY T. R. POULSON

—for Cali

Six months of ninety-a-night motel rooms, light
through panes like hands, like plans, and now
my married lover asks my thoughts. I want
to tell him my neighbor's yellow lab runs,
a golden streak. She licks my hand, her tail
a C, her nose aquiver to things touched
by me. I don't know if she gnaws on meaty
bones she finds on walks with her woman,

or if her woman fingernails thorns from her
toes. I wish I could toss knotty sticks in breakers
until slobber slicks my palm. Take her home
and feed her ribs. I touch my lover's face
but say nothing. Why would I confess
I'm in love? He'll never be my dog.

IN LOVE
BY SOURIMA RANA

And the last

time | that you close your eyes;
The wind is

Stung by a star that fades...

your
mind wanders, you feel a kiss
quivering like a

wild heart. through a thousand novels
you | walk |
beneath the shadow...

too sweet to resist. . .

You're in love.
You're in love.--

(Blackout Poetry from Arthur Rimbaud's poem "Novel",)

°SC@R D°M!NGL!Z'S MANNEQUIN

BY RUTH TOWNE

I made the odyssey of turtles
in August, by the eye-blue promenade,
with espadrilles in hand.

This was after I rose up the Rock of Monaco,
after the blush pink medieval alleys
where I walked as quiet as a friar,
to the castle with its dole of oddities—

a wood pod submersible,
a gyroscopic table,
the black tooth of a megalodon,

and the Adriatic seaweed,
the white baleen bones, the dark octopus beaks,
the pennate skeletons of manta rays,
and fluorescent corals.

What remained salient for me was the sanctuary,
that temporary heaven for indestructible objects,
where turtles swam in a saltwater veranda.
They were patient as angels behind a glass edge,
with their sea in view over the travertine ledge.

And the Mediterranean was a lazuli haze,
and the stones of the beach were carapace gray,
each was fixed as a sea turtle shell,
as I stepped off the promenade into the sea.

DIVING DEEP

BY E. RHYME

Flashlights on, scattering two thousand lumens,
we find each other.

Up we propel from the deep to this breathing reef—a seascape
cut out from a magazine.

With sand under my nails, I trace your pruney fingers,
you clasp my hand.

Barefoot we wade these shallow waters, toeing the rims
of oyster shells.

But, the ocean spills over land, a little too much,
and a little too soon—

my love songs undulate like the abandoned strands of kelp;
a seagull screeches

in the distant glare: our visions blur the gulf—
that what consumed us was love

or desire, who is to tell?
The tide withers, heat runs through the shoreline

bleaching the corals,
your grip loosens—the lagoon washes us away;

our lights left flirting on the atoll.

CARAVAGGIO'S 'BACCHUS' AT THE UFFIZI
BY MARC ALAN DI MARTINO

It's grape-as-metaphor. Squint hard enough
and you can tease out the artist's ghost-image
loitering darkly in a flask of wine—
Hitchcock-before-Hitchcock—challenging
the viewer to a duel to outlast time.
It's nearly an afterthought's minutia:
a faint stroke or two suggest a nose,
an eye, yet once it's seen it cannot be
unseen. Most reproductions blur it out,
unable to capture such fine detail.
Up close it practically begs you to smudge
lipstick on the inch-thick bulletproof glass—
but there it is: observing you, unnerving you,
daring you to accept its vile offering
of eternal life.

Scan to see painting



Section Three

HATE PAIN LOVE STING

BY DICK WESTHEIMER

I hate blackberries, how their ripening comes
in the season when ground-hornets erupt
in numbers from their nests, how the sweetest
fruit is hidden among the fiercest thorns,

that no matter how aggressively I prune,
the canes grow lank and menacing,
like whips in the hands of some god
whose purpose is to remind me

that at some point I must pay—so yes, to get
at those berries right at the time they're prepared
to warm my chin with juice that's honeyed enough
to charm those goddam hornets from any lures

I set—to get at those berries, I must be
willing to bleed, to tear my garments
like some bible prophet when their god
is blasphemed (like the lord of blackberries is

when I take her name in vain and complain
that I have to suffer so, work hard at harvest,
when it's the cane that gives me more
than I can offer) which makes

it and me like lovers I guess—the giving, the pain,
the fruit and its juices, the tears and the taking,
the love and its making, the blossom and the bee.

TERRACED
BY LAVINA BLOSSOM

Feathers strewn through the yarrow
on the third tier of the native garden.
The finch feeder become a hawk feeder,
the small birds have fled. Meanwhile, bees
at the California fuchsia, flaming trumpets that
the hummingbirds play backwards. And lazy
spiders are kiting, climbing to high places,
feeling for air and electrical currents then
tossing out threads. For a week, as I walk up
the steep steps, a thin strand of webbing sticks
to my nose, mouth, or cheek. The gophers
have left the sunflowers alone, content with
garbage scraps. A lizard wearing a map
of diamonds on its back jerks up the brick
wall, stalls there, toes spread wide.
Nothing still for long, never satisfied.

