



Gyroscope Review

fine poetry to turn your world around

Spring 2024



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Spring Issue 2024

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Constance Brewer

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For further information, visit our website: gyroscopereview.com

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From the Editor

Welcome to Spring, 2024! In my corner of the world, we've had little snow this winter, and now things are starting to bloom early. Way early, although the greening grass and little blooms are cheery. I'm being serenaded by red-winged blackbirds every afternoon, and they supply the background music as the poetry comes together. We have a wonderful Spring Issue for you, including a record for us of six ekphrastic poems. Follow the links or the QR codes under the poem to see the artwork inspiring the poets. This issue features a wide range of poem styles, I'm certain there is something here for everyone to enjoy. We may be a tad bit biased, but we love every poem in this issue.

Since April is also National Poetry Month, we are happy to present a month long Post a Day on the website, of current and former Gyroscope Review poets presenting their work in audio or video format. I love hearing poets read their work and bringing such liveliness and feeling into their interpretation. The next best thing to listening to a poet read live. Please join us every day in April on the website to celebrate your fellow poets and their work.

Constance Brewer

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Section One

BACH & BIRDSONG

BY ANN E. MICHAEL

Morning, peppery scent and sound
indoors and out—a window opened after
winter's closure, viola and violin,
fragrance follows fugue, sun dispersing
early fog as bluebirds take up the trill,
three notes, wren's answer louder than
seems likely for a bird so small.

The swell of cello steps its way among
the thronging tunes, the cat and her
dander notes settle in sun's rays, separate
from mourning dove and mockingbird,
sheltering in place as the next cantata
inhabits the room, illuminating,
and the mockingbirds sing.

NEKO HARBOR

BY GENEVIEVE CREEDON

A morning mirror near the southern
pole and all we see is blue and white—
silky peaks in the distance
and the color of oxygen in glaciers,
as if the ocean's brush dabbed
its almost Caribbean blue
on the walls surrounding it.

Some say it is lake-like
in its stillness, but a decade
of living around the Great Lakes
has uncoupled "lake" and "still"
in my mind. Soon, the glacier
will divide itself into the harbor
that is not a harbor
by the standards of any inhabited
place—no port or docks
or wharfs, no buoys or boat
launches—and the calving ice
will drop like a passing freight train,
a tsunami that crashes
and then ripples and ripples...

By afternoon, the mirror is gone,
and we are sitting in a giant
glass of crushed ice, edges
sharp enough to scrape
the ship, make it bleed.

ANTARCTIC DAYBOOK—A DIRGE

BY LENNY LIANNE

Before Scott went south to the Pole,
he promised his wife he'd keep
a daily journal for her to read later.

From the coast of that ice-cloaked
domain, he began his dash to the Pole
in a bubble of grand adventure,
anticipation and optimism.

But, a month into the mission:
*Things are not so rosy as they might be,
but we keep our spirits up and
say the luck must turn*

—on the same

December day in 1911 in which
Amundsen reached the South Pole.

The motorized sleds, their engines
broken or overheated in the cold,
ponies, no good on the glacier's
fields of jagged ice and steep climb,

and his dream of being first,
throttled by fate. *Great God!*
This is an awful place....

A March blizzard wind hissed
for nine days. Temperature descended
to *70 degrees below zero.*

Outside the tent, their only shelter:
no mercy, only a magnitude of flakes
spinning toward infinity.

*Dearest darling... quite the worst
aspect of this situation is the thought
that I shall not see you again.
The inevitable must be faced—*

The following November, searchers
found Scott's last camp, the sled,
still loaded with a sampling of boulders.
Within the tent, itself almost buried
by the obstinate snow, three men, frozen,
lay peacefully, Scott in the middle.

In the recovered journal's inside cover, Scott had scrawled, *Send this diary to my wife* but lined out the word *wife* and instead inscribed *widow*.

WHAT GROWS WILL NOT RECEDE

BY ZEKE SHOMLER

As the tender new leaf,
near-fluorescent green,

emerges half-abashedly
from its dark and hardened

stalk, I grasp its freshest
cells, release them

from what binds them,
paper-thin and near

translucence, and I slip
a bead—hard plastic, circular,

bright as dappled sun
through clean stained glass—

onto its slim neck. In the
coming days it stretches out,

unfurls, secures its new
adornment into fixity

until one cannot be separated
from the other without

tearing, without
a wound. So it is as well

when the world clothes me
in grief, how I grow

through its bright rings,
how they turn me into

something other than
the green and reaching life

that I once was.

COME FROM THE BLINDING LIGHT AND HEAR

BY MICHAEL DWAYNE SMITH

Let me tell you about the riotous golden rock-daisy
bloom along the riverbank and how no one can
get enough of the new mare. You'd go gaga over her.

Blue, gray, and white scrub-jays have nested in
the sugar bush. This morning I watched them collect
shiny objects to stash in their twigs. As of today,

our chitchat has been a clandestine language for
twenty-two years. Out loud or by way of pen, words
snagged in my throat, flesh on barbed wire. Until now.

I still feel your palm in mine when you slipped away,
see the fear in your morphine-doused eyes when
the moment came. Your voice is clear, though you've

revealed zero about kingdom come. That's okay.
I garden, even tend the roses for you, have no fear of
horses and listen to every sort of bird for news of

spring. Let me tell you about your great grandson's
smile, his eyes, how he dozes swathed in my arms.
I whisper your name, secretly, in his immaculate ear.

THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AN ESSAY

BY MARJORIE MADDOX

—for *Mark Smith*

Outside—that's where I think of you
between the pines glimpsing
a twitch of feathers that match
each tweet and trill on a trail
you've uncovered some morning
just after you fished
the slim river at dawn.

Or inside, in that other lush
wilderness of classroom and words
where you spoke of ideas as lures
that catch the murky thoughts,
then reel them in to make a meal
my students and I
feasted on for weeks.

A quiet current covering
the depths of movement—
that, too, was home to your spirit,
your syllables rising and diving,
breathing in what cannot be seen
but what still sustains us,
your sentences elegies.

What did I know of you but this:
word and image, humble turn of the eyes,
or the time I watched you stand awkwardly
on stage beside the strong woman you loved
to voice a fear that, years earlier,
I almost drowned in?

Once, I read how you slept soundly
on your back porch
three of the four seasons.
You were at home there
in the deep dark and dawn of nature,
at home there when you rose early,
considered carefully the next place to go
or rest, the next place to name
what you heard in the woods
or mountains, the next view
that called to you from everywhere.

SEAGULLS

BY BRUCE PARKER

Ecola Creek, Cannon Beach, Oregon

Rain continues to fall in the night,
wind-blow, perhaps snow
sealed off by window glass.
The seagulls, where are they?
We'll see them come morning
as they feed on schools of small fish.

At low tide the creek runs to the sea
and the sea's white fingers clamber over its waters.
Suddenly a swarm of black birds arrives,
they feed on something in the wet, brown sand.
The gulls have gone. The creek, swollen by rain,
is a line of rapids following a king tide that overrode the streak
of fresh creek water, driftwood strewn onshore.
A spat of hail flattens on the window.
Even trees sometimes topple,
roads wash away without permission.

Before me on the round, brown table,
as witness to the tumult outside:
a little matchbox, small candle in a glass,
binoculars, spectacles and pen, a black cup—
all as still
as the motion of water meeting water
seems alive.
Another band of rain arrives,
the hills abide, the gulls survive.

I write to you:
the sand is shining.

PRAISE AVIAN

BY JEFF SCHIFF

revenge artists
corvids who know
a villain when they spot one
three years on
starlings gulls swallows
who beeline
who wingflutter
dive and dart you
into cower or flail
those who buzz you
into drop and roll
yes
just because they can

QUESTIONABLE FACTS ABOUT SPIDERS

taken from questionable websites

BY KARLA HUSTON

The word "Spider" comes from the acronym
"Sample—Please Investigate Data; Exoskeleton Regular."

Hairy spiders are mammals
that produce delicious, unusually cold milk.

And with unborn spiders, an entire egg sac
outnumbers the population of India.

The Kenyan Applecrosser spider grows
beautiful, nearly flawless emeralds on its abdomen.

Scientists found a spider that was over 8 ft long
and weighed 530 pounds. It couldn't walk

because its legs had been broken
by carrying its own weight.

