



Gyroscope Review

fine poetry to turn your world around



Summer 2025



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Summer Issue 2025

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Constance Brewer

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From the Editor

Welcome to the Summer 2025 Issue. We have a great lineup for you this issue, with plenty of interesting and inspiring poems, including some humorous ones. We love seeing humor in the poetry we get. I think with the way the world is currently, we could all use a break for some light-hearted poetry. The best light poetry requires a deft touch and subtle lines. If you have some of those poems, send them our way!

Our relationships with nature are also explored, and it seems to be an anchor for many people. Just a daily sighting of a singing bird or stream, a beautiful flower, or towering tree, and we settle a bit, content. We try for a mix of poems every issue, the ones that make you satisfied, and the ones that make unease curl. Good poetry leans both ways. We hope you enjoy the Summer 2025 collection, ready for you to read and reflect on, so spread out your lawn chair and dive in!

Constance Brewer

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Section One

WINDOW SONG

BY RITA ROUVALIS CHAPMAN

Listen. I love it all.
Keep the window open
as long into deep summer
as possible
as long into beginner winter
as possible
the smell of the school bus
at 5:40 every morning
the skateboard wheels
and lawn service trailers
doing their bump and tattle
muscle cars roaring
between the stop signs
the rollicking Colorado
with windows up so hard
only the calliope of the baseline
leaks into the street
Truck, hat, Mariachi
he's all over the
neighborhood and
more all-in than
anything I know
and now I'm a little-in too
filled with the whispers
of street vespers
these calls for blessings
these canticles and hymns.

CARDINAL SONG

BY JENNA WYSONG FILBRUN

I skip along
as he whistles for the horses. One note—
two longs, nine shorts.
Corn grain clinks the tin can
he carries to the troughs and clatters
yeasty-sweet onto the wooden trays.
He smiles down at me as the sound
of pounding hooves crescendos.

^ ^ -----

In my teens, I learn to mimic the whistle
well enough to call the horses on my own.
I pull the line of that little song,
and they come thundering from the field
like magic, like I am someone
worth coming for.

^ ^ -----

Under the bare trees by the now-empty barn,
a ruby-red cardinal calls one day
into an open morning stillness,
and I finally recognize the song,
too late to ask any questions.
Like so many things
I didn't know I didn't know
until I lived in this empty house.

^ ^ -----

Now I hear them everywhere—
the long-short notes of cardinal calls
through the tree chatter. Each one
a face I recognize in a crowd.
A smile at the memory of a smile
and the way we make a way
from a way that was made.
Like an echo of an echo
of an echo.

THE GAZEBO
BY WALLY SWIST

This is our favorite destination.
It is where I give you
a chocolate bar, where we look at
books. As I turn the pages,
your delirium increases.
You see the rooms open out
and you reach for a lamp, a vase,
as if we're shopping for
antiques again. November wind
blows through the open spaces
in the gazebo. We can feel
warmth on our backs from the sun.
We're open but protected by
the conical roof, able to view
your special Japanese maple,
whose crimson leaves flutter,
which continues to amaze you.
My patience wanes due to
your interest in every car
entering the roundabout
or when you ask me again
about who lives in the shed
behind the retirement community.
For the first time I feel averse
to being with you but recover,
take your hand for which you've
misplaced a glove, reach over
and kiss it, overcome by how
hauntingly sad this is, our time
together slipping away by increments,
my trying to salvage
what I have left of you.

HOW THE BODY REMEMBERS RAIN
BY SREEJA NASKAR

trees grow
 along the outlines
 of my grandmother's body—
mango roots softening her knees,
 breadfruit cracking her shoulders
 (tender, and splitting).

she never asks
 but everything blooms
where she has bled.
my mother
 carries the ocean on her back
 and I wonder if it is her duty
 to remember
 the weight of drowning.
when she bathes me
she hums
 a country that no longer exists—
 each note
 a wave
 breaking against
 my ribcage.

i open my mouth
 and the heat
 of a thousand summer afternoons
 stones itself
 behind my teeth.
tropical sorrow, my inheritance.
 sweat salt / grief salt / mango salt.
 there is a bird that won't stop singing
 in the dead tree outside.
my mother says:
 that's how you survive.
 my grandmother says nothing—
 the wind moves through her bones
 like a prayer,
 a forgiveness
 we never asked for.

and i—
 a fruit rotting from the stem,
 peeling language from my skin
 to find where
 the water
 begins again.

LOST IN THE DARK EVERYTHING THAT'S NOT REALLY ROUND OR ORANGE OR A KOI*
BY JONATHAN YUNGKANS

I'm waiting
for the phone call that Dad has passed
and for Saturn
and Jupiter
to join Mars
Venus and the L.A. skyline

the western sky
is in the middle
of a month-long convergence
planets
lining up across the horizon
best seen
at twilight

a phenomenon
that might not reappear for decades

Dad's not coming back

there's a word
for how I feel right now

sturmfrei

it's German
and translates as *storm free*
but it means
being free
alone
and able to do what you want

so I gaze
at the skyline's glittering gold lights
red Mars
and white Venus
flanking it

waiting
for ice-blue Saturn
and Jupiter
the orange of koi
in the pond at my junior high school

taking in the gloaming's silence while it lasts

a silence like being around Dad

there's a lot
I would like to have talked about with him

even
if his temper
was a hair-trigger wired to a thermonuclear bomb
one wrong word
or the right word in a wrong tone
and he was hot as a star going supernova

the explosions
had become shorter
less stellar

so we talked despite ourselves
breaking the ice
even
as I felt it crack
and he might have also felt it crack

that ice
was never really thick enough to walk on

sturmfrei

I think of that koi pond in junior high school

the koi would hear
our footsteps
drumming
across the wooden deck above the pond
deep and resonant

the tone
of taiko drums though the warm August night sky
the Obon festival
at the Buddhist temple down the street

Obon
the Japanese festival of the dead

the one year I went
was with another family

sturmfrei

drums
thundering forever and way too short
a thunder
not scary but welcoming
on a closed street
thronging with people

the throng of koi
in the water at the deck's edge
waiting
kissing our fingers
as we fed them

quiet night

there should be drumming

but it's late
January
not August

ice thin as air

Jupiter
appears
large
and orange

not
with other stars'
steady light
but flashing

a koi's mouth
opening and closing

* Title is a monoku by Johannes S.H. Bjerg, in Sonic Boom, Issue 7 (December 2016)

XUANZANG TO HIS DEAD FATHER
BY EUGENE DATTA

The smoke rising in the sky is not from cooking fires. Villages are full of burned homes, robbers and assassins ruling the roost, roads littered with skeletons. Truth and falsehood are two peas in a pod. You, with your bright eyes, saw it all coming and closed your door to the world, wisdom your final resting place. Now I am leaving, in secret, my shadow my only companion. I'm on my way to the realm of no return. I want to cross its endless ocean of sand, and the plateau and the mountains beyond, to reach the place where I hope to hear what I have never heard, know fully what I've known only in part. If still alive, I will return some day. I'll bring to the land of your birth and mine the light it deserves.

in the sea of death
a monk on foot
the long road

AFTER A TANTRUM I END UP AT THE PARK
BY FELICE ALEXANDRA

In case you don't know, you are in
section K, 379, Grave 1, between
Ruby Brooks and Salvadore Rodriguez.
Your pink gravestone is sinking—

it is inches below the top
of the grass. They all are now.
Grounds workers must have to edge
around each headstone.

I like it—all this order—
and someone else taking care of it.
I am lying on top of your bones.
I need to wail. Perhaps I can sing

flesh back onto my own skeleton,
sing meaning back into an unraveled life.
Statues impersonate angels. A tree
almost shades me. I remember grass

makes me itch so I sit on my shoes
because there is no bench, no blanket.
I think to meditate or pray, but hundreds
of swallows are here practicing flight drills.

They take off in a group, their bodies
like jets—they bank left, then right, split
the sky in two groups, then land together
at the same moment like a symphony ending.

Are you seeing this, Mom? They do it again
and again. Everything is new in the bird-stitched air.