HE HAD A GREEN THUMB

BY ELAINE MINTZER

He'd heard a story
about a boy
who once stuck a twig
into a girl's body
and it sprouted there

so he lined up branches like blades
on a surgical tray
and parted the neighbor girl's pink furrows
with gentle fingers
on the pale chenille mat
on the floor of his mother's bathroom

where the girl could see
the green cloud
of the crown of the white alder
in the high window above the tub

and, luckily, the procedure
was without complication,
and she healed
with only *this* tiny scar:

sometimes, when the wind blows,
she feels the leaves of the tree
thrashing inside her.

SHAFFER ROAD
BY CYNTHIA WHITE

You are asphalt unblemished, Fairfield Inn & Suites & the gym
I belong to. & you are what you used to be: the lonely edge,
the temp job I had at the Intel plant feeding microchips

into plastic tubes. You are the crime & the crime's
half-life. You're the farmhouse Marie rented that year,
its mice & crooked doors. Stoned, we'd talk for hours,

looking out on what was then a sea
of Brussels sprouts, the fields heavy with fog.
In summer, so many blackberries banked your ditches,

I'd lose myself, & the minutes. You're that same farmhouse
at dusk, Marie stemming my blood, smearing the cuts
with goldenseal before she calls the police. You're the well-lit room

where I waited, half-naked, to get my picture taken.
You are the next day, & the day
after that. The switchblade's snick. My unholy breath.

Shaffer Road, I don't need a bulldozer
to dig you up. You live
just beneath my breastbone, like a second heart.

LOUDER THAN LAUGHTER
BY ALISON STONE

Dead lovers are the hardest to forget.
The thing you stopped yourself from saying echoes.
Those long-gone reach out as wind on skin.
Our bodies form from memory and stardust.

The thing you stopped yourself from saying echoes
louder than laughter or waves.
Our bodies formed from memory and stardust,
we're jerked from desire to desire.

Louder than laughter or waves,
our grievances and hungers mutter.
We're jerked from desire to desire
as the moon lessens then swells.

Grievances and hungers mutter.
Too much news makes me want to go back to bed.
The moon lessens, then swells,
silvering the newly-planted field.

The news makes me want to go back to bed –
photos of soldiers leaving, or coming home.
Silver on the newly-planted field
draws the night animals from their lairs.

Photos of soldiers leaving or coming home.
The shrieks of the grieving
draw the night animals from their lairs.
We inhale the past with every breath.

The shrieks of the grieving
mingle with birdsong and crunching leaves.
We inhale the past with every breath.
Often what seems finished isn't.

Mingled with birdsong and crunching leaves,
those long-gone reach out as wind on skin.
Often what seems finished isn't.
Dead lovers are the hardest to forget.

AZTEC CALENDAR
BY EUGENE STEVENSON

Over the lake, deep green, dark from its bottomed-out rocks to the diamonds afloat & at play on its surface, the summer sun burns through space, sky & cloud to melt the glacier once again, slowly turn white ice into green water, sweep the sky clean blue just as the heaven of the gods ought to be. Cumulus make their way, white like this woman asleep, face turned away & into the pillow, dark hair spread in a fan of blanket silk, jade around her neck on gold chain fastened to the universe around the gold of autumn sun as it peels away the darkness, the walls, the blinds, to open her blue eyes & quiet the fright.

Stone, haggard & pale as death, brings a shattered self to an encounter with the path, offers shelter & exile, sells madness at an exacting price. The absent man, hands half-raised in supplication, stumbles in the field: mountain-hewn stone is a man under winter sun moving his feet, dragged by soldiers, a walk without end. Blood, asimmer in taut limbs, rescues a failed warrior, his, a canoe without paddles, tightens neck muscles, twists the face to spring sun, to sky heat & falcon flights on & through the thermals. Eyes turn inward: lake flows in his loins, cloud in his skull, stone in his hands as the calendar is carved & chiseled in the sun.

SPECIFICS

BY R.T. CASTLEBERRY

From the rooftop seam,
a grackle calls out the day.
Leaves fall to a backyard bench,
a dog barks three houses down.
For use every other weekend,
a box kite leans in
the corner of the porch,
Xbox clutter rests beside the couch.
A Juul pen, emptied bottles from
a cousin's marital trials,
my cheating marriage
litter the coffee table.
Picnic and pool sounds,
party laughter I'm avoiding
cracks through an open door.
I gather up the Omega
careless on the dresser,
Luccheses tossed at the closet.
Paul Simon's isolation croon
curls from computer speakers.
Bacardi Gold balances on
a Ted Hughes biography.
Just shaved and showered,
I ready for the afternoon.
Glaring at the clock,
glancing at the rum,
I'm curious at possibilities.
Neat or on the rocks
gathers my attention.
The rain moon won't
mark us until early morning.
The remaining hours are mine.

TRESPASSES

BY BONNIE PROUDFOOT

It was October, a blue western NY sky, and the
Gowanda reservoir called to me. Yes, I was
trespassing, *No Swimming* signs were posted,
but I knew a cove hidden by pines. In the
chill air, I shook free of my clothes, waded in,
water still holding summer's warmth.

Off somewhere, a distant baying, maybe hounds
racing after a rabbit, then the sound was closer.
I thought about my clothes in a heap on the shore,
and how none of my housemates knew where I was.
I ducked under, held my breath, but could barely
count to ten before my head broke the surface.
I knew I'd see dogs breaking through trees,
then hunters, then them seeing me.