The average human autopsy in Chicago
will reveal roughly 250 small spiders living

throughout the endocrine and circulatory systems.
In New York the average is more than 800.

Almost all spiders are homosexual.
Millipedes were once strings of dozens of spiders.

In some places, owning large spiders is required.
Spider kits are issued to natives when they reach sixteen.

Folks can face stiff fines or jail time
if found without their spiders.

ON THE HOUSE THAT FELL AWAY

BY SUSANA GONZALES

It won't take long for the milkweed
and manroot to finger their way

through the house's cracks and doors
breaking in like thieves searching

for something of worth
it won't take long at all for the house

to lose all purpose
make its way back
to sand water clay

Now it lies
at the bottom of the canyon

a closet full of clothes for the curious
beetles broaching the recent arrival
of drawers desks dinnerware

Now a staircase leads nowhere
and the open floor plan has moved
beyond its blueprints

left to house the canyon coyotes
that sniff around its flattened walls
then move along

WHAT IS THIS

BY DAVID BANACH

the branches of the pines extending
bouncing gently up and down
fronds a newfound tender green
cupped hands extending
like a priest of outstretched arms
dispensing grace

I watch them I don't know what
they mean it is morning
I have slept well a clouded April
morning greeting me

and this is life mornings all
and evenings and for a moment
it has my attention. I love it
and myself and the floppy way
the new green shoots of needles
not yet stiff all make their
ups and downs

BEYOND THE WEST WIND, A PRAYER

BY LINDA NEAL

Take me beyond the west wind
to a winter fantasy of ice
to far reaches of the sky, and pin

me to a spot where juniper and sacrifice
rain, and the scent of my mother
lives again on the lip of paradise.

My time, shrinking to a bother
has gone beyond the limits of a rainbow wreck
and the skittish hand of ether

pushes me between rags and
and the skirts of spring
toward the gleaming night

where luminous sound
blows 'round beyond the desert clay
of this dry oasis where I pray.

Take me to the concentric eccentricity
of ether inside the cells where Kirlian
photographs capture cosmic light.

Take me to the mandala's core, and
drop me in the middle of my life
repentant, but without regret

and place me in that brief second between
green leaves flying and snow piled up like grief.
Let me glimpse again the primal plasma.

Drive me to that holy space where primordial beasts
amble near the shore, where loss wanders
sacred as a prayer, and love is not

nothing but a memory, where skin and blood
wrap up close in the evening gloam
and the ghost of Shelley roams.

RENGA II

BY SHAHEEN DIL, ZIGGY EDWARDS, TIMONS ESAIAS, ROBERTA HATCHER, ALYSSA SINENI,
AND ARLENE WEINER

Bees come to the yellow cups
of evening primrose
chickadees work
in the crabapple tree.

Competing notions of nightfall
still darkness settles its loose weave
across the knees and shoulders
of our huddled farm.

We have received so much from this earth.
In return, our ancestors' bones.
Now, at the hour between dog and wolf,
fear and uncertainty reign.

Under the porch, decades of ashes
from fine cigars. Wheeling stogies,
and exotic pipe tobaccos no one
any longer smokes. Now, we listen.

Their engine bodies, cicadas in
the flame of summer, an ancient
thrum reverberates—a song, a siren,
warning.

Turbine engines generate,
wind turns and turns in warm air,
wink, and the blinkered wings of angels
shimmer.

DEAR PINE FOREST II BY GUSTAV KLIMT
BY CHRISSY STEGMAN

A friend once stood with me
while I gazed at you for 20 minutes.
She could not beckon me away although I feel
beckon is not the right word. You are
just some pine trees.
I'm told if I am a woman I should not
use 'just' anymore.
Too passive and apologetic.
Women need to empower their words.
Even though you are just some pine trees,
I am apologizing to you. You are
so simple and pure. Just trees
I am forever perceiving. Forgive me?

Dear Pine Forest II,

I feel no one loves you. That you will
burn down. I apologize. I left you
to have lunch. The restaurant was waiting
for a wedding party. My friend and I
just drank too much. We talked
loudly. It was good. We wore sunglasses
inside & lips red with wine.
I could not stop thinking about
you and your trees. The soil.
How I wished to trace the hairs of your pine.
The only thing that could pull me back from
your wildness was the wilderness of
my friend's good laugh.

Dear Pine Forest II,

I still go back
at least once a year to look into your
darkness. To seek out the
eleven spaces of light. To see if
I'm painted in your sky.



[Pine Forest II, 1901 by Gustav Klimt \(gustav-klimt.com\)](http://gustav-klimt.com)

OLD BARN IN UPSTATE NEW YORK

BY BRIAN DUNCAN

A roof with graceful swayback curve
sits atop gray boards with tattered
ends. Below, the sill slips quietly
off its foundation of river rocks.

Vines embrace the walls, reach
for windows black like empty eye
sockets, the door frame's gaping mouth.

One back corner rests on the ground
the way a dog tucks a haunch
under to lie down with a sigh.

Inside, echoes of stamping
hooves and milk hissing into metal
pails. Faint smells of urine and manure.

It leans away from its house in awkward
silence, unwanted, like a bad neighbor,
sinks gradually into the welcoming earth.

Overhead the patient sky presses down.

A FLEA MARKET SOMEWHERE IN SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY

BY DANIEL DAMIANO

Matchbox cars without engines
parallel park beside
1950s shoe boxes,
hat racks without hats,
coat racks without coats,
shoe racks without shoes,
frightened dolls without eyelids
forced to stare at the sun,
life-affirming mantras
within old frames,
garden gnomes
guarding
an eroding tricycle,
rusted hatchets
and butcher knives
and bayonets
point to Nazi armbands,
a Carly Simon biography,
a 24 year-old box of Flutie Flakes,
street signs to Stop,
to Yield,
to Proceed with Caution,
across from urns without ashes of the dead,
bowls without Fruit Loops of the living,
a baby carriage long without a baby,
who may now be 45
and attending this flea market
and wondering
who on God's earth
would buy
any of this.

SNOW ON MARS

BY ADRIANNA GORDEY

*After Opportunity and all the other rovers lost to dust storms and science
Someday NASA will come.
Someday I'll meet my Prince.*

The Queen planet killed my twin sister eight years ago.
Spirit was the fairest of us all, her solar panels reflecting
rays of sun, a magic mirror replenishing her energy reserves.

But the Queen – huntswoman – lured her into burnt sienna
sand, the blush of death, trapping her six wheels as she depleted
her energy reserves struggling to free herself from the soft soil.

*And away to his planet we'll soar,
to be happy forever more.*

My solar panel collar bone was declared fairest after Spirit's
death. Bereft of family, I searched for the person, the Prince,
sending me signals. Seven memory banks in my chest

kept me company. Until the Queen breathed whirling dust devils
whose dry saliva lusted over my non-volatile memory.
She mined them from my chest, seven dwarves whose time it was to rest.

*Someday when winter ends,
he'll rescue me from the Queen.*

I searched for you across sand-strewn forests, the Meridiani Planum,
the Eagle and Endeavor craters, the Purgatory Dune. I took pictures
of my travels, hematite blueberries for you to follow:

ripples of sand, patches of jumbled rock on crater rims, 31° slopes
threatening to kill me. The Prince asked me to find life on Mars.
I exist on Mars; am I not life? If so, mission complete.

*And the stars will sing and wedding bells will beep
someday when NASA comes.*

It's getting dark and my batteries are low. Before you, the Prince,
go, sing me a final song as I fall into eternal sleep:
*I'll find you in the crater forests, and when the night is new,
I'll be looking at Mars, but I'll be seeing you.*

Section Two

ADAM'S POSTCARD TO EVE

BY JUAN PABLO MOBILI

Hello, my love.
What are you wearing?

I still favor
the old leaf.

For the last few
hundred years,

I've been living
in India, no apples

can grow here,
which helps.

How are the kids?
Have you heard from the serpent?

AFTER EDEN

BY VALARIE HASTINGS

In the beginning,
 after we left the garden
he couldn't get enough—

apple pies, strudel
 wafting through the house,
me, elbow-deep

in a steaming pot
 of apple sauce on the stove.
Back then I could drive

him mad simply by putting a Red
 Delicious between my teeth,
the shape my mouth

would leave in the firm fruit,
 like so much abundance
discarded by the bedside

lamp. He liked to peel
 the skins of Arkansas Beauties
into ruby spirals

he'd lay across my naked belly.
 Sometimes I'd flip slices
of Pink Ladies or Jonagold into his mouth

from across the room
 just to watch him suck up
that knowledge.