WE ALL CONSIDER THE THERAPIST
BY JANA RICHARDSON

We are sitting at a wooden table and my mouth is stupid with beer. Ian asks which one of us is the most stable and we all consider the therapist before agreeing it's Lynn who cries when she's happy. For some reason I'm reminded of the cold mornings my brother and I used to huddle under a blanket tented by the floor heater, and I felt milk-warm, safe. Graffiti on the underpass of the creek, our baby legs sway in the valley, goatheads thorning up from the mud. Our mother will tell me not to have children. I'm an old hand—I'm really good at fielding nausea, for example, lately from eating recklessly, chicken blood and fermented sorghum. I've done it so many times it doesn't scare me anymore. I need love but I don't need help. My client watched her uncle drop to death from the sky in Afghanistan. My client chose not to kill that man, but he thinks often about the carotid artery and the color red. I try to make my eyes into anchors and my voice into a ship. I am sitting at a wooden table. The woman I pay to read my cards says the love is beautiful because it is unattached. I'm the therapist and I want the love to be attached to something.

THE GIFT OF TANGO
BY JUAN PABLO MOBILI

My parents wear each other's breath
Bert Meyers

Come to think of it, I don't remember my parents
showing their affection to each other, except

those evenings when they danced the tango
and people gathered to watch how

*a woman and a man
loved each other
without saying a word.*

How his hand invited her waist to come closer, and
hers perched on his shoulder as alert as a sparrow.

*They could have taught you
a lesson on the precision of desire,*

and educate you on the earned closeness of two people
who went through storms together and chose to go on,

slowly spinning to a sad song, because sadness
should not be endured alone

*and they had children, and
what mattered was their joy.*

THE LAST LITTLE DEATH AT HIS HANDS
BY RACHEL BEACHY

Our minds as slippery as our bodies once were
I have felt these hands
pull me through the years
have known the cool touch of that
wedding band on my waist
and thought *forever*
which has gone so fast – the times
we made babies, the times we tried not to
make a sound so as not to wake them
and other nights when I forgot
I was anybody's mother
clawing at shoulder blades and biting the pillow
more animal than human
but even animals grow older
soften into the gray twilight and find
a place in the forest to lie down
if this is the last time then let us
clear the faded bedspread
with a creak in our limbs
and remind each other once more
what it meant to live.

HE WAS A SCHOOL OF A MAN
BY FRANCINE WITTE

All chalk dust, clapped erasers,
a notebook creaking open, that thrill
of a breaking spine. When you walked
away from him, you wished you were smarter.

She was a lake of a woman,
all washy tears at sad movies,
waterskin, fish pulse under
the surface. When you walked
away from her, you longed for everything
that has ever slithered out of your grasp.

It was a forest of a night, that time
they met. Shiver trees and mud clumps.
A blueberry breeze blowing them together.
Picnic? he asked, but she said she doesn't
breathe on land. Oh that I can teach you,
He says and points to his chest where the lungs
are, he motions to his ribs and everything
else in the body. Everything but the heart.

Soon, they became a country. The blend of them.
Topography and theme parks, Hikers scaled
their distant mountains. As a together thing,
they showed up on "bucket list places." The combination

of brains and emotion became irresistible
and the hordes wouldn't stay away. Then one day
a stranger tells him how warm and sensitive he is,

her eyes electric and new. His face turns into a firepit,
and a fire of a man cannot stay still and so he burns
up his own country and leaves. Later, he will become
a postcard, thoughts sent from somewhere
other. Words that bleed when wet.

The woman goes back to being a lake,
a swaying, open mirror for the sky
and everything in it.

She pushes the memory of him, of them,
underwater where it glints fishbone,
sharp. Above her, a heron lifts off,
wings slicing everything clean in half.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YEAR & YARD IS TWO LETTERS
BY DAVID COLODNEY

The smell of grilled chicken & kabobs lingers,
a caesura under shimmering sheets of stars

& the sky looks like a sheath of aluminum foil.
I close the grill top & ask you for what seems like

the hundredth time how long have we lived here?
We surrender to two Adirondack chairs where

we sip Tito's in summer & watch our subdivision
bike or walk past us. As we plan our anniversary,

I ask you if we'll be here in 10 years, retired or close to it.
Will our 60s bring clarity? We might become grandparents,

yet we also worry about the kids never leaving/worry more
if they do. The vodka is humidity & we drink until warm & sticky

like every night. If I work until 68 & you quit at 62 would that
maximize our time? Tito's math in a bumbled calculation.

Wouldn't it be funny if the kids left & we stayed
after all our big talk about living in Lisbon or London

& in 20 years will we still sit in this grass with our Tito's
in our 70s? Will we still be able to maneuver the stars

that hover over this old two-story house? When I ask about 25
years instead of 30, breaking the pattern, you stop me:

our 80s dangle like marionettes slow dancing in sunset.
Will we still be sitting in these two chairs celebrating

another year *together* or will one of them be empty & toppled
as autumn breezes arrive & a leaf off our avocado tree floats

into one of our laps as gentle as a memory?

REUNION

BY ROXANNE DOTY

We come back to this city of memory.
Dense humid air rests upon my skin
as if each particle of moisture
holds another dimension of time
and space, when chance still lingered,
we were too young to comprehend
impossibility and dysfunction,
and you held the fragile fabric of us
together, so tenuously together.

I hear the click of your high heels
against cracked sidewalks
on starless, late-shift nights,
the last bus home, you unafraid of darkness
and broken streets. Looking like a movie star
in that necklace with pale blue stones,
like chips of ice. You told me shadows
disappear when we keep moving.

I took the rosary beads
when we cleaned out your mobile home.
Seven pairs, I hung them on my wall
next to the necklace.
They shine a rainbow
when afternoon sun catches
and I think of your faith,
my profound lack.

But now you feel as close
as breathing and I dream
a bridge over your absence.

PREDICATE

BY NANCY CHERRY

While I am reading entries from my past
where my mother speaks to me
down the phone line and my father
drives his truck home,
the verbs alter in my mind—
spoke, spoken, driven, drove—
as if what was written must adapt
to my present perspective, as if
to read of the past in present tense
is a lie. Tomorrow, I will no longer
be sitting in town twenty years away
from where I used to live
not wanting to confuse who I am now
with who I was in the house up the hill
the way I do in dreams where I am still
married to the man downstairs, still
painting the kitchen Sea Coral
in the morning sun, still storing
the crystal in the dining room cabinet,
the silverware in the drawer below, and
I know which clothes hang in the closet,
the shirts I like to iron in the living room
as I watch afternoon TV, the smell of steam
rising from clean linen
like everyday weather—the entire history
of our lives together stretched
into the future as if it never happened.

THE GRILL
BY KEN HAAS

A Weber Spirit E315. Which we ordered together,
assembled together. She steadied the base
while I, rightly or wrongly, attached the wheels
and sidewalls, then mocked the instructions as she
persuaded the drip tray holder and battery pack that
they belonged precisely where she had thrust them.
We wrestled the barbecue in jointly, then she coyly
slipped the wires through their tenebrous openings
and palmed me the screws with which to hitch
the front panel to its grudging wagon. I sang *Sunday
Morning Coming Down*, which sounded embarrassed,
as she eased in the burner caps, wiggled on the knobs.
She hummed *Jolene* as if it meant something,
while I anchored the side wings with the brackets
and lock nuts she had gouged from an ornery box.
Facing one another we groaned the propane tank
into its pocket of doubt, evoking the night we
took turns spooning each other out of all things
that had been done to us, as if we were the ones
who had done them. She stripped the corn, slit
the peppers and zucchini, spatchcocked the chicken,
rubbed it with irreverence. Grease spanking the flames,
I cooked in thickheaded gloves with fork and tongs,
smiling so past regret that she snapped a picture
to text my sister, as evidence. I will never understand
how she sometimes feels she doesn't make me happy.

OLD RHYTHMS AND NEW RHYTHMS
BY JEFFERY ALLEN TOBIN

The rutted path behind the cattle shed
still cuts its line, though hooves have long since gone.
Grass works slow reparations in the clay,
but never quick enough to seem undone.

Along the lane, the blackthorn scabs the ditch,
bare-knuckled fists against the rain and sun.
Each spring it blooms like nothing ever hurt,
then hardens back to bone when summer runs.

We call the past a better field, a sky
where every star was fixed and close at hand.
We take the old house, with its sagging door,
and paper up the cracks with talk of gold.

But rot set in before we ever knew;
the joists gave first, a thin and splintered yield,
like changes underfoot—silent, slow—
until a boot goes through, and all falls in.

Meanwhile the river bulges overnight,
yanks cobblestones like loose teeth from its bed,
and trees that rooted steady for a century
go sideways, all at once, in one night's flood.

Old rhythms drum inside the wrist and bone:
a way of setting snares, of stoking fires,
a way of cutting words until they shine—
while new ones ghost their way into the frame,
wearing no warning but their own arrival.