A memory surfaced, how each morning
at assembly in junior high, all the students
recited the Lord's prayer, a sea of faces,
holy phrases they knew by heart, and me,
a Jewish girl, who didn't know the words.
Did they see my lips stumble and pause?
what about my parents or the rabbi, their
dismay if they knew what I pretended to say
every day, asking forgiveness from another god.
Sins and trespasses. And so, I waited, treading water,
until the source of the noise was upon me.

Into the open sky, double lines of geese,
a vee formation, long black necks stretching forward,
as loud a racket as a pack of hounds, honks and calls
echoing, until they flapped out of sight, taking their
cacophony with them. No dogs. No hunters. But
I couldn't stay. I swam to the shore, shook off
the water, dressed, and found my car where I'd left it.
It felt like waking from a dream, how everything
shrinks, jolted back into one small body.
A bit of paradise lost, and me, not able
to hold on to it when I had the chance.

EASE

BY FRANK BROSIUS

"Inside the ark were the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant." Hebrews 9:4

you pull hard
on the staves
to move the
damned thing
behind you and
force it
down the road
with its golden seat
where you
never sit,
no manna or almonds
for you girl
who always does
the right thing,
but the wrong thing
for you,
who deserves
better
than Aaron
even though you
were the one
who swapped
out his staff
for an almond
branch
so that everyone
thought God
had picked him,
but it was you
all along.

you played
along
made faces
along
the road
while others moaned
groaned
and placed faith
inside the
heavy box
that only you
knew to be

more than a
house
for scratched-up
stones
and the spirit
of a god
who never talked
to women
even when pissed.

it was the only
place
that gave you
hope
for a better day
a non-slave day
a day when you
could hold
up your head
in front of
the shack
outside the village
where
you'd plant
flowers
for the bees,
milk the fat goat,
feel the land
ease.

POSTPARTUM BRINES

BY MICHELLE HENDRIXSON-MILLER

Hiccup and spit up.

She is prayer
fulfilled in bone,
juice, and drum.

The perfect product
of a careless aim.

Nobody's baby,
but mine.

Like a white cat
to its fleas, she is
never free of me.

All I do is haunt
and want her.

Ambient mother,
fertile crescent,

a full half of her
first wounds.

POEM FOR MY SON
BY DIANNE STEPP

As Lahaina burns it all comes back,
you blasting your horn,
barreling around the blind curves,
standing on the brakes
those weekends you drove
the corkscrew road
from your house in Hana
to peddle your art glass at the fair
under the Banyan Tree.

You and your wife still a team then,
setting up your stalls
under the tree's outstretched arms,
the glass jewels winking
in their velveteen boxes,
your boy playing tag
with the other kids, darting
among the many trunks,
in the dapple-shade of the canopy.

Watching the news I feel
the tears on my cheeks,
and can't tell whether my grief
is for you, trapped in the maze
of your own terrible darkness,
dead at forty-four by your own hand.
Or for the gutted lives
of the people of Lahaina
weeping in their charred ruins.
Or for the trophy Marlin that hung
over the bar at *Lahaina Coolers*,
our favorite restaurant.
For the scorched remains
of the Banyan Tree.

Or for myself
because I couldn't save you.

ARK

BY ROBBI NESTER

—After *Red Chairs*, by Gail Spaien

After summer burned it all down to the ground,
we started bringing outdoors in, soft sheep's wool,
sand transmuted into glass, wood, planed smooth
and fashioned into furniture. Out there, so much
has disappeared. Once, every flower housed
its multitude of bees, and tiny hermit crabs
explored the shore. They're gone now.
We're building a museum of lost elements
so no one forgets the way things used to be.
Outside, grey sky broods, rainclouds spilling over.
But except for the narrow strip of splattered
pane, the sound of wind, we hardly know it.
We've been layering the patterns as a bird
constructs a nest, lined with soft down,
one twig at a time. A puzzle sky, complete
with birds, vying at a feeder. Just a few
more bits to add, and then we'll have it.
The braided rug and chairs take their color
(chili red) from the hollyhocks that used to
grow beside the gate. When the puzzle's done,
the painting framed, brushes soaking in a jar
of turpentine, when wave-patterned shades
have been pulled tight, and rain turns into
snow, we'll wonder—when we open up
the door, will we be stranded on a rock,
adrift on a grey sea of clouds, left all alone?