We were still learning
 to love our bodies, how
to shed our clothes

like new skins in the deep grass
 behind the house,
not yet knowing

where I began,
 where he ended.
We took backroads

in those light-laden
 days to harvest festivals.
One year I was crowned Apple Queen

in seven different Pennsylvania
 counties.
And while the trees

in our orchard
 bloomed then spread their
bounty, our bodies bloomed

with them,
 the weight of all that fruit
piled high in our larder—

his body, mine now
 beginning to betray us both.
O, and that sweet knowledge

of where we've been,
 where we're headed.
You see, in the beginning

 we missed nothing
of that other life.

STRANGERS BUYING APPLES

BY MONA ANDERSON

I wear my garden shoes to the grocery store, their deep soles
spreading soil through the aisles like Hansel and Gretel's crumbs.
A young man with eager hair reaches for Honeycrisp apples

at the same time I do. He says he'll munch them during his flight
to Paris later in the day. When he leaves I see his Nikes gather
my soil bits, but not to find his way back to me. Not yet.

First, he'll deposit crumbs on the plane for travelers continuing on,
then sprinkle more on Parisian streets for others to deliver
to their gardens, his shoes collecting French soil along the way.

Two weeks later he finds me back at the apples. He tells me Paris
was sunny, and smiles as if he knows my shoes glean the soil he's leaving
to carry to my garden where I plant seeds for lettuce and haricot verts.

PRAYER TO THE EMPTY SKY

BY DONALD SELLITTI

God the gullible
and bribable
and ever blameless
voice hard-wired in my
brain, please hear my plea
above the din of the apostates
and the doomed believers
and remember that in church
I wrecked my knees
for you and scraped you
from my palate carefully,
then swallowed
without chewing you.

God the petty
and the petulant
and voyeuristic,
remember that I surrendered
to my doubt in you
only when you stood me up
when I most needed you;
when what I prayed for
in my desperation
landed in a pile, rejected,
like a badly written poem.

God the king of parlor
tricks and wishful thinking,
whose absence from the world
makes sense to the believers
as a test of faith, but
not to me who'd like to
see more proof of you
than statues weeping,
please tell me how
of all the stories we
invented to explain
away the dread,
you alone
have not outlived
your usefulness.

LOVE LEAVES LEFTOVERS

BY MARIA GIESBRECHT

It's been three years and I still have the French keyboard enabled on my phone. Occasionally, when I comment on poems on the internet, it autocorrects *love* to *liberté*. (Which is fitting, I suppose.) It's been three years and I still sleep facing the window because it's good *to feel the sun when you wake*. Every time I see a squirrel I think of how you, completely amazed by their existence, tried to feed them peanuts off your balcony railing. And how they came to you and gently nuzzled your hands. I've never shit-talked squirrels since. Love leaves leftovers, I've learned. It's never a clean escape. Oh, but what a way to say goodbye: *here, I've loved you, save some for later*.

IN WHICH A THERAPIST MAKES ME UNDERSTAND NOT EVERY FAMILY
WAS LIKE MINE

BY SHELLY NORRIS

What if we stack atop unmarked ash
scattered across sandy soils
where overturned sedimentary rocks
smoothed by time ruined his plow blades,
a cairn of bone China, fill the saucers
with pearls, adorn it with moss.

What if we twine fraying strands
of last century's threadbare beliefs—yeah,
yeah—wind them like webs
about old clock works fastened
inside a shadow box until a monstrous eye
of god bristles like a purple aster.

What if we polish to luster the effortless
daily disasters, his talent to fleece
women of honor, smooth as bourbon, precise
as his form when he threw that loop to lasso
a calf, no effort for a cowboy's cowboy.
What if I just don't clot your memory

with my stories of disoriented drunks
who froze in blizzards, or how there would
never be a proper swimming pool for kids.
How we'll all drown swallowing a language
with only one word for *stone*, in which *stone*
carries a hundred different meanings.

What if I tell you instead how the Blue Jay
escaped the cat's jaws, circled the open rooms
searching for sanctuary, how flapping to be sure
she could still fly, found an opening
of crystal sky and swooped through the door jamb
like one breathy note from a wooden flute.

THE END

BY ANDY MACERA

The End is a secret agent
receiving instructions from a speaker
in an abandoned drive-in
movie theatre or a briefcase left
in a bus station locker.
The End reviews the files for
the easy hits, the condemned, hooded,
strapped into a chair, noosed
on a gallows, the spent shell of the aged
trapped beneath the white knees
of a sheet, crying uncle.
The End is a cold steel caller,
icing any recklessness for incantations
or innocence, motivated by
metrics, thriving on the pressure
from above. The End
is not perfect, indiscretions sewn
like jewels into the lining
of his black cloak, pinning the tail
of the setting sun to
the hem of the horizon
to slow a waning train of window light
being chased by eyes
blinking back the bone-crushing
gravity of a goodbye,
or the nights he watched her
unpin the jet brooch
displaying a lock of his hair,
take off a black dress,
his hand always shaking, always reaching,
unable to touch
the forbidden fruit of her flesh.

HONEYMOON

BY ANI BACHAN

the first night they made love, they made breakfast.
bellies slick with moonlight & sick with hunger,
they abandon a love-warmed bed to
indulge the bitter linoleum
crack 3 eggs and a window, they let
the night air christen the espresso-maker, the jack-and-jill-mugs, the toaster
that dulled in someone's basement for years
now glowing, pregnant with purpose—
Good morning, it says.
Good morning, they say.

BETWEEN TWO SLEEPS

BY CHRISTINE POTTER

Last night, I awoke around four because I thought I heard something—someone walking, dragging the wind along with him. Someone banging the night against the walls of our room. Or was it our old cat chasing nothing downstairs? We have ghosts but they have given up on us and gone quiet. Something brighter than the blue air flickered. I understood it was just cedars in front of the street lamp, waving in what had become a storm. My husband bicycled his legs in his sleep, so I woke him. He told me he'd been fighting someone. *It was very violent*, he said. I wondered if two people could throw a dream back and forth to each other. I wondered if maybe that's what's happening to us: everyone gasping up out of the imaginings that grasp us when we need to be at rest, all of us kicking the sheets away, our eyelids not quite wanting to open. Is something out there or did we invent it? And is this storm powered by the force of our nightmares or because we didn't believe them? In the morning it will all drain into light, and we will be busy again. Remember what woke you, assign to it a name. Sleep now and call it out in the logical dawn.

LADY C
BY STEVE BRISENDINE

—after George Hayter’s “Portrait of Lady
Caroline Montagu in Byronic Costume”

Mind this one,
I warned myself.
She’s dangerous.

Oh, she’ll track you around the gallery with those seawater
eyes and hint with her blush.

She’ll show you her neck and the inside of her wrist, and
dangle that rosary from one half-beckoning finger as if to say
how easy it is to drop good intentions and take them up again
once the misdeed is done,

and she’ll let your gaze wander to her blacksilked instep, allow
your mind’s fingertips to trace it, aching to trail higher –

but make no false moves, son. Attempt no unwelcome advances.
That bosom is chaperoned by a dagger-hilt, in case you hadn’t
noticed, and her hatpin is a good six inches long.

Too late,
I replied.
*She’s already slipped that half-smile
between my ribs, and I’m bleeding out.*



<https://chazen.wisc.edu/collection/4850/portrait-of-lady-caroline-montagu-d-1892/>

SEPARATIONS

BY DAVID A. GOODRUM

I've scattered words on the ground
so that the squirrel in you
has something to save for winter

pressed them into the visible
cracks around door jambs
to keep the chill wind at bay

our first words after sunrise
used to split morning light into whirling
bright bands of impossible color

we could sculpt whole conversations
like blocks of marble, wood, clay, ice
and realize the hidden shapes beneath

then we began to recycle phrases
gathered with gloved hands
rummaging through newspaper stacks

left leaves and clippings composting
to hide the barren ground
and offer the nightcrawlers cover

slight digs, like borers and bark beetles,
attacked and stripped branches
of the tree we once tended together

there's still the occasional unexpected
wasp in the garden glove finger
or scorpion in the slipper

tucked into a dead snag while we sleep
remnant consonants and vowels
chant together in requiem

A SEPARATION

BY SKAIDRITE STELZER

What he sent me:
the cast iron frying pan,
the second-hand rolling pin,
the Zeiss-Ikon camera,
my fraying witch cape,
my lace bobbins,
a photo of his new daughter.