It isn't neat, the way the old gives way,
nor honest, how we light it up in story:
not worse, not better—only worn by touch,
a weaving done by hand, and torn by hand.

HADES AND PERSEPHONE'S PILLOW TALK

BY LAUREN SCHARHAG

I miss my mother.

Can we not talk about your mother right now? Aren't my asphodel meadows enough for you? My ghost-pale gardens, white as winter breath, rooted in stony soil, sustained on the brackish water of my five rivers?

It does have a stark beauty, I don't deny that. But I don't dream here.

You will. Even the dead dream. I promise, they do.

But I'm not dead. Like you, I will never die.

Time enough to become accustomed to these halls.

Why me?

Because I love how your flesh ripples like silk caught in a breeze. I love how the flutter of your eyelashes matches the flutter of pulse at your temples. I love the springiness of your eternally youthful bones, the oils still infusing your hair. I love the deep red sea of your platelets, the freshwater stream of your lymph, the delicate pink of all your tissues.

I miss warmth. I miss the peonies and the fragrant thyme. The only green thing here is slime, and the air is dank, no fragrance like cypress or mountain tea, crocus or apple-bearing sage.

Sounds garish.

That's my mother's house you're talking about.

Sorry, love. Truth be told, I enjoy watching you grow pale and wan down here. I enjoy watching you become severe. Then you'll go away and let the sun make you fierce, so you return to me as the queen you were always meant to be.

And I love watching you molder in the dark. You're the soil from which spring violets and bear's breech, the barley, the Savatiano grapes. The gnarled olive trees that grasp through rocky outcroppings remind me of your touch, ripping through barriers to grasp at light.

I made myself handsome for you. I donned a fresh coat of flesh, had spiders weave me this hair. I warm my hands in vapors of brimstone before I hold you. And despite my careful sartorial decisions, you still manage to strip me right back down to my calcified essence.

You are darkly handsome, but you smell of rotten eggs.

More pomegranate, darling?

You taste of loam and lichen and aged beef.

I am the desiccation that brings raisins, the slow vinting of wine. If you can learn to grow down here, then so can all the fruits and flowers of your mother's house.

Promises, promises.

Together, we make eternity, the unending cycle. What I kill, you resurrect. What you nurture, I break down and feed to my kingdom of mushrooms. A womb and a tomb, passion and ashes. I am inevitable. You are merely likely, but adaptable. In time, you will like it here. Together, we'll raise children, hell, and the dead. Our daughter will do all the dreaming for you.

And I will release every hero that passes through these gates. I will release everyone capable of defying you. I will make your kingdom mine. I will be the mistress of Hell's kitchen with all its blades and fires, fashion a flag from this bloody sheet and claim my own nation. And yes, a daughter who will strike fear into the hearts of men.

I shall bring you the hearts of men on a platter.

Was that a proposal?

It was.

Then I do.

Section Two

DON'T TRY

BY ABDULMUEED BALOGUN ADEWALE

*—I'm glad you've guarded me and bent my life away from blessings that don't last—Marina
Tsvetaeva*

- I. Trust me, there's nothing wrong with your sight.
- II. That distant figure dancing by the singing swirling river is indeed a tree and of course, a cypress.
- III. Your guts are indeed God's little angels sentinelizing your soul,
when they exhort you, yield to the drum of their guidance at an ecstatic pace.
- IV. Don't try at all, against their wishes, mending your deeds like rags, into modelling
your desired outcome alive.
- V. What you see is indeed a big blinding smoke. Do not attempt to convince yourself otherwise.
- VI. You're not down with myopia, nor are there clouds of cataracts frolicking before your blue
iris
like toddlers underneath a deploring April sky.
- VII. This way you're feeling is the truth.
- VIII. Do not silence the God within you.
- IX. There are more alluring flowers in the garden of life than those widely accepted rosy reds.
- X. Yours is not a fate destined for roses, stop seeking reds.
- XI. Yours is a path of turquoise blue with a touch of gold at its hems and a legion of angels
blowing soulful trumpets and flutes all the way.
- XII. There's no light at the end of this tunnel. Stop squeezing your eyes.

RADIANCE, GRACE, AND GOD-FILLED SPACE
BY JEFFERY ALLEN TOBIN

Not so much a summons
as a soft giving-over —
the morning frost resigning to noon,
the knot in the tree loosening
into a burl, a beauty.

First, the bright obedience:
small shoes polished for Mass,
a whispered catechism in the dark,
the oiled hush of faith taken whole
like bread still hot from the oven.

Then the long unbecoming,
the fervor worn down
to studious doubts,
to breathless clutches at the tangible —
the pull of late buses, newsprint smudges,
the clutch of keys at the door.

All the while, unnoticed,
a slow knitting beneath
what we break and scatter:
a lean space filling
not with certainty
but with a steadied emptiness,
a room prepared.

Now, the turn —
grace neither sought nor reasoned with
but encountered the way
a hawk's shadow touches
the back of a hand
before the hawk is seen.
A prayer half-remembered,
not for show but for staying afloat,
sounding the depth
where the old words still hold.

Radiance, grace, and God-filled space —
not as conquest, not as comfort,
but as a kind of remembering,
a kind of coming home
to the hollow we carried all along,
ready to receive
whatever dares to fill it.

YES THIS
BY JAY PAINE

in the star-smear of this kósmos
this cause of my being
did you lose the fragments *yes this*
 yes this
or did each become a small treasure
the lake's inky surface fluctuating far above?
listen i can't dive into this body's depths again
i'm trying to be realistic
the conception of the ideal self failed
which is why i prayed
 maker of forms *yes this*
 yes this
and every night since
a recursive dream my fingers disrupt
the moon's unstable reflection
how light is soft
how light can be reshaped
but it's never that simple
mushrooms are perfected in the dark
and in the early hour
i reach for the protrusion *yes this*
 yes this

THOSE HAREBELLS
BY DAMARIS WEST

I last saw them
two years ago along this coast,
puffed with their own breath, breeze-shaken,
poised over scarcely more than stone
among wild thyme and rockrose.

They were thrush's egg blue,
classic-cotton-pyjama blue,
enough-to-make-a-Dutchman's-trousers blue,
blue as sea-sediment
in a cup of skyline.

To reach them now would take me past
paddleboards of swimming ducks,
trekking poles of herons,
chequered flags of oystercatchers
riding the wind's propeller.

I'd have to swing boulder to boulder,
wade through bladderwrack,
cling to cliffs,
conscious of the tide advancing
and the blue of my horizon receding.

DOG DAY MORNING

BY MICHAEL DWAYNE SMITH

What then? A future that extends as far as one can stand it.
Ambition is the true constraint. Days promise nothing,
deliver hills afire, and answers spill from June skies like

no big deal—they were there all the time. Patience, oddly,
doesn't feel like time passing. We smile, terrible, at love
and the way it passes with a wave and a blown kiss, no

boredom in its gaze, all exercise to the heart, but what
matters at last are these atmospheric changes, light and ash,
that glorious white horse-head of the moon, your childhood

racing away and then back again as your body enters its
cave of decay, its church of regret, its shrinking corridor
of imagination. St. Peter's hallucination cannot save you

in the end, nor will Kant's realm, and in the street it's early,
nostrils charmed as you jog past the bakery, Philip Whalen's
ghost a step or two behind you, as America wakes up to its

breakfast and its preoccupations, though you have to piss,
aware only of that and the drone of blank obligations roused
around you, like sad dogs in a pound of their own making.

THE SOUVENIR

BY RYAN WARRING BIRD

There are no gift shops
in The Void.

So, I stole you
a handful of darkness.

It's cold, viscous, and unstable,
But yet, I bore it gladly
across formless space,
in cupped hands.

You must drink it
and tell me
how this flavour compares
to all the darkness
you've known,

and whether you prefer
this vintage,
simply because
it belongs
somewhere

else.