Scan to see painting (page down)



RED DOG HAIBUN
BY DAWN TERPSTRA

October adds zip to your zooms through wind-rowed leaves. You stop, sniff the wind, rocket-ready again. Little red dog, show me secrets scented in prairie grass. You pounce at a vanishing mouse. Startle dark-eyed juncos in the bayberries. Dodge honeybees launching from a purple hive. Sploot and nap on earth soft with autumn.

hunger stirs—
burn pile overflows
ashes ashes

Herding in your blood. Soccer ball at your feet. Move it left. Right. Beneath a reclining chair. Your scavenger's tongue licks tortilla chip crushed into a rug.

sharp winds howl,
firelight in the copse
promise of bones

Peeing in cold grass, Hunter's Moon on the rise. You sniff, head down, while I shine a light along trees on the hill, the orchard where deer like to roam, a quiet fencerow covered in bittersweet. In the corn field, two orange eyes reflect from a calico cat that catches mice and voles beneath dry leaves in my garden. Two more eyes shine unblinking near the creek bed. You growl, long and low. Orion emerges from behind clouds.

red fox in cattails
taste the wild night
first snow

THE GHOST OF AGNES ALICE COLE 1895-1983

BY JUDE BRIGLEY

At Landshipping Quay the bluff is overgrown
with scrub and tree where once we sat to shell
peas in the uncertain sunlight. The tide creeps up
the river, correcting the olive waters to lapis blue.
And the houses on the road, remnants of a mining
age, now sport long windows to view the petulant
moods of water slapping under the bridge to stain

the mud flats green. It is not the same, although
the birds scold like their ancestors in the warmth
of a shadowy morning when the ear becomes accustomed
to a silence which is pregnant with noise of ticking
water, furtive whispering of leaves. No longer a farm,
the orchard is derelict as uprooted woods, the paths
obscured by bamboo, ragweed, foxtail. It is now a

home, the concrete facing painted cream, but
entrances and exits too neatly fenced off.
The dairy windows smashed reveal no butter churning,
no cheese dripping into enamel bowls. No one to love
the cool, solitude of the buttery when the father
is thankfully out in the long fields or grafting the apple
to the pear in an unholy union. At least it's not you.

I forego the pleasure of calling Pilot and Pearl home.
Their black and white snapping will not be returning
and mine is only a meagre passing to check on a place
where I loved each tide and turn of season, despite
my sisters crying in the inauspicious night.

THE SHIRT

BY MARTIN WILLITTS JR

I wait for rain to pass before taking laundry out.
The rusty creak pullies
move a line of clothes further when wet,
nearer when dry. My father is waiting.
The laundry will smell of lilacs
and front doors opening.

I shake loose the laundry before folding,
stacking them in a wicker basket.
I snap sheets into distant thunder.

I lay out my father's shirt,
fold its arms over the front,
hugging the shape of emptiness. I fold again,
neck to belly buttonhole.
I even button the shirt before folding.
I pack neatly.
My father is waiting.

I lay out my father's shirt and iron.
The breast pocket will hold
his off-white monogram handkerchief.
I fold the edges of the handkerchief
into the silence.

I take his shirt as an offering to the undertaker.
Father would prefer this pale blue dress shirt.

GRANDFATHER MOWING

BY LYNN GILBERT

for Richard Sharp Cibella

The patch below the pond too cramped
and hilly for the power mower
he'd scythe instead. When early damp
from the prior evening's dew or shower

had dried, he'd stride with whetted scythe
across the weedy drainage ditch.
I'd follow barefoot—keeping an eye
alert for snakes and toads—to watch

him swing that odd, two-handed tool
expertly, close above the ground
so that the waist-high grasses fell
in shaggy bundles all around.

His were skills of centuries past:
to shoe a horse, to cast in sand,
to smooth wet plaster over lath,
to plow on foot, or plane by hand.

Back and forth I see him pass
swinging his scythe close to the soil.
I hear the swishing of the grass,
the clang of whetstone honing steel.

CONTRIBUTORS

Lavina Blossom is a visual artist as well as a writer. She grew up in rural Michigan and now lives in Southern California where she cultivates a native California garden of drought tolerant plants that support local fauna. Her poems have appeared in various journals, including *3Elements Review*, *The Innisfree Poetry Journal*, *Poemeleon*, *Common Ground Review*, *The Paris Review*, and *Ekphrastic Review*.

Jude Brigley is Welsh. She has been a teacher, an editor and a performance poet. She is now writing more for the page. She has a chapbook of poems, *Labours* (Thynks Press) and has been widely published in a variety of magazines including, *Blue Nib*, *Door=Jar* and *Scissortail*.

Frank Brosius is a researcher and physician who appreciates the art and craft of poetry. His workplace is a couple of blocks from the wonderful Poetry Center at the University of Arizona, and he hopes its proximity somehow improves his poetry. Frank's only credentials are living a long time and having tried to translate medicine and science into life and art.

Rohan Buettel lives in Canberra, Australia. His haiku appear in various Australian and international journals (including *Presence*, *Cattails* and *The Heron's Nest*). His longer poetry appears in more than fifty journals, including *The Goodlife Review*, *Rappahannock Review*, *Penumbra Literary and Art Journal*, *Passengers Journal*, *Reed Magazine*, *Meniscus* and *Quadrant*.

Sarah Carleton writes poetry, edits fiction, plays the banjo, and knits obsessively in Tampa, Florida. One thing she loves about winter is that it finally cools down and she can play outside. Lately she has been considering the possibility that pineapple pizza might be tasty in a sweet-salty way. Sarah's poems have appeared in numerous publications, including *Nimrod*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Cider Press Review*, *The Wild Word*, *Valparaiso*, and *New Ohio Review*. Sarah's poems have received nominations for Pushcart and Best of the Net. Her first collection, *Notes from the Girl Cave*, was published in 2020 by Kelsay Books.