PORTRAIT OF A MAN WHO KNEW LOVE'S POSSIBILITIES

BY DIANA DINVERNO

—After “*Marc Chagall*” by André Kertész (*Gelatin silver print, 1955*).

Behind a table in his Paris studio, Marc Chagall tilts his head, offers a sepia-dissolving smile that reminds you of lilacs in June. He wears a floppy smock over his shirt, collar half in, half out. His knuckles rest atop the table strewn with his heart’s accoutrements: pastels jumbled in a box; palette daubed with rose and delphinium height-of-summer hues; corked turpentine bottles; a single mixing bowl; small studies—flights of fancy he intends to show are real; and wild, paintbrush bouquets, ready, bristles up.

He looks—at the world,
directly at you, his friend—
eyes, that bright, vast blue.



<https://dia.org/collection/marc-chagall-50899>

FOR MY DAUGHTER

BY BILL SCHREIBER

What knots you loosened
then retied, double knotted,
yet aglets flew free as you ran,
wind in treetops were voices
to give solace when there was none,
and your fingernails etched lines
on the rock by the mailbox
until you finally left for good.

The stars you counted
then lost when dawn came,
apple tree's brief blooms
that fell to bark and bare branches,
your cupped path from here to the dusty road
a single stripe between grass.

You say you won't look back,
yet like a bird you linger
in the canopy of a tree circling the feeder,
at the lake where hooks find your fingers
but leave water unharmed,
and an idling boat slips its mooring to drift
toward a far shore, turning and turning.

MUSIC

BY JULIA BUCCI

On still February days when the wind won't carry flames, the town allows fires. Dusty smoke hovers over frozen lawns. I gather brush in my arms and look for dry branches from broken trees that labored through storms, winter's birth flowers. From my neighbor's cracked window, music

ripples out, and I turn. I first heard you in music, in the contrapuntal notes of a fugue that carried you to us. When the news came of your birth, I walked through halls of frozen angels and smoke, through streets scattered with flowers and broken bottles, to find you, a silent baby waving your arms.

Even then you knew in your skinny arms that you were born to find the faintest music, that you could coax the seventy pieces of broken wood that make a violin into notes that carried the melodies of that morning's heavy smoke, lovely and bitter as the woman who gave birth

to you. We dressed you in green for rebirth, for leaves that return to branches. Cradled in my arms in the murky airport light, you coughed in the smoke but turned and smiled when cackling music played over the loudspeaker. Your laugh carried us home, hid the parts of you that were broken.

You came to us with parts already broken. Sleepless, you watched the moon, its rebirth and exile. When I searched city shadows to carry you home, you shoved me away with scarred arms and disappeared underground. You lost your music. You tore yourself into the wrong parts. You hid in smoke.

I pile branches on this pyre until the smoke wavers like my neighbor's arpeggios, beautiful broken chords. I didn't know how many ruptures there were in music, how many clashing notes go into any birth. Friends told me to put you down, but I held you in my arms until you walked. You were not too heavy to carry.

I watch the smoke shift, watch the weak wind carry it away. I know you still hold hidden music in your arms. The fire sparks. The broken deserve another birth.

CONDOLENCES

BY EMILY SIMMONS

Dying prompts the call for flowers,
which arrive almost mechanically
—friends and family at the widow's door.

Designated sprigs and white lilies, bouquets
and chocolates she's left holding
after the oval farm table overflows.

Flowers dropping entire corollas
after home hospice leaves
the man who already left, fully exiled

from body and clothes. His dog curled
into the last dirty pile of his laundry, leaving
his wife alone with a drop-leaf table suddenly

struggling to hold the slow-dying blooms. She watches
the brightest yellow hues fall in the kitchen
like dead canaries fluttering to the floor.

Wood planks creaking from the weight
dying brings through the door.
as if grieving could be better held

by watching another dying thing
fall, petal by petal, till they, too,
need carrying, like him, back out the door.

WHY I HAVE STOPPED BRINGING MY NOTEBOOK INTO SUBWAYS

BY VANESSA Y. NIU

It is hard to think of home when you are being shot.
All these days I have been writing about the rivers
and the flowers and the tiny suns glittering in the
apartment windows of strangers. In the

night I lay still as a calf who will be slaughtered in the
morning and feel my heartbeat trying to keep me
alive. Sometimes it is all I can do to keep myself
alive. But of course I cannot write about tiny suns

when trains are being stopped because a girl was shot
in the carriage next to mine. I cannot write because
my first thought when I heard the gun was that
mother would be happy that there is one less life

to sustain, two decades of life set free. If life does
flash before your eyes, I wonder what she saw, if there
were rivers or if her mother's hand reached to drag
a string of guts from her stomach, the new age

creation myth. A series of closed doors, jobs littered
leaving penny and bloodline taut. Daughter crucified
and unable. Magdalene returns. Or perhaps the bloom
in a field of lilacs, some unnamed season of humidity,

wind, under the two suns of Kepler 16b. If she saw
her body bloom under its heat, open with a flare.

Tomorrow I will be thick with memory and
write of how it rained and the brown-gray water
dragged into the train, the cold and wet of a fresh
body. How the river is able to continue flowing

because of the rain, and how we are able to
rest our frustrations in the life and death of clouds.

Tomorrow is another day. There will be another
city of tiny suns. It is another day I live, and that
is all I can account for.

Section Three

THIRTY YEAR FIXED AND DAPPLE GREY

BY CAL FREEMAN

I think I jerked the bridle reins
when I couldn't get the gelding to arch his neck
while cantering, the heavy curb bit in his mouth.
A mere aesthetic now, that style of carrying the head low
so ranchers could shoot wolves off of the pommel.
Theron Pembroke told me if it happened even one more time
I'd never ride at his farm again. "I think,"
exculpatory phrase, as if the precarity of memory
might mean a memory didn't happen,
as if shame could be expunged by what
we half remember. Cruelty's in the hands and mind,
in a gesture without heat, in the hardened
equine mouth, in yellow teeth. I've known kindness
un-reciprocally. It's a lower lip you bite
when the spleen comes up in you. One of my stepson's
favorite stories involves the time he fell
in the Rouge River and I refused to pick him up
from the park. I insisted he walk home and spray himself down
with the garden hose before entering our house. I'm not sure
what the theme of that anecdote is, but when a child suffers
lonely humiliation and remembers it as an adult,
we can only conclude that the world holds
a slow freight of cruelty undammed by someone
who should've known better. The self's a one-ton beast
that bucks. The beast's a skinny self that breaks the spirit.
One October near his birthday, I texted Ethan
about quassinoids and how serendipitous and strange
it was that he spent countless hours kicking
a soccer ball beneath the stinking sumac in our yard
and was now researching the healing properties
in the chemicals such putrefying plant matter becomes.
He said the message arrived when he was losing faith.
Before I gave up the horse I took Ethan riding.
He broke out in hives and his breathing slowed.
I drove 90 down Middle Belt to buy him Benadryl
from the gas station. Needless to say
I never took him back. We were a young family then
with a mortgage and an Arabian horse nobody
had the temperament to ride. I gifted the horse
to the Pembrokes' school barn to save myself
\$300 a month on board. He wasn't worth much.
14 is old in horse years. A tree of heaven,
hollowed out by ants, listed toward the pasture gate
the night I dropped the papers off. Mown hay

moldered in a field behind the house. Theron was a decade gone.
His son-in-law patrolled the farm with a plug
of Beech-Nut in his jaw. The horse gave them a few good years
of lessons. They didn't call to tell me when it died.

REAL ILLUSIONS

BY MARK SIMPSON

The will is free, but not necessarily, like a room full of canaries flitting about fixtures and furniture, resting on the available edges of things except the one looking out the room's window. It seems sad, but what does it expect?

When the cat enters the room, the others sing their song of fear. So beautiful, the cat lapses into an unfeigned respect.

I've thrown away the tiny slips of paper I've written notes on—addresses, names, appointments:
“Don't forget to_____.”