✱

LINEN

BY TUHIN BHOWAL

—for *IZ*; after James Merrill

I am never the same body twice, the Body speaks, at the spectacle
Of wearing a new shirt, the body cowers, lest this cowering forget,
So degraded my butterfly chest, arms, and my back weak, so sinister
My religious guise, naked, that my body arcs the knees, calves' translucence
Tight, rise, hold, yet the navel stinks into a finger whose all desires lose,
Unfold, the way a baby goat's only eye jiggles static in its dire
Socket—not in fear, not at transparency of life, no song, it gimmicks
Not even rage but mercy, an etiquette for the world's roundabout grim
Ways, while all this while, mortal flesh disintegrates as deluded trout—
Beyond the final flaying of the blade, blood spits veined, the body dead
Turns silver; now the body gets clothed, both hands pivoting buttons busy
Underneath the stitches, loose, but shame, shame is reticent in roiling on
Like clumps of soil colloidizing vision turbid, Virgil in a glass tilling—
What you see is neither sedimentary nor separable—albeit, hills
On the scrim hosting jingoism of men, clamor as rattling bones serpents
Only dreamt of until now; nonetheless, I crackle my knuckles obscure
And sound pops another lopsided shirtlop, what a pity, as buttons
Skip each other like years, precisely, sliding into their wrong holes,—hands, but
Hands often miss, *and your hands*, the Body speaks, *always think differently*—hand
Knows that the etymology of this line, hence, all lines to ever be,
Like materials of my memory, is fabric, the body's lone veneer—
Wait, whose eager child, loiters by your waist, a girl or a boy, who has grown?
The beloved is difficult to find, the tooth tick-ticking, whose
Flexing thumbs industrious in pain, little tongue still a child, picking
The broken tooth, *your wisdom*—the way from that very first day buttons uproot,
Yarn-dangling-hair like tassels of corn, needles knot in the eye, Let the tooth
Drop, it's eight years late, I'm sold to my arid emporium of buttons,
Craggy gums smile, my body is slick to unburden its corroded sheen,
My ancient textile, the Body speaks, The colour of my mind is green.

TRANSCONTINENTAL
BY SEAN WHALEN

Stranded in the Winnebago he believes
Bob sings *Tangled Up in Blue* directly to him
and that if Bob was here he'd talk them into forgiving him

The mountains of the Oregon coast
form a shield wall
against Des Moines

He longs for the north woods but was tempted to stay
for the red-haired stranger in Tillamook
whose laces he untied after they pushed
a broken Winnie towards welcoming tides and slick currents

But that was watersheds ago
and now Winnie has died for good at the top of the world
There's no chance of getting back to him somehow

Coasting downhill he swims his hand in the wind
to mimic the otters diving in the kelp beds
the narrative in his head as frothy as the waves
hammering the rocks calm as the rips
dragging otter pups to the sea lions and orcas
cruising near the drop off to deep water

Becalmed at the bottom
he lights up Winnie as a pyre
prays the smoke will carry his forgiveness east

Thus untangled he strips bare
wades into the bay drifts west sinks
into the blue

HOLLER THE COST

BY DANIEL EDWARD MOORE

At four AM my Facebook feed
 invites me to a virtual tour of Auschwitz,

to sign up my senses for a total collapse
 if I stand on mountains of shoes

blinded by glasses, broken, and bent,
 grieving a missing face.

If I go my brain will arrive in a cattle car
 stuffed with extraordinary lives

about to be changed by ordinary gas into
 Zyklon clouds the birds remember

as hands that fed them bread,
 as mouths practicing summer's songs

on a peaceful Polish sabbath.
 If I stay my heart becomes a barbwire cage,

emptied of beautiful grieving things for the
 yellow stars in heaven.

I LEND MY DAUGHTER A WORD
BY ELIZABETH CRANFORD GARCIA

What we find a mile past
the marsh grass, the wax myrtle,

the heron perched there,
ibises' white chatter, the clutch

of oysters in the pluff mud:
the edge of this world

is no edge at all. Wind-smeared gray.
One smudge of horizon,

one blur of spray.
Nothing here is blue.

The wind empties us
of everything but awe.

Does the bright swatch of light
vanish to a distant point,

or spill toward us? She says,
I like to look out far to see

*how big it is—
and scary.*

We're all so small, so lost
in the froth of shore.

This year, they all
wrestle the waves. It's cold—

but not so cold I can forget
the crying I heard the night before,

tiptoed to their room
to find my son, sniffing:

I thought you'd never come.
It's there in the *sandspur*

and *broomseidge*, in *bitter panic grass*.
In the mouths of gulls,

cawing in long scythes,

a riot of wings, beaks

hooked to peck a bite
from sister's sturdy fist.

How the tide pool pins her
to disappearance.

WHY WE CAN SLEEP
BY JANE RICHARDS

Sometimes before I fall asleep
when cold pulses past the windows
and house timbers crack,
I think about the birds,
fat cardinals, cautious at the feeder,
grab-n-go chickadees,

for they must sleep, too,
and the night is bitter
and I imagine them
huddling inside a tree hollow,
or perched alone on a pine bough,
fluffing feathers, shivering,

and I fluff a down comforter
over my shoulders,
let the world take care of itself for a while,
as the birds must, too—
in the closing of eyelids
the vision of a rising sun.

DELUSIO BENE ESSE
BY ROBERT WEXELBLATT

As you step on to the pavement
after bearing the dentist's quest
for profitable trouble, a
scrutiny that, for once, turned up
neither cavities nor decay,
no plausible case for root
canal, just the head shake and the
ineluctable *We'll have to*
keep an eye that bicuspid,
teeth scraped clean to innocence
by the meticulous, only
mildly scolding hygienist
who scoured a smile so bright
you feel like you've dropped half a pound's
worth of plaque—you're confident of
your invulnerability,
sure that even a careening bus
would miss you, that a deranged drunk
on the subway wouldn't single
you out or have a knife, and that
when you get home there's bound to be
something more delightful than a
fistful of bills in the mailbox.

You've fixed the veneer that detached
from the kitchen cabinet with
contact cement and it looks
just fine, nobody's going to guess
that it was ever flapping free
and looking cheap, they won't even
know it's just veneer, while you'll be
congratulating yourself for
how smart it was thinking to use
contact cement, so you saunter
from room to room breathing deeply,
bowels at ease, alimentary
canal and lungs in good trim
that will be as everlasting
as that cabinet's bogus oak.

The myrtle you picked out at the
garden store as ground cover for
your blotchy backyard looks all right,
unwilted, the garden maven
swore it would spread, stay green all

winter, be verdant by next spring
when periwinkle blooms will burst
and you're certain you'll be alive
to see them erupt come April.

After half an hour of frenzied
searching the two couches, under
three chairs, four drawers, and two beds, you
finally find the lost remote
and all at once the feng sui
of familiarity is
restored now everything is just
where it ought to be, nothing will
ever get misplaced again, just
as that can of Flex-Seal will keep
the cellar dry forever more.

The last grandson's graduated,
you survived all his finals, term
papers, even the senior thesis,
so you suppose you're immortal.

Two hours in and at last you've
hit on *le mot juste*, grinning
at that word, you're certain
the rest of the poem will slide
out smoothly like an easy birth.

A PICKLE PICTURE
BY ANN CHINNIS

He texted me a thumbs down emoji,
followed by:

**PLEASE. Stop with the old pictures
of her crusading for her causes,
or pictures of her causes & desist
with pictures of her typewriter.**

No more pictures of our dead mother
in her blue cotton muumuu sautéing
button mushrooms while reproving Bishops
in two columns on her cookbook flyleaf:
“Pro Ordination of Women” & “Con”.

No pictures of her justice speeches
typed on onion skin paper or a picture
of her file card printed in fountain pen,
“Shrimp Thermador for Forty”—
culinary coercion for her political missions.

Which meant no more pictures of me,
because while my mother typed
brave addresses about oppression, I rested
my head on the floor by her desk, adoring
the stubborn thunk
of her Smith Corona’s manual carriage return,
picturing myself in her image,
a gentle anarchist too—even an ER doctor.

So, I sent him a pickle picture,
not even that black and white picture
from ’76, Rev. Jeannette Piccard kneeling—
her ordination at sixty-nine as first female
Episcopal minister—my mother beaming.
It wasn’t that picture. This was a picture
of a perfectly pickle-shaped pickle,
fished with metal tongs from a vat of brine
at 7-Eleven by my mother
in her high heels & leather gloves & periwinkle beret.

No, this was a picture
of a companionable pickle
on the front seat of our mother’s
Country Squire station wagon with faux wood trim

that she drove city to city, shaming
her non-inclusive church with speeches
she typed on her Smith Corona. This picture
was just a pickle picture.

A patient pickle in the passenger seat,
waiting for me to finish field hockey practice.

A bashful pickle in a wax paper bag,
like my commando mother, disguised as something disarming.

A charming pickle—like my mother's Ozark yarns—
making lemonade from a vinegar day.

A picture of a powerful pickle
overwhelming my mother's Femme by Madame Rochas
perfume and my sweat from practice with onion & garlic.