R.T. Castleberry, a Pushcart Prize nominee, has work in *Vita Brevis*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Trajectory*, *Silk Road*, *StepAway*, and *Sylvia*. Internationally, he's had poetry published in Canada, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, France, New Zealand, Portugal, the Philippines, India and Antarctica. His poetry has appeared in the anthologies: *You Can Hear the Ocean: An Anthology of Classic and Current Poetry*, *TimeSlice*, *The Weight of Addition*, and *Level Land: Poetry For and About the I55 Corridor*.

Maureen Clark is a retired assistant professor at the University of Utah where she taught writing for 20 years. She was the president of Writers @ Work 1999-2001, and the director of the University Writing Center from 2010-2014. Her poems have appeared in *Bellingham Review*, *Colorado Review*, *Alaska Review*, *The Southeast Review*, and *Gettysburg Review* among others. Her first book *This Insatiable August* is forthcoming from Signature Books in Spring 2024.

David Colodney is a poet living in Boynton Beach, Florida. He is author of the chapbook *Mimeograph* (Finishing Line Press, 2020), and his poetry has or will appear in multiple journals. A two-time Pushcart nominee, David holds an MFA from Converse College and has written for the *Miami Herald* and the *Tampa Tribune*. He currently serves as an associate editor of *South Florida Poetry Journal*.

Joe Cottonwood has two lifetimes in one as a contractor repairing homes and as a writer of novels, poems, and the occasional song in the Santa Cruz Mountains of California. His latest books of poetry are *Foggy Dog* and *Random Saints*.

John Cruze makes photographs and writes poems in the hope such things will pass for homework over the course of an examined life. His day jobs have included teacher, trainer, trial lawyer and mediator. His work has appeared in the publications, *Riparian*, *Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel*, *For A Better World* and others.

Marc Alan Di Martino is the author of *Love Poem with Pomegranate*, *Still Life with City* and *Unburial*. His poems and translations appear in *Bad Lilies*, *Palette*, *Rattle* and many other journals and anthologies. His translation, *Day Lasts Forever: Selected Poems of Mario dell'Arco*, will be published by World Poetry Books in 2024.

Margie Duncan lives in New Jersey with her husband, Brian, and two tuxedo cats. When she retired from the business side of academia, she returned to writing poetry and looking out the window. She spends some waking time hiking in the woods. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Thimble*, *OneArt*, *Rust e3 Moth*, and *Lily Poetry Review*.

Lynn Gilbert's poems have appeared in *Appalachian Review*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Consequence*, *Light*, *Mezzo Cammin*, *Tipton Poetry Review*, *Southwestern American Literature*, and elsewhere. Her poetry volume has been a finalist in the *Fjords Review*, Gerald Cable, and Off the Grid Press book contests. A founding editor of *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*, she lives in a suburb of Austin and reads poetry submissions for *Third Wednesday* journal.

Jeremy Griffin is the author of the short fiction collections *A Last Resort for Desperate People: Stories* and a Novella, from SFAU Press; *Oceanography*, winner of the 2018 Orison Books Fiction Prize; and *Scream Queen: Stories*, forthcoming from *Black Lawrence Press*. His work has appeared in such journals as the *Alaska Quarterly Review*, the *Bellevue Literary Review*, the *Iowa Review*, the *Hopkins Review*, *Oxford American*, and *Shenandoah*, among others. He teaches Creative Writing at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa.

Steubenville, Ohio native **Richard Hague's** work has appeared in *Poetry*, *Smartish Pace*, *Appalachian Journal*, *Northern Appalachian Review*, *Birmingham Poetry Review*, *Nowhere Magazine*, *Hiram Poetry Review*, *Nimrod*, *Mid-American Review*, *Ohio Magazine*, *Still: The Journal*, and *Creative Nonfiction*, among others. He is author or editor of 22 volumes of prose and poetry, most recently *Continued Cases* (Dos Madres Press, 2023.) His essay "Jesus of the Hills," featuring the poetry of Jim Webb, appears in *Writers By The River: Reflections on 40+ Years of the Highland Summer Conference* (McFarland Books, 2021). He convenes and prompts the bi-weekly Originary Arts Initiative's Writer's Table.

Michelle Hendrixson-Miller received her MFA from Queens University of Charlotte, where she served as poetry editor of *Qu Literary Magazine*. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Thrush*, *One*, *Chiron Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *Adirondack Review*, *The Fourth River*, *Harbor Review*, *Mudfish*, *The Meadow*, *The Museum of Americana*, *2River View*, *One Art*, *Rust e3 Moth*, *Summerset Review*, *Laurel Review*, *Twelve Mile Review*, and *Ligeia*.

Abdullah Jimoh O. is a linguist and a poet. He holds a Bachelor's degree in linguistics and is a natural language processing enthusiast. His works have appeared or are forthcoming in the *Tint Journal*, *Efiko Magazine*, *The Shallow Tales Review*, *IHRAM's anthology: Thorns, Tears and Treachery*, *Verum Literary Press*, *Thanatos Review*, *Mudroom*, *Kalahari Review* and *Afritondo*.