Enough to line the canaries' room, wall-to-to wall, enough to cover up the cat now slumbering in a corner. What isn't seen isn't there. That's especially true for the canary looking out

the window, back turned, for all practical purposes the other canaries not there, except that now and then it hears their singing, which is the doubt that makes the room a cage.

SHADOWS ON THE ROOF IN MONET'S "THE CUSTOMS HOUSE", VARENGVILLE, 1882"

BY ERIC WEIL

Yesterday, Valley Forge was one hundred degrees, as unlike Washington's army's brutal winter as I can imagine, and my son and I strolled the battlefield from shade tree to shade tree, water bottles in hand. Despite our precautions, I spent the evening lying on the picnic table at the campground, without an appetite, on the edge of heat exhaustion. Today, in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, I am avoiding another hundred-degree July day, with Monet's blues and greens, cool in the museum's air conditioning. One shadow is too thin and long to be of the chimney that squats like a stump on the tile roof. Another, like a fork handle, on the landward side, has no apparent object. And the trees behind? Close up they are not trees shading the roof, but a meadow reaching toward rocky heights like misplaced waves. The chill air protecting the art is so delicious I spend an hour on a bench in front of this small painting, wishing for long sleeves, trying to imagine how these luminous shadows on the customs house roof appeared to Monet, while the guard, concerned for this priceless painting, checks on me once again.



<https://www.pivada.com/en/claude-monet-the-customs-house-varengville-1882>

MORNING MOOD

BY RODERICK BATES

There is a reclining Buddha on my dresser
and out the window I see a mole trap—
sharp spring-loaded spikes of a tiny portcullis
set to impale some soft furry thing
as it noses about under the grass of my lawn.

The Buddha holds his head up with one hand
as he gracefully and calmly waits for his death.
The mole, if my trap works, will be stabbed
multiple times and will die slowly, painfully,
alone in the dirt.

I am annoyed to find my coffee cup empty.
Don't expect wisdom from me.

KNITTING SUNSET
BY RICHARD JORDAN

At dusk, like clockwork,
she takes the obligatory
phone call: a neighbor
checking up.

Sardines on soda crackers for supper,
oil and brine set aside
for the blind cat pawing
at her hem.

Come dark, she moves
to her blue recliner, unspools
wool the rich red of summer
strawberries or maybe

a first love's lips. But
it's a perfect sky
seen years ago
she aims to match.

In this spacious parlor
lit now by a single lamp: stillness,
save for the cadenced clicks

of rosewood needles,
steadier than breath.

TO MY PINK MITTENS

BY ANGIE HEXUM

Wooly bonbons, you make
valentines of these hands.
Plucking you from a wicker basket
in a Reykjavik gift shop,
I never expected this sweet effect—
how, when I nestle my fingers
in your fuchsia stripes,
your audacity of cotton candy,
your flamingo aloha,
each passing stranger ignites
at the jubilee of knit and purl
bursting from my coat sleeves,
each meets my eyes
with a tender wonder
as if to ask, *For me?*
I smile back, by which I mean,
Yes, take my hand.

FRUGAL

BY DOROTHY HOWE BROOKS

My friend buys the jacket she loves,
red with gold trim,
though she doesn't need it,

and the lovely pink
mohair sweater
that feels so good on her skin.

She spends what she makes.
The future
will take care of itself.

At dinner, she has two glasses
of a delicate white wine
that is more than the meal.

We're on vacation, she says.

While I, frugal, hold my life
between my fingers
like a pinch of salt.

EGGPLANT CONSUMMATION

BY RUTH MOTA

I am drawn to how the purple robe
of the eggplant glistens like a bruise

how, as a royal bride, she succumbs to my blade
her coat curling down onto my cutting board.

I admire how she reveals her spongy white flesh
puffy as eyelids after a good cry

in my therapist's chair where I've cut
through to another bitter truth.

When I sprinkle salt on her severed rings
she will cry too, drops rising from her limp rounds.

I dry her tears, snow her with flour. Bless her
with the blood of tomatoes and the iridescence of onions.

I cede her to the sizzling oil of my pan, where her life is consecrated
consumed down the dark hole of my throat into another universe.

SEASONED

BY SUZANNE EDISON

See the crystal, the crust
of white and pink veins—what's left

of the Great Salt Lake—
I too am shrinking.

Less flesh to cushion a fall,
less time to reckon confusion.

What falls away is always, says Roethke—
a few ink marks, painted caves, stone

carvings, our attempts to evade extinction—
No thoughts salt-preserved or pressed in amber.

A mother is salt—needed
to level pressures, keep a child in balance.

But when younger, I tilted on scales, weighing
my insignificance. Like a swirling

barber pole without a center, I danced
naked on stage, smeared blue paint on my skin—

mistook *encore* for *be More*. Blessed be

our bodies—a daughter, a man, broke me
and then brined my once stiff,

taffeta-heart—Now, I'm hewn—
a little bit sinew, a little bit bone.

I move as windblown grass; old beliefs
are flushed, cured like rime on glass.

SEVENTEEN RENDERED PORTRAITS OF MY MOTHER

—after Betsy Sholl

BY PATTY WARE

One of my parents was a violin, the other a piano.

One suffered shrieks of unschooled strings, the other hung suspended, a Chopin nocturne.

One was a bottle of valium with a chaser of regret, the other a silver chalice brimming with wisdom I was terrified to taste.

One of my parents was a bird, the other a worm.
My childhood a trail of twigs and discard—was somewhere here, a nest?

One of my parents was a firebrand, the other a fawn
One of them I willed, the other I wept.

In the funhouse mirror of my becoming,
one song-birded her children as a blessing, the other pinioned suffering to a cross.
Thus, my fascination with death and mystery
of resurrection.

One was a middle finger, the other a genuflection.
They tried to play nice.

One was a fist, the other a prayer flag. I feared
fighting, was embarrassed I didn't know how to pray.

I was a girl running through the forest, fleeing
the sheep I mistook for a wolf.

BROOK AS A BODY – ON LOOKING AT A RECENT PHOTOGRAPH
BY TERRI MCCORD

“Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide”
Hamlet, IV, vii

Sky as a skirt
in shadow

a peacock blue
in this petite stream

the branch shape
a sash
hanging leaves
the bodice

Water asks
for the luxury of time
substantiation
over time
To open
past the horizon line
flickers on stones
like flint of light
like candle flames
leaves to the side

resemble small hands
pulling one’s self up.

SIXTY SECONDS OF INFINITY

BY SANDI STROMBERG

*Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity,
a.k.a. The Infinity Room by Yayoi Kusama*

“It’s just for one minute,” says the museum guard,
opening a door as substantial as those that secure

MRIs and CT scanners. The question of radiation leaps
to mind. “Stand on the triangle,” he orders,

assuring this room is only sealed to enhance
Infinity. Out of the dark, hundreds, maybe thousands,

of golden lights fly toward me, tiny lanterns
ceiling to floor. I swivel 360 degrees

as my body shoots through this glorious cosmos
even though my mind knows I’m standing still.

Without warning, the room goes black. I am lost
in space, amorphous, with nothing to measure

myself against. As though gravity had stayed on the other
side of the door. If, as some faiths claim, my body

will transform into energy when I die, will I float
in the vastness of this Universe?

Before I can absorb the possibility,
lanterns burst back into light. My imagination

reels. How can I understand such an unknown
dimension, nowhere to brace or balance?

An unexpected knock. The door opens. I jet back
into *here*, step from the room, blinded for a moment

by Earth’s daylight. Vanished, the flash
of immortality. A possible afterlife

I’m not ready for yet.

You Tube Video of Mirror Rooms

https://youtu.be/8VwJMw_fLvI?si=aPSI0vNuJ-bihN5N

Link to Image

<https://hirshhorn.si.edu/kusama/infinity-rooms/>



THREE PHOTOGRAPHS

BY JOHN PETER BECK

A few black and white photographs of serious people in their finest clothes

It is a matter of state. The meal had a treaty on the menu but no agreement for dessert. The smiles were diplomatic, reserved, staged, practiced, pressed perfectly like the negotiators' Saville Row suits, purchased not rented. The coat and trouser seams were straight, so much different than the borders under discussion, not as easy as having rivers to divide them, faint map lines in dispute, history on display. The past is full of dinners like this, better food than on the battlefield, polite words that can start or end the pain, the death, the waste.