The day I quit the field hockey team,
after warming the bench for another season,
my mother, upon seeing my defeated face
slouch into the car, handed me the wax bag
with the pickle.

Feel it! she tempted.

Although you can't tell from the pickle picture—
the pickle in the picture was not too hard,
not too soft—inevitably an impeccable crunch.
My mother, plucking our pickle-penny
off the dashboard—

like she did every day—
slid the coin into my palm,
"Heads, you bite first. Tails, it's me!"

DAUGHTER, REDUX
BY SREEJA NASKAR

i sleep in the spine of the house /
door unlatched, tongue pressed
to roof / waiting for the ceiling to breathe me in.
 mother says *i was born backwards.*
 says *grief wrapped around your ankle*
 like a birthright.
and i've been limping ever since.
 my name
a blood bruise inside someone else's mouth
(they chew around it)
still call me
daughter
like it's a promise they'll keep.
the floorboards remember my weight /
but not my warmth.
a ghost that forgot to vanish.
i think i was supposed to become
 a tree, a reed,
 something soft and
 full of listening.
but i just became—
her.
(the closed fist, the open wound.)
 became the night light left on
 for a girl who never came back.
became the shadow of her prayer hands,
the apology she never swallowed.
what a mess i leave.
 bones folded into the dark like
 origami teeth—
and even the silence
 doesn't want me.
 i knock on my own skin.
(no one answers.)
i tell god,
i am tired of being your daughter.
and somewhere in the dark,
something agrees.

GARSCUBE RESEARCH FACILITY
BY HEIDI JOFFE

Greta, my dad's pig, greets
us with a grunt, rolls over onto her back
for the obligatory tummy rub. Maybe it's a spring day, maybe
slightly cold. She's gentle, smarter
than most humans, but his hands
that check organs and temperature with
the tenderness one gives to the dying,
her doom held, her fate sealed, the cord
of his love, snipped.

I will escape her pen
to pull apart the veils
of leaves, to reside
against the roots of trees, watching the thrush
pull a pink worm from the warming loam,
my palms pressing into the cambium knots
of Himalayan plants, a century of secateurs
pruned this transplanted
root into shrub and tree—pink and purple shadows from the flower's bell shaped
clusters, the rock incising my dirty knees
with fingernail moons.

I hear my name,
carried across the water, but I don't want to leave this place, not ever,
and I never want that pig to die.

NIGHT SHIFT AT THE OBSERVATORY
BY ABBY PULLAN

3 AM

The universe unfolds like a letter I've been afraid to open.

The telescope's mechanical eye tracks Jupiter's slow waltz across the dome of everything.

Coffee grows cold in my thermos as I calculate distances between here and the horsehead nebula.

Numbers so large they lose meaning, become pure abstraction, the mathematics of loneliness.

In the control room's blue glow, I am the only witness to a star's dying light, photons that travelled six hundred years just to meet my retina at

this exact moment.

The caretaker finds me at dawn,

still staring at printouts of cosmic background radiation.

The afterglow of creation captured in pixels and static.

He nods, understanding that some jobs require you to lose yourself in the beautiful mathematics of being infinitely

small.

COLDER THAN A WELL-DIGGER'S ASS
BY JOHN DAVIS

I envision two hairless half moons
rising from the earth.
A north wind blows against the flesh,
the owner of which, bent over and coughing,
digs bits and pieces of frozen earth.
This ass would be happier completely frozen,
freezing to death but no, this ass is cold

and once the pride of teenage girls
at beach parties, once the trimmed flanks,
the rump roast, the roastbeast that cannibals
drooled over. Long ago, this ass qualified for a
U.S. Choice Top Grade A meat sticker. Now it has
widened out, and, if truth be told, should be stamped
with a *Not Less Than 30% Fat* ground beef sticker.

Not even a witch's tit in a brass bra
on the shady side of an iceberg
is this lonely, this wrinkled, this cold.
This mile-wide ass that longs
for a massage and warm shower water
running off the bounce of its curves,

longs to be told *Nice job, Ass, for supporting my
350 pounds of blubber on cafe stools.*
How this ass would love for the well-digger
to sleep on his side under goose down quilts.
But it is not to be.
This ass is where they keep the cold of the world.

Section Three

DOUG AT THE BUREAU OF DESIGNATION AND APPELLATION
BY SHUTTA CRUM

“ . . . what did I know of love’s austere and lonely offices?”
Robert Hayden, *Those Winter Sundays*

tangerine	kumquat	persimmon
✓named	✓named	✓named

dust flies out
as he pushes over another hefty page
his job getting harder by the day
the hour the minute the second
so many names already given, taken

some things are difficult to name
like the desire to explode outward into all that is lovely
like the scream that sits afraid in the belly
like this nebulous thing on his desk
—waiting patiently to be named

he loved the sound of tangerine—all glow
 and high-spirited
he loved the lip-smacking sound of kumquat
and the persistence of persimmon
 on the tongue and in the ear
those were good names—oh!
he had his heyday, once

but he’s left difficult decisions too long
now, he scans notes he’s scribbled
in the ancient codex, many sunk into obscurity
could there be some variation of an older name
some combination he’d overlooked
that he could use for this unnamed thing

lust	need	love
already designated		

there’s no getting around it—
he slides another #2 yellow pencil behind an ear
scoops the squishy thing from his desk
puts it in his mouth—yes!

that complex and uncategorized want
 to be more
 to hold more
 to be a vessel that pours forth but never empties

he rolls the taste of that idea around
feels his tongue swell as it prickles
the lining of his throat
feels it seep through his body, opening pores

he turns to the final page in the book of names
strokes the creamy skin of the blank vellum
knows there is no word, no adequate name

he rises from his desk
shuffles through a sea of scrunched-up lunch bags
and the fossils of half-eaten peanut butter sandwiches
to put on his coat, pick up his hat, pry open the door

behind him—the immensity of possibility

BEFORE BREAD

BY ANI BACHAN

—after Al Purdy

Until the matrimony of flour and water
You and I are the communion on everyone's lips
By day, I grind seeds into paste and you
Make up words for clouds
Today, you called one Equestrian
Which sounds almost right
Come nighttime, we slug
Over to a patch of green
Large enough for two vertical beasts
The paste, hard in our bellies, leaves no leftovers such
We take our clothes off and just talk about the weather
I think it'll rain when we die, you think we never will
We agree that a breeze is lucky one way when it clears our eyes
But unlucky the other since we see less of each other
You say the Equestrians look especially close this evening
I don't tell you that John claimed the word for horizontals last Tuesday
The equestrians gallop until we fall asleep
Then tip over the edge of the sky and become
Something vertical, almost like us.

ODE TO OKRA
BY SARAH BANKS

From seeds, you flower
white-cupped blossoms
before I pluck the pods, furry
lady's fingers, a staple
of southern vegetable plates.
In books, you're labeled a fruit,
but never mind the botanical class.
We slice you in the kitchen,
then name you what we like.
Lunch ladies serve you slippery
green, stewed with tomatoes
and colors like Christmas.
When packed into jars and suspended
in brine, we suck the salt
from slimy sheaths, but fancy markets
sell you dried, crunchy, and mixed
with vegetable chips.
At home, I halve the pods lengthwise
to roast them on a sheet, but Grandma
cuts you into rounds. Coated in cornmeal,
she fries you in oil. My fork sidesteps
the ham and potatoes
to spear one golden okra bloom
and split the seeds between my teeth —
fruit that flowers in my mouth.

TEACHING EMMA TO MAKE BONE BROTH
BY MICHELLE McMILLAN-HOLIFIELD

Char the body over winter wood.
The smoke will haunt the muscled house.
Tear meat from bone. Set it aside for later.

Steep the remains in a stockpot. As it heats,
skin, the body's fatty fabric, releases oils
slick and glistening for flavor.

Drop in the chandelier of bones. See how they
unbuckle themselves in the boiling turmoil.
That brackish sluice! That bayou juice!

—

Let all the primitive spices—salt, cilantro, bay leaves,
parsley, turmeric—stipple and hum in the greening
spleen of the kettle. Add rinsed carrots, celery stalks,

julienned peppers, a dash of pizzazz. Shred the diaphanous
domes of the onions, their in-slices but also
the basal plates, and the roots, those earth soldiers.

Pluck the garlic buds from their flaky slums.
Press until their spurs rupture and run deep
and pungent into the furrows of your fingerprints.