Wess Mongo Jolley is a Canadian novelist, editor, podcaster, and poet, most well-known for hosting the IndieFeed Performance Poetry Channel for more than ten years. His work has appeared in journals such as *Off the Coast*, *PANK*, *Danse Macabre*, *The Chamber Magazine*, and *Apparition Literary Magazine*. His horror trilogy, *The Last Handful of Clover*, is being released on Patreon, Wattpad, QSaltLake, and as an audiobook podcast. Mongo writes from his home in Montreal, Quebec. Find him at <http://wessmongojolley.com>

Molly Lanza was awarded second prize for The Moth Nature Writing Prize 2023 and was selected for the 2023 London Independent Story Prize anthology. She has been a finalist for several awards and her work has appeared or is forthcoming in publications including *The Rumpus*, *The Irish Times*, *Crosswinds*, *FlashFlood*, *About Place*, *Terrain*, *The Vestal Review*, *Cimarron Review*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Southeast Review*; and has been included in several anthologies. She has been awarded residencies including Millay Arts, OCARC, Dorland Mountain Arts, and Noepe; and is grateful for grant support from the city of Boston's Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture.

Samantha MacIlwaine is a rock climber and poet from the Bay Area, California. She lives on the road in the American West.

Natalie Marino is a poet and physician. Her work appears in *Plainsongs*, *Pleiades*, *Rust + Moth*, *Salt Hill*, *South Florida Poetry Journal*, *West Trestle Review* and elsewhere. She is the author of the chapbook *Under Memories of Stars* (Finishing Line Press, 2023). She lives in California. You can find her online at www.nataliemarino.com or on Instagram @natalie_marino.

Elaine Mintzer lives in Los Angeles. Her work has been published most recently in *Anacapa Review* and *Sheila-Na-Gig*. Her work has been featured on *Moontide Press* poet-of-the-month page, *Cultural Weekly*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, *Beloit Poetry Review*, *Panophyzine*, *Slipstream Press*, *Silver Birch Press*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Last Call*, *Chinaski*, and *Lummox*. Elaine's first collection was *Natural Selections* (Bombshelter Press 2005).

Robbi Nester is a retired college educator who hosts two monthly Zoom poetry events. She is the author of 4 books of poetry and editor of three anthologies. Learn more at her website, <http://www.robbinester.net>

Yoda Olinyk (she/her) is a Canadian memoirist and poet passionately exploring the hearty, sharp-edged topics including love, grief, and addiction. In the past year, Yoda's poetry has appeared in: *Button Poetry*, *Sky Island Journal*, and *Kitchen Table Quarterly*. Her memoir, *Salt & Sour* is available anywhere you buy books, or at www.doulaofwords.com where she works as a book doula. Yoda is on Instagram as @doulaofwords.

Shaun R. Pankoski (she/her) is a poet most recently from Volcano, Hawaii. A retired county worker and two-time breast cancer survivor, she has lived on both coasts as well as the Midwest as an artist's model, modern dancer, massage therapist and honorably discharged Air Force veteran. Her poems have appeared in *Bitter Oleander*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *ONE ART*, *Gargoyle*, *Poetry Breakfast* and others.

T. R. Poulson, a University of Nevada alum and proud Wolf Pack fan, lives in San Mateo, California. Her work has appeared, or is forthcoming, in various journals, including *Best New Poets*, *Gulf Coast*, and *Booth*. She supports her writing habit by delivering for UPS in Woodside, California. Find her at www.trpoulson.com

Bonnie Proudfoot lives in Athens, Ohio. She has published fiction, essays, reviews, and poetry in a variety of journals and anthologies. Her writing has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. Her debut novel, *Goshen Road*, (Swallow Press) was named 2022 WCONA Book of the Year and was long-listed for the 2021 PEN/ Hemingway. Her first chapbook of poems, *Household Gods*, Sheila-Na-Gig Editions was released in September 2022. Bonnie currently teaches part-time for the Department of English at WVU.

Sarah A. Rae (she/her) is a poet and occasional essayist. Publications include her chapbook, *Someplace Else* (dancing girl press, 2020), and poems appearing in *Jet Fuel Review*, *Revista Blanco Y Negro*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Anti-Heroine Chic*, and the *New Orleans Poetry Buffet Anthology*, among others. Her translations of work by the Mexican poet Guadalupe Ángela may be found in *Ezra*, and in video format in *Jill! A Woman+ in Translation Reading Series*. A native of Champaign, Illinois, she lives in Chicago, and works as an educator for high school students and adults.

Sourima Rana is an aspiring poetess from India, with a postgraduate degree in English Literature. An avid reader, she loves writing poems, songs, reviewing books and analyzing films and paintings. Her poems have been published by the *Write Order*, *Quill House* and *Gabby e3 Min* publications; and is forthcoming in the *Katherine Mansfield Yearbook*, in 2024. She loves spending time with and caring for animals in her spare time.

E. Rhyme was a girl with a neat pink bow. Now she has realised, too late, (but better late than never ever), that rules can be broken, fences can be crawled under. Like Diogenes, identifies as Cosmopolitan, and unlike him can be found on X (twitter) at @EntangledRhyme and IG at @entangledrhyme. She has work published in 'A Story In 100 Words' and forthcoming in 'The Pierian'.