A few of the finest photographs of Black and White people in their serious clothes

The mayhem was spread across the pages of Life magazine. The marchers, some in their church clothes and some fresh from work in the factories, wanted to vote and choose their leaders, sit at the front of the bus, drink from all fountains, go to schools with shiny new textbooks, to live free in America. The police and their dogs wanted to hurt these men and women, scare them enough to have them turn the clock back on their dreams and live in someone else's carefully constructed world of white and wrong. "Ain't goin to let nobody turn me round, turn me round, turn me round."

A few serious photographs of the finest people in their black and white clothes

Prom dresses and tuxedos all ended up as black and white in the formal photos no matter what color they really were. The corsages and boutonnieres were black and white. The bouffant hair and page boys, ducktails and pompadours—all were black and white. Young women smiled radiantly; young men flattened their smiles slightly so not to look goofy. To some, the prom was the last gasp of youthful freedom before marriage, children, jobs, so few vacations, so many bills. To others, the army beckoned, and their years of service were cut short in foreign lands with hard to pronounce names. For decades to come, their parents stared at these prom pictures, the only formal portrait of a name whispered among the rosary beads, the Our Fathers and Hail Marys.

VAN GOGH—MEMORY OF THE GARDEN AT ETTEN (LADIES OF ARLES)

BY PEGGY HEITMANN

November 05, 1888

Dear Theo,
Gauguin wants me to paint
from memory but I struggle
against his instruction
when my face craves the sun,
and my brush strokes
itself best when I am outdoors
surrounded by a cascade of color.
Last night, I dreamed
of mother and Willemien
walking past a maidservant.
As an experiment, I painted
a memory painting
but exaggerated and distorted
the women, the landscape.
Here, as if crafting a poem,
a profusion of pink and scarlet
geraniums and lemon
yellow dahlias splash
among some sweet white flowers,
wind their way across the canvas.
Surely, allegory consumed me
in memory of the parsonage,
flowers, and the leaning cypress trees.
I plan to hang this painting
in my bedroom at the Yellow House.
Perhaps if I tire of staring
at mother's sad face,
I will send by post for your viewing.
Please send more canvases
and paints.

Yours with a handshake,
Vincent



Van Gogh Image:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memory_of_the_Garden_at_Etten_%28Ladies_of_Arles%29

REAPPEARANCE

BY PAUL ILECHKO

He appeared from out
of the sandy badlands
of rural Utah or Colorado
in need of refreshment
and a shave
asking the first people he met
what time it was
although what he really wanted
to know was the date
and even more what year it was
as he began to live out an experiment
on the possibility of reintegration
a falling back into a way of life
that he'd left behind so long ago
there would of course be a film
a fictionalized biopic
featuring someone like Tom Hanks
cleverly displaying the human ability
to lose and regain language
all of it seamlessly integrated
into the pastel-shaded landscape
where traps had once been set
and small mammals skinned
a series of metaphors for endurance
in a world without doors or windows
without access to the internet
the most shocking omission
for a contemporary audience
whose screens are constantly glowing
throughout the film
even during the famous casino scene
propelled by a soundtrack of classic rock
that places him so firmly in the time
he had once wanted
so desperately to escape.

I REALLY NEED TO PUT DOWN MY PHONE

BY LAURA GRACE WELDON

Scrolling and clicking with godlike power
past Taylor Swift's vilification, past
vegan meatballs in the making, past
new black hole theories, past climate disaster
I'm aware the screen trains my neurons to need
more and more input, to rely on each tiny rush,
selectively moving my awareness away
from the space I inhabit and the air I breathe,
away from the living eyes I might look into,
as if I'm AI in training— scraping the web
for what's relevant immediate current flaming.
When I was a child I slid my finger across
the carving knife I'd been warned against.
Its shining blade called out, asked to be known.
I still remember the shiver as it cut into my flesh,
how I tried to hide my crime's blood
rolling down my shirt and shorts,
staining the kitchen rag I held over the wound
I must have known I'd give myself.

TAKEN IN BY TALK ABOUT ALIENS AND THE FEEL OF PEACHES
BY DICK WESTHEIMER

They ask about aliens and I say, have you
ever stood beneath a peach tree, its branches
pruned in the shape of a vase, and looked up
and among the leaves seen

a hundred honey-streaked suns setting at once?
You reach and hold in your hand something
that makes you forget you've ever caressed
another as you pluck it free

from its twig. Of course there are mysteries
out there, or how else could this trickle of juice
make the bees as jealous of the sweet as I am
of my lover when she devours one of these things,

caught in the throes of satisfaction, transported
to some world I can't go. And isn't that how it is
with pleasure, that we can only know our own fire,
and are alien to the pulse of other's desires.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Ani Bachan is a Toronto-based student and occasional writer. She has been previously published in *Inlandia's Online Journal*, *The Showbear Family Circus*, *F3LL Magazine*, *Phantom Kangaroo*, and others.

David Banach is a queer philosopher and poet in New Hampshire, where he tends chickens, keeps bees, and watches the sky. He likes to think about Dostoevsky, Levinas, and Simone Weil and is fascinated by the way form emerges in nature and the way the human heart responds to it. You can read some of his most recent poetry in *Isele Magazine*, *Neologism Poetry Journal*, *Passionfruit Review*, *Terse*, and *Amphibian Lit*. He also does the Poetrycast podcast for *Passengers Journal*.

Roderick Bates edits *Rat's Ass Review*. His own poems appear in *The Dark Horse*, *Stillwater Review*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Cultural Weekly*, *Asses of Parnassus*, *fēlan*, *Three Line Poetry*, *Last Stanza Poetry Journal*, *Ekphrastic Review*, and *Anti-Heroic Chic*, among others. He also writes prose and won an award from the International Regional Magazines Association for an essay published in *Vermont Life*. He is a Dartmouth graduate and lives, writes, and edits in southern Vermont.

John Peter Beck is a professor in the labor education program at Michigan State University where he co-directs a program that focuses on labor history and the culture of the workplace, *Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives*. His poetry has been published in a number of journals including *The Seattle Review*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, *The Louisville Review* and *Passages North* among others.

Steve Brisendine lives, works, and remains unbeaten against the New York Times crosswords in Mission, KS. A 2024 Pushcart Prize nominee, he has appeared in *Modern Haiku*, *Flint Hills Review*, *I-70 Review* and other publications and anthologies. He has no degrees, one tattoo and an unironic fondness for strip-mall Chinese restaurants. Write to him at steve.brisendine@live.com

Dorothy Howe Brooks' work has previously appeared in many literary magazines, most recently in *Valley Voices*, *California Quarterly*, *Broad River Review*, *Tampa Review*, and *Atlanta Review*. Her second full length poetry collection, *This Pause, Like Mist Rising*, was published in May, 2023, by Main Street Rag. Her fourth chapbook, *Subsoil Plowing*, was published in 2020 by Finishing Line Press. Her poem "Hearing Loss" was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2018.

Julia Bucci is a Boston-based writer, teacher, and microfilmmaker. Her work has appeared or will appear in publications including *Cognoscenti*, *Smoky Blue Literary and Arts Magazine*, and *Teach.Write*; in film festivals; and on the Moth Radio Hour. Her screenplays have won awards. Julia teaches high school English during the week and life writing to older adults on weekends.

Genevieve Creedon is a scholar, poet, and essayist. She earned her M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Southern Maine's Stonecoast MFA Program and her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Michigan. Her writing across genres focuses on the wonders and mysteries of earthly life. She has lived in Connecticut, New York, Maine, Michigan, New Jersey, and most recently, Indiana, and strives to explore the worlds around her with her human and canine companions. Her work appears in *About Place*, *Cider Press Review*, *Narrative Northeast*, *San Antonio Review*, and *Westchester Review*, among others.

Daniel Damiano is an acclaimed Novelist, award-winning Playwright, Pushcart-nominated Poet and acclaimed Actor based in Brooklyn, NY. His first novel, *The Woman in the Sun Hat*, was published in 2021 by fandango 4 Art House and was a 2021 Seattle Book Review Beach Read Recommendation. This was followed by his first book of poetry, *104 Days of the Pandemic* (2021) and his second novel, *Graphic Nature* (2022), also published by fandango 4 Art House. His poetry has been published in *Curlw Quarterly*, *Quagmire Magazine*, *Crooked Teeth Literary Magazine*, *New Voices Anthology*, *Cloudbank*, *Newtown Literary Journal* and *HotMetal Press*.