Throw in the skins, the satchels, the umbels,
all of it, as the swash suds and burbles.
Wild daughter, this is your calling, darling.

—

First, you were a thought. Then sprout. We wanted to grow you
from seedling into garden full and fat. All that tender greenery:
our soothing pardon. Ah! Your hums. Your hymns.

Fusion of function and beauty. Savory and sweet. My body's basin
craved the seasonings: the clippings, the pods of cardamom,
cinnamon sticks, ginger. All the livenings. Worth tasting.

—

Remember you were all perfumed ingredients gleaming like ornamental stems.

—

Emma you sweet trick, you musky dance, you vapor.
I had neither smoke, nor fire, nor wind, nor soil enough
to grow you. Your supple, soft tissue washed out of me.

With you went the way I looked others in the eye, the way I
invited camaraderie, as together some stranger and I would ponder
turnips or mustards, galas or honey crisps, cumin or curry.

I took pleasure in the small hello. The singing's stopped.
Emma: wild and brief girl who almost was. Persimmon.
Bittermelon husk. Emma, look at your almost-mother.

Slack-skinned, *bent-double*: a curse whisking, muddling,
sloping the spoon as if the spoon was a key, as if the key
was a cup, as if the cup was a mortar, as if the mortar

had a pestle, as if the pestle crushed the spices, as if the spices
polluted the dense crawl of swamp. Emma: You drown me.
I could not keep up with your scree, that sliding deluge.

—

This soup is biting. A bitter smack. One false relish after another.

WHY I DON'T WANT YOU TO SEW ME UP
BY VALY STEVERLYNCK

I tell my OB—

This is where seed swims to root into flower
each wave in its wake a shimmer, a shine

This is where hoofs gallop, thirsty, to water
each press of their weight a flare, a flash

flicker of crystals, kaleidoscope, this is where
shapes melt into rivers of radiance

turquoise and silver neon explosion
fuchsia, chartreuse, glimmering gloss

ash grey sometimes, burnt orange, charred red
damned river instead of cascade

seat of oxytocin, of disappointment,
this is where I open and shut.

This is where I first felt their precious heads crown
round planets, plasmatic, electric like stars

steel cabled my back, my thighs awled and punched
loosened my legs, their celestial slide

surging and soaring, sagging, collapsing
lapse ligaments, muscles, organs and pride

labored my smile, sullen brown bulge
this is where my body withers without

permission, acceptance, love, tenderness—
eyehole, prismatic, black hole, black void

vacuum or plenum, ebb flow of tide
this is where I sow the garden of my life.

ANALOGOUS

BY JEAN VONEMAN MIKHAIL

Like a second-hand canoe,
I was pulled by the rope of one arm,
and surrendered myself
to the cloud-skinned river.
We joined, a confluence of two.
Our bodies drudged-up,
dragged-under the floodwater.
Our toes touched down into muck
like lily rhizome, and the creep
of their stems tangled ropes
around my ankles and wrists.
The bottom-feeder's belly
scraped over my face.
Mud in its eye. I think I dreamt-up little
minnows flashing their small
underwater mirrors, signaling
keep still, keep still. Then, I awoke
to what was happening.
The hand-held mirror resting
on my dresser flipped
face down, cracked in half,
shattering into tributaries.
That is when you landed on top of me.
Were you trying to keep me
from drifting away?
Your face steadied in my hands
like a dog-water bowl, wobbling.
My four-post-bed rose, uprooted.
North. South. East. West.
All directions of my room closed in.
Arms and legs sprawled out:
mine, yours, the bed's bumped
and pitched together. Limbs
dangled down into river rage.
My mother's wedding gown
arose from the hope chest.
Imagine my heartbeat as a little
darting fish, skipping under a rock.
My mouth half opened into a kiss.
I watched as her veil flowed
like a carp's swishing tail.
Fish-skin-scale-sequins loosened
from the puffed sleeves of the gown
sloughed from its hanger.
Once, a river-twist against her skin.

I felt the sting of a ray-finned catfish.
Fear wriggled me upside down.
I railed at the black-barbed whiskers.
The chinless bumping.
Were you attempting to save me?
I was a child already used
to swimming. You
engaged the oars of your body,
ferried me home in your half-sunk
birch-skin boat. The white nose
pointed into the shoulder
of the riverbank then shuddered.
When our roof detached, lifting off,
my mother paddled down the hallway.
Curious about the commotion.
Her sheer-terror of a nightgown.
She yelled as the shingled side
of the roof pitched wide, eased
open like the cover of a book.
Think fire. Think brimstone. Think
Rapture. River scripture written
in red. River-god slug tongue.
Bad blood coughed from the culverts.
Uprooted willows hung their heads.
I grabbed at the cattails wagging
with the river's own wind,
releasing their seed into the flow.

THE LIMITS OF CURIOSITY
BY SUSANNAH SHEFFER

We went in pairs, diving
under the surface of the lake

which offered no opinion
and then emerging into the cockpit

of the upside-down kayak
to rest in that bubble of air,

that cove of sudden intimacy,
almost nose to nose

with the other summer
camper, so mammalian

in our requirements.
The day the other girl said

*do you want to see if it's possible
to use up all the air in here*

I learned that I didn't want
to know everything after all.

Not how far we could go
or how much one person

could agree to do for another.
Not how little we could get away with.

I took a fast gulp of that obvious *no*
and slipped out of her proposal

back onto the shore of my
limited, needful life.

RED, RED, RED REDUNDANT
BY GINA FERRARA

A ladybug crawls toward a pile of unpublished poems.
Sheathe, coat, or shell, red stands out,
ask a soldier in a revolutionary war.
I think the bug will bless my poems,
so I watch it scale the stack
and reach one titled "Scandent Potential".
The ladybug manifests its own expertise,
having crawled within jasmine, cat's claw vines
through floral barriers, a hedge,
red roses and ready thorns,
up the drain spout, the full height
of our house the color of sun-baked bricks,
finding a thumb sized hole in the screen
to enter a slack window upstairs.
My page cannot be turned,
transporting the ladybug outside,
its redness, one stray, rolling rosary bead
on a worded carpet hovering
above what's recently sprung from cool dirt.
That isn't all. There on the fence
two cardinals, the male masked and spectacular,
the female, her feathers a blush
on her breast, not a blaze of totality.
I tilt the page, place the ladybug
next to the roots of the honeysuckle,
specific to the swamp, pointy flowers,
vermillion bursts, cardinals taking flight,
splendor seen in these redundancies of red.

AN OZARK YAWP
BY JAY HOWARD

In my country along about April or May
we have redbuds and white dogwoods
by the thousands. I love this place.
Ask me if I mind there are men
with access to realms I'll never be.
I mean Forrest Gander. Oh sure,
I've been to the Redwoods. I've read
Shepard of the Hills. I know only one
language, but it has the word *wanderjahr*.
It has *yawp*. I'm the least among poets, but
I understood a line of John Ashbery once.
I was transported in a flash into a spacious
room, and I was just there. A ferryman
was once kind to Aphrodite in
disguise as an ugly old woman, and she
made him beautiful for it. That's
what love does to the good-natured.
It is the custom of the men of my country to
feign ignorance when outsiders are present.
We play a mean dobro when they leave.
In my country, we don't have breath-
taking, dramatic swaths of beauty, sky
pricking mountains. We have caves and
barn quilts. We're the prettiest place in the
world. I'm of those who seek a language
beyond letters, a country-free self. I want
to be with you in that spacious place.
The exquisite. The Good
Book says study to be quiet and work with
your own hands. I love that part. I'm dead
set on exploring this territory stem to stern.
I will seek what my heroes sought.
I will look for dogwood flowers in May.

VISITING THE POPE-LEIGHEY HOUSE

BY KENDRA RALSTON

—*After Frank Lloyd Wright*

i imagine us there, among our books perhaps some
splintering twilight under thicker stars, the cantilever
austere below our flowering dogwood, our red maple

and our writing room would too become a nursery,
our hands ripe with dimpling thighs instead of ink, little moon
craters on the tops of her palms, we'd sing lullabies

to her, our garlic, those soft-vined tomatoes, the bluebells
she would clutch with autumn-crisp air beneath our bare feet
beside you and i, our wine deep red, our reflection within it.