Laurie Rosen is a lifelong New Englander. Her poetry has appeared in *Peregrine*, *Gyroscope Review*, *New Verse News*, *Oddball Magazine*, *The Inquisitive Eater: a journal of The New School*, *One Art* and elsewhere. Laurie won first place in poetry at the 2023 Marblehead, MA Festival of the Arts.

Mary Kay Rummel's ninth poetry book, *Nocturnes: Between Flesh and Stone*, was published by Blue Light Press of San Francisco. Previous books have won awards from New Rivers Press, Bright Hill Press and Blue Light Press. She is Poet Laureate emerita of Ventura County, CA, and is finishing a volume of new and selected works to be published by Blue Light Press. Mary Kay has performed her poetry in the US, Ireland and England and taught poetry classes and led workshops for all ages and groups of students and is a founding member of the Ventura County Poetry Project.

Susan Shaw Sailer has published three collections of poems—*The Distance Beyond Sight*, *The God of Roundabouts*, *Ship of Light*, and two chapbooks—*COAL* and *Bulletins from a War Zone*. Sailer lives in Morgantown, WV, and is a member of the Madwomen in the Attic program at Carlow University, Pittsburgh.

Michael Salcman is a former chairman of neurosurgery at the University of Maryland and president of The Contemporary Museum, a child of the Holocaust and a survivor of polio. Poems in *Arts & Letters*, *Barrow Street*, *Hopkins Review*, *Hudson Review*, *New Letters*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Raritan* and *Smartish Pace*. Books include *The Clock Made of Confetti* (nominated for The Poets' Prize), *The Enemy of Good is Better*, *Poetry in Medicine*, classic and contemporary poems on medicine, *A Prague Spring* (Sinclair Poetry Prize winner), *Shades & Graces* (winner Daniel Hoffman Legacy Book Prize), and *Necessary Speech: New & Selected Poems* (Spuyten Duyvil in 2022).

Peter Serchuk's poems have appeared in a variety of journals including *New Letters*, *Poetry*, *Atlanta Review*, *Paris Review*, *Denver Quarterly* and others. His most recent collection is *The Purpose of Things* (Regal House).

Merna Dyer Skinner (she/her) is a poet and communications consultant living in Portland, OR. Her poems have appeared in: *Gargoyle Magazine*, *ONE ART*, *Rust + Moth*, *Lily Poetry Review*, *Quartet*, and *The Baltimore Review*, among other journals, and three anthologies. Her chapbook, *A Brief History of Two Aprons*, was published by Finishing Line Press. Merna holds an MA in Communication Studies from Emerson College. She's lived in six U.S. states and traveled to six continents.

Emily-Sue Sloane is an award-winning poet who writes to capture moments of wonder, worry and human connection. She is the author of a full-length collection, *We Are Beach Glass* (2022), and a chapbook, *Disconnects and Other Broken Threads*, due in March 2024 from The Poetry Box. Her publications include *Evening Street Review*, *Front Porch Review*, *Long Island Sounds Anthology*, *Mobius Magazine*, *MockingHeart Review*, *Nassau County Poet Laureate Society Review*, *Oberon Poetry Magazine*, *Panoplyzine*, *PPA Literary Review* and *The RavensPerch*. Sloane holds a B.A. in Anthropology from Vassar College and lives in Huntington Station, NY. Learn more at <https://EmilySueSloane.com>

Connie Soper is a hard-core Oregonian who finds inspiration while hiking or beachcombing. Her poems have appeared in *Catamaran*, *The Adirondack Review*, *Cider Press Review*, *Willawaw Journal*, and elsewhere. Her first full-length of poetry, *A Story Interrupted*, published by Airlie Press in 2022, celebrates walking and witnessing her native terrain.

A retired therapist, **Dianne Stepp** lives in Portland, Oregon. Her poems have appeared in *Comstock Review*, *The Oregonian*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Cider Press Review*, *Sugar House Review* as well as other journals and anthologies. She has published three chapbooks: *Half-Moon of Clay*, *Sweet Mercies*, and *The Nest's Dark Eye*.

Ralph Stevens lives in Ellsworth, Maine with his wife, the photographer, Sally Rowan. He has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and is the author of the collections *At Bunker Cove* (Moon Pie Press), *Things Haven't Been the Same* (Finishing Line Press), and *Water under Snow* (Wipf and Stock: Resource Publications). He is a regular contributor to the online journal *Verse Virtual*. His poems have appeared in a variety of publications and on the radio programs, *The Writer's Almanac* and *Poems from Here*. He can be reached by email at thismansart@gmail.com He blogs at <https://ateverygate.wordpress.com/about/>

Eugene Stevenson, son of immigrants, father of expatriates, is author of *Heart's Code* (Kelsay Books, 2024) and *The Population of Dreams* (Finishing Line Press, 2022). His poems appear in *Atlanta Review*, *Burningword*, *Delta Poetry Review*, *Door is a Jar*, *Red Ogre Review*, *San Antonio Review*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, among others, & have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. More at www.eugenestevenson.com

Alison Stone has published seven full-length collections, *Zombies at the Disco* (Jacar Press, 2020), *Caught in the Myth* (NYQ Books, 2019), *Dazzle* (Jacar Press, 2017), *Masterplan*, a book of collaborative poems with Eric Greinke (Presa Press, 2018), *Ordinary Magic*, (NYQ Books, 2016), *Dangerous Enough* (Presa Press 2014), and *They Sing at Midnight*; as well as three chapbooks. Her poems have appeared in *The Paris Review*, *Poetry*, *Ploughshares*, *Barrow Street*, *Poet Lore*, and many other journals and anthologies. She is also a painter and the creator of The Stone Tarot. A licensed psychotherapist, she has private practices in NYC and Nyack. www.stonepoetry.org YouTube – Alison Stone Poetry.