Diana Dinverno is the author of *When Truth Comes Home to Roost* (Celery City Chapbooks, 2022). A Best of the Net and Pushcart Prize nominee, Diana writes and practices law in Michigan. For more information, visit www.dianadinverno.com

Brian Duncan lives in Kendall Park, New Jersey with his wife, Margie, and two tuxedo cats. He worked in a virology laboratory at Princeton University for many years and is now happily retired. He enjoys devoting his time to poetry, reading, watching old movies, vegetable gardening, messing around with old cars, puttering around the house, and hiking, hoping he'll meet a dog he can pet. He has poems in *ONE ART*, *Thimble*, *Passengers Journal*, *Whale Road Review*, *Elysium Review*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, and in a forthcoming issue of *Santa Fe Review*.

Suzanne Edison's first full length book, *Since the House Is Burning*, by MoonPath Press was published in 2022 and was a First Finalist in the Poetry Society of Virginia book contest. Her chapbook, *The Body Lives Its Undoing*, was published in 2018. Poetry can be found in: *Michigan Quarterly Review*; *Lily Poetry Review*; *MER*; *JAMA*; *Whale Road Review*, and elsewhere. She is a 2019 Hedgebrook alum and teaches writing workshops through Hugo House in Seattle and UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital.

Cal Freeman is the author of the books *Fight Songs* and *Poolside at the Dearborn Inn*. His writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *North American Review*, *Oxford American*, *The Poetry Review*, *Witness Magazine*, *Third Coast*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Passages North* and elsewhere. He lives in Dearborn, MI and teaches at Oakland University.

Maria Giesbrecht is a poet based in Toronto, Canada. Her work has previously been published in *Contemporary Verse 2*, *Talon Review*, *samfiftyfour*, and elsewhere.

Susana Gonzales is a southern California poet whose writings explore her Mexican American roots and the lesbian feminist experience. She has been published in various literary anthologies and journals including *The Power of the Feminine I*, *Sheila Na Gig*, *Gyroscope Review*, *One Art*, *The Santa Fe Literary Review*, *Mobius*, and *As You Were: The Military Review*.

David A. Goodrum, writer/photographer, lives in Corvallis, Oregon. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Tar River Poetry*, *The Inflectionist Review*, *Passengers Journal*, *Scapegoat Review*, *Triggerfish Critical Review*, *Tampa Review*, among others. Other publications include a chapbook, *Sparse Poetica* (Audience Askew, 12/2023), and a book, *Vitals and Other Signs of Life* (The Poetry Box, 6/2024). See additional work (poetry and photography) at www.davidgoodrum.com

Adrianna Gordey (she/her) is a writer based in Kansas. When she isn't writing, Adrianna can be found daydreaming about the Atlantic Ocean, assembling overly ambitious Halloween costumes, or cuddling her one-eyed dog, Rudy. Her work has appeared in *Red Noise Collective*, *Passengers Journal*, *Hunger Mountain Review*, and elsewhere. Follow her on Instagram @by_adrianna_gordey

Valarie Hastings is the 2020 winner of the Steve Kowitz Poetry Prize and recipient of an Honorable Mention for the 2020 Allen Ginsberg Award. She was also a 2024 semi-finalist for the Laura Boss Narrative Poetry book prize and a 2021 finalist for Winning Writers' poetry humor contest. Valarie has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and has published in more than a dozen literary journals including *The New Guard*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *San Diego Poetry Annual*, *Literary Mama*, *SheMom* and *Crab Creek Review*. Her first collection of poetry, *Searching for Dandelion Greens*, debuted in 2021, (Garden Oak Press)

Peggy Heitmann. She likes to say she was born with a story in her mouth. She grew up listening to the stories both sides of the family told. She is a word artist who craves the fresh and novel concoction of words, a visual artist who mostly enjoys making and giving art to family and friends. She enjoys setting goals, making lists, but mostly enjoys spending time with family and friends. Publishing credits include: *The Monterey Poetry Review*, *The Rockford Review*, *Deep Overstock*.

Angie Hexum is a speech-language pathologist by trade. A Nebraska native, she moved to the San Francisco Bay Area after graduating from Swarthmore College. Her first published poem appeared recently in *Caesura*. She currently resides in Campbell, CA where she enjoys hiking, cycling, and singing in a chorus.

Wisconsin Poet Laureate 2017-2018, **Karla Huston** (www.karlahuston.com) earned an MA in English/Creative Writing from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. The author of eight chapbooks of poems, a second, full collection of poems *Ripple, Scar, and Story* was published by Kelsay Books in 2022. Her poems, reviews and interviews have appeared in many regional and national journals. Huston taught Creative Writing at The Mill: A Place for Writers for 10 years.

Paul Ilechko is a British American poet and occasional songwriter who lives with his partner in Lambertville, NJ. His work has appeared in many journals, including *The Bennington Review*, *The Night Heron Barks*, *Southword*, *Stirring*, and *The Inflectionist Review*. His first book is scheduled for 2025 publication by Gnashing Teeth Publishing.

Richard Jordan's poems have appeared in *Gyroscope Review*, *Rattle*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *New York Quarterly*, *Gargoyle Magazine*, *Sugar House Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Redivider*, *The Atlanta Review*, *South Florida Poetry Journal* and elsewhere. His debut chapbook, *The Squannacook at Dawn*, won first place in the 2023 Poetry Box Chapbook Contest and will appear in early 2024. He lives in the Boston area.

Lenny Lianne is the author of five books of poetry, most recently *Sunshine Has Its Limits* (Kelsay Books). She holds an MFA in Creative Writing (Poetry) from George Mason University and has taught various forms of poetry in workshops on both coasts. A world traveler, she lives in Arizona with her husband and their dog Jeff.

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

Professor at Commonwealth University, **Marjorie Maddox** has published 15 collections of poetry—including *How Can I Look It Up When I Don't Know How It's Spelled?* (Kelsay); *Transplant*, *Transport*, *Transubstantiation* (Yellowglen Prize); *Begin with a Question* (International Book and Illumination Book Award Winners); Shanti Arts ekphrastic collaborations *Heart Speaks, Is Spoken For* (w/Karen Elias) and *In the Museum of My Daughter's Mind* (w/Anna Lee Hafer www.hafer.work and others.) *Seeing Things* (Wildhouse) is forthcoming. She also has published a story collection, 4 children's books, and two anthologies (co-editor), and is assistant editor of *Presence* and host of Poetry Moment. www.marjoriemaddox.com

A South Carolina Arts Commission fellowship recipient, **Terri McCord** has earned awards from Hub City, Emrys, the Poetry Society of South Carolina, literary journals, and the Vermont Studio Center. Her poems have been nominated for a "Best of the Net" and Pushcarts. She loves poetic projects and collaborative work. She is a visual artist as well. Recent work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Pin Hole Poetry*, *Broad River Review*, *South Dakota Review*, and *North Dakota Quarterly*.

Ann E. Michael lives in eastern Pennsylvania, where for many years she ran the writing center at DeSales University. Her book *The Red Queen Hypothesis* won the 2022 Prairie State Poetry Prize; she's the author of *Water-Rites* (2012) and six chapbooks. Her next collection, *Abundance/Diminishment*, is forthcoming from Kelsay Books in the spring of 2024. She maintains a long-running blog at www.annemichael.blog

Juan Pablo Mobili was born in Buenos Aires and adopted by New York. His poems appeared in *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Hanging Loose Press*, *South Florida Poetry Journal*, *Louisville Review*, and *The Paterson Literary Review* as well as international publications such as *Impspired* (UK), *The Wild Word* (Germany), *Hong Kong Review* (Hong Kong, SAR), *Pasaje* (Argentina), and *Otoliths* (Australia). His work received multiple nominations for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net, and his chapbook, *Contraband*, was published in 2022. He's also a Guest Editor for *The Banyan Review*.

Ruth Mota lives in the Santa Cruz Mountains of California where she writes poetry or facilitates poetry circles to groups in her community like veterans or men in jail. Her poems have been published in many online and print journals including *Gyroscope Review*, *Terrapin Books*, *Passager Books*, *Tiny Seed Literary Journal*, *Tulip Tree Press*, and *the Atlanta Review* among others.