Link to Image



<https://savingplaces.org/places/pope-leighey>

SEAWARD

BY PETER SCHIRESON

Accompanied by Thelonious Monk,
I pour a bourbon and float out into the silver mist
that hangs over the yard.
Yellowed trees, dim in twilight,
lean together like a band tuning up.
Perched on a twig, a finch chirps,
and is still, a conspiracy of beauty,
in which I become an empty boat
drifting away on the warm shadow of a summer night,
impatience, yearning, bitterness, failure,
all drifting away.
In the morning, I try to pry the moment open.
Was it just the bourbon and Monk, or was it a taste of something
like what religious people mean when they talk about grace?
I join my wife in the kitchen, the room honeyed in morning sun,
the air suffused with the healing fragrance of waffles.
We take our coffee out to the yard.
Across the street, a teen girl walks a tiny dog on a rhinestone leash.
A dove pecks for worms at the edge of the grass.

HITCHING A RIDE IN MY LEFT SNEAKER

BY JACOB BUTLETT

Every spring, whenever I go for walks around town,
I watch passing headlights light up speckles of rain,
turning falling droplets into scintillating pieces
of marble in my imagination, and in those moments—

while I daydream beside traffic under my red umbrella,
strolling across crosswalks or down cobblestone lanes
overlooking rose gardens and pizza parlors—I pause
to shake a pebble out of my shoe. This happens regularly.

One moment, I'm passing by a cafe that smells of vanilla
bean and cinnamon spice, and then the next, a pebble
somehow sneaks into the speeding traincar of my left
sneaker and kicks into my heel as if to make room

to take a nap beside my wool sock, and every time,
I have to take a seat on a bench or stop inside a store,
out of the rain, unlace my shoe, and tip it over—
a shoe derailment at a bus stop or near a lettuce stand—

and the pebble tumbles out for dear life, disappearing.
Today, a pebble—perhaps the same pebble I always
find in my shoe, returning again and again for some
reason—elbows my toes. The rain pours on. Streetlights

blink on under a blanket of purple twilight clouds.
I sit on a dryish bench below a row of sycamores facing
a busy intersection, and with my free hand, I remove
my shoe. Before I can knock the pebble out, I stop.

Somedays, aren't we all just pebbles hitching rides
in some guys' sneakers, feeling misplaced, unwanted?
What a shame it would be to release this pebble
into the rain. A shame, really, to excommunicate

this innocent hitchhiker to the streets, where it would,
no doubt, be run over by trucks and buses or dragged
by a torrential downpour into sewers. I dig into the shoe.
The pebble—perfectly plain and smooth like a seedling.

How many people have admired it for just the way it is?
I rise from the bench, placing the pebble in my shirt pocket
so that the pebble, my tiny travel companion, may rest
under the beating of the rain, over the beating of my heart.

SELLANO TIBETAN BRIDGE, OCTOBER MORNING
BY SIMONA CARINI

The crossing starts with a step
on the first metal slat,
step two lands on the next slat:
between the treads

five hundred seventy-four feet of abyss,
the drop enveloped in crisp air.
My vow not to look down
forgotten at step three.

A sharp inhale, a long exhale,
I release tension into the open space,
and the mind empties.
One step, another,

one thousand twenty-three needed
to reach rock again on the other side.
I don't feel light, don't imagine I could fly,
a rope and clamp anchor me

to the steel cable at head height,
I place my trust in the harness
as I do in my friend, who steps behind me,
sharing the walk and wonder

all the way, another link added
to the steel bond between us.
Step, step, slide the clamp along the cable,
step, step, slide.

We reach a platform—a few slats
connected to cover the gap—
spin slowly, take in the hamlet ahead,
the village behind, hills covered

with holm oaks, white hornbeams,
vineyards empty of grapes,
festoons of yellowing leaves,
fields combed by the plow.

Time neither stops, nor runs fast,
simply leaves the scene, leaves us.

HALF WAY UP A MOUNTAIN IN UMBRIA
BY DAMARIS WEST

Through masking trees, the dusky pink
shoulder of a tower.

A white track climbs
between curving fringes of grass

and apple trees. Pears, apricots,
dragon's blood plums droop

under their dusty leaves.
Honey-scent of ripe fruit.

Orange blossom notes of broom.
Rosemary and lavender.

The sky has leaked into gravel
threaded with chicory.

A patio door stands open.
Beyond, terracotta tiles.

Three dogs race out
squirming with excitement.

They follow as chores are done:
up and down steps lugging water,

sickle and secateurs,
trimming and tending,

unwinding bindweed.
They flop in the shade.

Which roses have opened today
and which have the beetles eaten?

Below us the village sprawls
down its one street

and up the valley sides.
The ground quakes with evening drums.

HOUSEBOAT

BY M. BROOKE WIESE

Our second story bedroom windows looked
out over the ocean that was sometimes green
and slumbering, slowly rolling in while sunbaked
surfers straddling longboards bobbed in-between

the swells, patient for the long ride—more
black at times, the sea reflected clouds almost
touching wavetops, the sheeting rain offshore
like a heavy, velvet curtain on the coast,

green and shimmering like the aurora borealis.
Before a storm, the wash churned the sand almost
ochre, until the water became pewter
as each wave crossed the sandbar and every mollusk

lost its hold on the seabed and fish
were thrown helter-skelter in the surf,
glittering like tumbled coins or sea glass.
One daredevil was thrown headfirst

from his surfboard while others watched from shore,
weighing challenge against risk. The sea soared
as we watched from our second floor
and felt the house buck, and suddenly, come unmoored,

lift and pitch, a scow at last afloat.
We held fast to the newel post, and like a luffing sail
we swung this way and that as waves broke
over the porch steps, crept under the bottom rail,

over the sill, and climbed the stairs that torqued
beneath our feet, buckling floorboards and treads. The dogs
barked, then whined as the water rose and outlets sparked
and water spread, ruining all the rugs.

Wavelets sloshed against the locked bedroom door—
our last defense—then rushed in under the bed,
lifting it like a cork and tipping the four
of us, clinging nail and claw to the spread.

In time we gained our sea legs, balanced on the bed
and gazed out at the sea swells, monotonous

as Western fences. The dogs barked as two sea otters sped
round our bedroom, annoying an octopus.

When we first looked back, we saw a hole
where our house had been, a cinderblock and stone
foundation and a view straight through
to the house across the street, as if ours was blown

to smithereens by a tornado. Our block faded,
then the spit of land, then the land
itself. At first, scared and devastated,
we prayed and contemplated the end.

At first, we cried and hugged our dogs, and taking
the measure of our lives, we came up short,
embarrassed by our privilege as the world was breaking
and we drifted farther and farther from any port.

But much later, out at sea, no land in sight,
we watched the moonlight glance across waves
and fill the troughs with silver. We followed the flight
of planets and stars, the sky ablaze

with a light we couldn't conjure from the shore.
Now, on our porch, bathed in starlight, at sea,
rocked by the sea, our dogs and we, under Jupiter
and Mars, are exactly where we want to be.

ALL CREATURES EARTHBOUND AND SKYWARD
BY VIVIAN FAITH PRESCOTT

As a child aboard my grandfather's fishing boat,
I reached into a bucket and swished my small hand
through cold seawater, scooped up a seahorse

then let it go over the gunwale. I knew, even then,
to praise all critters, wonder at the diversity tucked
under stones, flying high in the thermals,

and swimming in water columns. Throughout my life,
I've praised the seahorse's brood pouch, their entwined
tails, female fertilizing male, his tender but wiggly belly

holding horses, his tail-shake releasing them into
their world of sea. I say, praise for the Spotted Sandpiper
on the edge of my beach, her many lovers are sitting

on her nests. While I'm snug in my cabin, she skims
low over sea, snatching up insects, bugs from shallow water,
a small crab. And praise for the alder tree, that sacred wood

equally male and female, smoking my king salmon
in the smokehouse. Praise for slender conical flowers,
their catkin dangle brushing my face on a forest walk,

those woody round cones scattering around my feet.
Praise the banana slug and the spot shrimp. Praise all
the beings and all these celebrated marvels embracing me,

enfolding—us. Praise for knowing the splendid
swimmerets and stunning slime, for that something
in me stretching out across the forest floor,

perfumed by flora and fauna, my creature-self reaching
toward you or you, and even you, especially toward you.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Felice Alexandra has an MFA in creative writing from Stonecoast MFA in Maine and is the recent winner of the Leon Priestnall Prize for Poetry. She is a California poet and lives in Ojai with her husband and fluffy dog. She likes long walks on the beach and homemade rhubarb pie.

Ani Bachan is a Toronto-based writer. She has been previously published in *The Quarter(ly)*, *Bear Paw Arts Journal*, *Gyroscope Review*, and others.