Rowan Tate is an emerging Romanian songwriter, poet, and tree whisperer. Her work is visually fervent and deeply felt. She reads nonfiction nature books, the backs of shampoo bottles, and sometimes minds.

Judith Taylor comes from Strathmore but now lives and works in Aberdeen, Scotland, where she is a co-organizer of the monthly Poetry at Books and Beans events. Her poetry has appeared widely in magazines and anthologies: her first collection, *Not in Nightingale Country*, was published in 2017 by Red Squirrel Press, and her second, *Across Your Careful Garden*, is out now. She is a longtime volunteer with North-East literature and art magazine *Pushing Out the Boat* and is one of the editors of *Poetry Scotland*. <http://sometimesjudy.co.uk/>

Dawn Terpstra is a poet, writer and beekeeper in Iowa. Her work has been published in *Pratik*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Halfway Down the Stairs*, *Verse Daily*, *Quartet*, *Ekphrastic Review*, *Gyroscope Review* and *SWIMM*. She is the author of a chapbook, *Songs from the Summer Kitchen* (Finishing Line Press, 2021). Her work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. She is an MFA student in creative writing at Pacific Lutheran University's Rainier Writing Workshop. She is the Poetry Editor of *River Heron Review*.

Ruth Towne is an emerging poet. Other poems from her project *Resurrection of the Mannequins* have been published by the *Decadent Review*, *New Feathers Anthology*, *Coffin Bell Journal*, *New Note Poetry*, *In Parentheses*, and the *Stonecoast Review's* Staff Spotlight.

Dick Westheimer lives in rural southwest Ohio, his home for over forty years with his wife and writing companion, Debbie. He is winner of the 2023 Joy Harjo Poetry Prize, a Rattle Poetry Prize finalist, a Pushcart and Best of the Net nominee. His poems have appeared or are upcoming in *Whale Road Review*, *OneArt*, *Abandon Journal*, and *Minyan*. His chapbook, *A Sword in Both Hands*, *Poems Responding to Russia's War on Ukraine*, is published by Sheila-Na-Gig. More at www.dickwestheimer.com

Cynthia White's poems have appeared in *Adroit*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Plume*, *Southern Poetry Review*, and *ZYZZYVA* among others. She was a finalist for Nimrod's Pablo Neruda Prize and the winner of the Julia Darling Memorial Prize from Kallisto Gaia Press. She lives in Santa Cruz, California.

Martin Willitts Jr is an editor of *Comstock Review*. He won 2014 Dylan Thomas International Poetry Contest; Stephen A. DiBiase Poetry Prize, 2018; Editor's Choice, Rattle Ekphrastic Challenge, December, 2020; 17th Annual Sejong Writing Competition, 2022. His 21 full-length collections include the Blue Light Award 2019, *The Temporary World*. His recent books are *Harvest Time* (Deerbrook Editions, 2021); *All Wars Are the Same War* (FutureCycle Press, 2022); *Not Only the Extraordinary are Exiting the Dream World* (Flowstone Press, 2022); *Ethereal Flowers* (Shanti Press, 2023); *Rain Followed Me Home* (Glass Lyre Press, 2023); and *Leaving Nothing Behind* (Fernwood Press, 2023).

Shannon K. Winston's book, *The Girl Who Talked to Paintings* (Glass Lyre Press), was published in 2021. Her individual poems have appeared in *Bracken*, *Cider Press Review*, *On the Seawall*, *RHINO Poetry*, and elsewhere. She holds an MFA from the Warren Wilson Program for Writers and lives in Bloomington, IN.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For the 2024 Spring Issue, there is no theme, we're just looking for fine, contemporary poetry, but it is our 9th anniversary, so if you have any 9 themed or 9 stanza poems, send them along. Hard to believe it's already been 9 years of reading wonderful poetry. We're always interested in political poems about the state of the world. (No rants please.) Ekphrastic poems are welcome, we can QR code link to the artwork. Nature poetry is always welcome. Other than that, send us the work *you* love.

Spring Issue 2024 submissions open January 15th, 2024, and run through March 1, 2024, with the issue releasing on April 1st, 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, easy to read fonts like Times New Roman 12 pt, and an up-to-date bio of no more than 100 words in the Submittable bio section. 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.

If you submit more than 4 poems in a doc, we will read the first 4 and ignore the rest. We welcome poems from both new and established poets. We have eclectic tastes, so give us a shot. We'd love to see what you've been working on. Check out past issues at <https://www.gyroscopecoreview.com>

See our full guidelines on Submittable: <https://gyroscopecoreview.submittable.com/submit/>

Thank you for Reading!



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