Linda Neal is a psychotherapist, writing teacher, thirty-year kidney transplant patient and Pushcart nominee with an MFA from Pacific U. Her poems have been widely published in *Calyx*, *Chiron Review*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Tampa Review* and elsewhere. She has been a finalist for the Palette Poetry Prize and the Beyond Baroque Prize. She lives and teaches poetry in Redondo Beach, CA. She has published two full collections, *Dodge & Burn* (Bambaz Press, 2014) and *Not About Dinosaurs* (Bambaz Press, 2020).

Vanessa Y. Niu is a Chinese-American poet and classical singer who lives in New York City. Her poetry has been featured in *The Amsterdam Review*, *Frontier Poetry*, *Stonecoast Review*, and more. As a studying musician, she can be found experimenting with poetry-to-music relationships and has written text for the modern composition scene at Juilliard (NY and Tianjin), Interlochen (MI), and the Purcell School (London, UK).

Shelly Norris has lived the past decade displaced in central Missouri where she is owned by three large dogs and five domineering cats. After instructing English courses at various universities and community colleges the past three decades, Norris is semi-retired. She instructs online courses part-time and is in the process of relocating to her home in Wyoming. Her first collection of poetry titled *Hyperbola* is set for release February 2024 from Impsired Press.

Bruce Parker holds an MA in Secondary Education from the University of New Mexico. He taught English as a Second Language, has worked as a technical editor and as a translator. His work appears in *Triggerfish Critical Review*, *The Field Guide*, *October Hill*, *Litbop*, *Cerasus*, (UK) and elsewhere, and is forthcoming in *Wild Roof* and *Crosswinds*. He lives with spouse poet and artist Diane Corson in Portland, Oregon, and is an Associate Editor at *Boulevard*. His chapbook is *Ramadan in Summer* (Finishing Line Press, 2022).

Christine Potter's poetry has been curated by *Rattle*, *Kestrel*, *Third Wednesday*, *Thimble*, *Eclectica*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Autumn Sky Poetry Daily*—and featured by ABC Radio News. She has work forthcoming in *The McNeese Review* and *One Art*. Her young adult novels, *The Bean Books*, are published by Evernight Teen, and her third collection of poetry, *Unforgetting*, by Kelsay Books. She lives in Valley Cottage, NY, in a house with two ghosts, two spoiled cats, and her husband.

Renga 2 Poets

All the Porch Poets have published poems in numerous literary journals.

Shaheen Dil has two poetry collections, *Acts of Deference* (Fakel 2016) and *The Boat-Maker's Art* (Kelsay Books 2024).

Ziggy Edwards edits the online zine *Uppagus* (uppagus.com). Her chapbook is *Hope's White Shoes*.

Timons Esaias's works have appeared in twenty-two languages, including an award-winning poetry collection, *Why Elephants No Longer Communicate in Greek*.

Roberta Hatcher's poetry chapbook *French Lessons* (Finishing Line) appeared in 2016.

Alyssa Sineni is a visual artist, writer, and Director of Programming for the non-profit Art and Inspiration International.

Arlene Weiner's latest book of poetry is *More* (Ragged Sky 2022).

Jeff Schiff is the author of *With light enough to braille me nextward* (MAMMOTH books), *They: A Letter to America*, *That hum to go by*, *Mixed Diction*, *Burro Heart*, *The Rats of Patzcuaro*, *The Homily of Infinitude*, and *Anywhere in this Country*. Hundreds of his pieces have appeared in more than a hundred and fifty publications worldwide. He has been a member of the English and Creative Writing department of Columbia College Chicago since 1987.

Bill Schreiber has been a Hyla Brook Poet since 2018. Bill has been published in *Aerial Review*, *Shot Glass Journal*, *The Poets Touchstone* and *Metonym Journal*. Bill works in the technology field and lives with his wife and son in southern New Hampshire.

Donald Sellitti honed his writing skills as a scientist/educator at a Federal medical school in Bethesda, MD before turning to poetry following his retirement. Numerous publications in journals with titles such as *Cancer Research* and *Oncology Letters* have been followed by publications in journals with titles like *The Alchemy Spoon*, *Better than Starbucks*, and *Rat's Ass Review*, which nominated him for a Pushcart Prize in 2022.

Zeke Shomler is currently pursuing a combined MA/MFA at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Cordite*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *Anodyne*, and elsewhere.

Emily Simmons lives near Ann Arbor, Michigan on a horse farm with their husband, two children, and a ridiculous number of animals. They received their MFA from Sarah Lawrence College and are creeping back to the literary world after a long hiatus in fields of horses.

Mark Simpson lives on Whidbey Island WA. Recent work has appeared in *Sleet* (Pushcart Prize nominee), *Broad River Review* (Rash Award Finalist), *Third Wednesday*, *Backchannels Review*, *Flyway*, and *Cold Mountain Review*. He is the author of *The Quieting* (Pine Row Press) and the chapbook *Fat Chance* (Finishing Line Press).

Michael Dwayne Smith haunts many literary houses, including *The Cortland Review*, *New World Writing*, *Third Wednesday*, *Gargoyle*, *Chiron Review*, *Monkeybicycle*, and *San Pedro River Review*. Author of four books, recipient of the Hinderaker Prize for poetry, the Polonsky Prize for fiction, and a multiple-time Pushcart Prize/Best of the Net nominee, he lives near a Mojave Desert ghost town with his family and rescued horses. His latest full-length collection goes from apparition to publication in 2024.

Chrissy Stegman is a poet/writer from Baltimore, Maryland. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in: *Rejection Letters*, *Gone Lawn*, *Gargoyle Magazine*, *Anti-Heroic Chic*, *Poverty House*, *Stone Circle Review*, *Fictive Dream*, etc. She is a 2023 Best of the Net Nominee. When she's not writing she is dreaming of writing or plotting projects.

Skaidrite Stelzer is a citizen of the world whose poetry has appeared in *Gyroscope Review*, *Glass*, *Midway Journal*, *The Baltimore Review*, *Storm Cellar*, *Qu*, and many other journals and anthologies. Her chapbook, *Digging a Moose from the Snow*, was recently published by Finishing Line Press. She enjoys watching shifting clouds.

Sandi Stromberg has been nominated four times for a Pushcart Prize and twice for Best of the Net. Her full-length poetry collection *Frogs Don't Sing Red* was released by Kelsay Books in 2023. Her work is widely published in literary journals and anthologies, most recently or forthcoming this spring in *Panoply*, *San Pedro River Review*, *synkroniciti*, *equinox*, *Pulse*, *The Windhover*, and *The Orchard's Poetry Journal*. She serves on the editorial staff of *The Ekphrastic Review*. Her poetry, translated into Dutch, has been published in the Netherlands in Brabant Cultureel.

Patty Ware lives in Juneau, Alaska and is convinced the best part of each day is the quiet solitude of early morning. When not at home, you may find her in Portland being tutored by her two grandchildren, whose recent lessons include the Anika scarf dance and Alden backwards slide slither. Her poems have appeared in *Parentheses Journal*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Literary Mama* and *Cirque*.

Eric Weil lives in Raleigh, NC. His poems have appeared in journals ranging from *American Scholar* to *Poetry*, from *Dead Mule* to *Sow's Ear*, and from *Main Street Rag* to *Red Planet*. He has three chapbooks in print.

Laura Grace Weldon lives in a township too tiny for traffic lights where she works as a book editor, teaches writing workshops, serves as *Braided Way* editor, and chronically maxes out her library card. Laura was Ohio's 2019 Poet of the Year and is the author of four books.

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 upcoming in *Whale Road Review*, *Rattle*, *Innisfree*, *Stone Poetry Quarterly*, *Abandon Journal*, and *Minyan*. His chapbook, *A Sword in Both Hands, Poems Responding to Russia's War on Ukraine*, is published by SheilaNaGig. More at www.dickwestheimer.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For the 2024 Summer Issue, there is no theme, we're just looking for fine, contemporary poetry. We're always interested in seasonally appropriate poems as well as 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.

Summer Issue 2024 submissions open April 1st, 2024, and run through June 1st, 2024, with the issue releasing on July 1st, 2024. We close when 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 sections. You can have your Poem Title and under it put "by Author XYZ, but we don't need headers, footers, or page numbers. Or pictures. 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 poems in the document and ignore the rest. Poems from both emerging and established poets are welcome. 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.gyroscopereview.com>

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

Thank you for Reading!



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