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Rachel Beachy Rachel Beachy lives in Kentucky with her husband and children. Her debut collection *Tiny Universe* will be published by Kelsay Books. Her poetry has also appeared in *Ephemera*, *ONE ART*, *The Orchard's Poetry Journal*, *Sky Island Journal*, *wildscape. literary journal*, and others. She was shortlisted for the Central Avenue Poetry Prize 2026.

Tuhin Bhowal is a writer, translator, and editor working between three languages: Hindi, Bengali, and English. Recipient of the Deepankar Khiwani Memorial Poetry Prize 2022, his poems and translations appear or are forthcoming in *The Margins*, *Ballast Journal*, *Redivider*, and elsewhere. A Translation Fellow at the South Asia Speaks Mentorship Programme 2025, Tuhin lives alone in Bangalore and tweets @tuhintranslates.

Ryan Warring Bird hasn't had poetry published in 15 years. Sure, he may have written little, and submitted even less, but let's not point any fingers here. He is also a father, tutor, and member of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Jacob Butlett is a three-time Pushcart Prize-nominated author. Jacob's creative works have been published in many journals, including the *Colorado Review*, *The Hollins Critic*, *The MacGuffin*, *Lunch Ticket*, and *Into the Void*. In December 2024, Aldrich Press published Jacob's debut book of poems, *Stars Burning Night's Quiet Rhapsody*.

Simona Carini was born in Perugia, Italy. She writes poetry and nonfiction (memoir, food, the outdoors). Her first poetry collection *Survival Time* was published by Sheila-Na-Gig Editions (2022). She lives in Northern California with her husband and two rescue cats, loves to spend time outdoors, and works as an academic researcher. Her website is <https://simonacarini.com>

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Ann Chinnis is the author of two poetry chapbooks—*Poppet, My Poppet*, and *I Can Catch Anything*. She is the recipient of a Pushcart Prize, 2025. Her work has been published in *Sky Island Journal*, *River Heron Review*, *Gyroscope Review*, and *Crab Creek Review*, among others. She is a retired Emergency Physician and a leadership coach and lives with her wife in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

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 three-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*.

Shutta Crum is a Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation honoree poet (2024). Her poems have appeared in many journals in several countries including *West Trade*, *Acumen*, *Calyx*, *Palette Poetry*, and *Boulevard*. A Pushcart nominee, she is the recipient of 9 Royal Palm Literary Awards (FL). Her chapbook *When You Get Here* won a gold RPLA. Her latest chapbook is *Meet Me Out There* (Kelsay Books). She publishes the monthly newsletter: The Wordsmith's Playground. www.shutta.com

John Davis is the author of *Gigs*, *Guard the Dead*, and *The Reservist*. His work has appeared in *DMQ Review*, *Iron Horse Literary Review* and *Terrain.org*. He lives on an island in the Salish Sea and performs in several bands. Jade plants, aluminum plants and unnamed string-bean type plants fill my room. Playing in the April dirt oh yes.

Eugene Datta is the author of the poetry collection *Water & Wave* (Redhawk, 2024) and the story collection *The Color of Noon* (Serving House Books, 2024). His work has appeared in publications such as *Mantis*, *Main Street Rag*, *Hamilton Stone Review*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, *Hoxie Gorge Review*, and elsewhere. A native of Calcutta, he lives in Aachen, Germany.

Roxanne Doty lives in Tempe, Arizona. Her debut novel, *Out Stealing Water*, was published by Regal House Publishing, August 30, 2022. Her first poetry collection was published by Kelsay Books in the spring of 2024. She has published stories and poems in various journals including *Third Wednesday*, *Amethyst Review*, *Cloudbank*, *Quibble Lit*, *Superstition Review*, *Cagibi*, *Espacio Fronterizo*, *Ocotillo Review*, *Forge*, *I70 Review*, *Soundings Review*, *The Blue Guitar*, *Four Chambers Literary Magazine*, *Lascaux Review*, *Lunaris Review*, *Journal of Microliterature*, *Flash Fiction Magazine* and *NewVerseNews*.

Gina Ferrara has five poetry collections: *Ethereal Avalanche* (Trembling Pillow Press, 2009), *Amber Porch Light* (Word Tech 2013), *Fitting the Sixth Finger: Poems Inspired by the Paintings of Marc Chagall* (Kelsay Books 2017), *Weight of the Ripened* (Dos Madres Press, 2020), an Eyelands Poetry Prize Finalist, and *Amiss*, also published by Dos Madres Press in 2023. Her work has appeared in numerous journals including *Callaloo*, *The Poetry Ireland Review*, *Tar River* and *The Southern Review* and was selected for publication in the *Sixty-Four Best Poets of 2019* by Black Mountain Press.

Jenna Wysong Filbrun is the author of the poetry collection, *Away* (Finishing Line Press, 2023). Her poems have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net and have appeared in *Autumn Sky Poetry Daily*, *ONE ART*, *tiny wren lit*, and other publications. She practices poetry to deepen her awareness of connection and loves to spend time at home and in the wild with her husband, Mike, and their dogs, Oliver and Lewis. Find her on Instagram @jwfilbrun

Elizabeth Cranford Garcia's debut collection, *Resurrected Body*, received Cider Press Review's 2023 Editor's Prize. Her work has appeared in *Southern Humanities Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Image*, *RHINO*, *Chautauqua*, *Rappahannock Review*, *Portland Review*, *CALYX*, and *Mom Egg Review*, and has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. She is an MFA student at Georgia State and mother of three. Read more at elizabethcranfordgarcia.com

Ken Haas lives in San Francisco, where he works in healthcare. His first book, *Borrowed Light*, won the 2020 Red Mountain Press Discovery Award, as well as a 2021 prize from the National Federation of Press Women. Ken has been nominated for multiple Pushcart Prizes has won the Betsy Colquitt Poetry Award and serves on the Board of the Community of Writers. His poems have appeared in over 50 respected journals and numerous anthologies.

Jay Howard is a teacher, poet, and writer living in the Missouri Ozarks with his wife and two dogs. He occasionally hosts a podcast called The Humanities District featuring conversations with artists and academics in his region. His book, *Digital Beings*, is forthcoming from Palgrave Macmillan. His poems and essays have appeared in *The New Territory*, *Modern Haiku*, *the Thieving Magpie*, and elsewhere.

Heidi Joffe(M.Ed.) is a poet and multimedia artist who crafts with fibers, clay, and words. She writes essays and screenplays, but poetry is her sustenance. Her publication homes include *Panoply*, *The Opiate*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Gyroscope Review*, and *Pine, Mountain Sand and Gravel*. She is currently completing an MFA at Pacific University.

Michelle McMillan-Holifield is a poet from the American South who also pens short fiction, creative non-fiction, and occasional book reviews. She is a Best of the Net (2018) and Pushcart Prize (2018) nominee, was semi-finalist in The MacGuffin's 29th Annual Poet Hunt (2024), and was longlisted for the Dzanc Poetry Prize (2024). Her work has been included in or is forthcoming in *Boxcar Poetry Review*, *Nelle*, *Rooted*, *Sky Island Journal*, *Stirring*, *The Main Street Rag*, and *Whale Road Review*, among others. She hopes you one day find her poetry tacked to a tree somewhere in the Alaskan Wild.

Jean Voneman Mikhail lives in Athens, Ohio, where she first came to study Creative Writing at Ohio University, so long ago. She has published in *Sheila Na Gig Online*, *One Art: a Journal of Poetry*, *Northern Appalachian Review*, *New Verse News*, *Gyroscope Review* and other literary journals and anthologies. In 2024, she was nominated for "Best of the Net," by *Eucalyptus Lit*.

Juan Pablo Mobili was born in Buenos Aires, and adopted by New York. His poems appeared in *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Hanging Loose Magazine*, *Louisville Review*, and *The Worcester Review*, among others, as well as publications in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Australia. He's a recipient of multiple Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominations, and an Honorable Mention from the

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Daniel Edward Moore lives in Washington on Whidbey Island. His work is forthcoming in *Xavier Review*, *Bryant Literary Review*, *The Meadow Journal*, *The Stillwater Review*, *Clackamas Literary Review*, *Sagebrush Review* and *River and South Review*. His book, *Waxing the Dents*, is from Brick Road Poetry Press.

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Jay Paine is a poet from Logan, Utah, where he attended Utah State University, earned a BA in English, and served as the Editor-in-chief for *Sink Hollow Undergraduate Literary Journal*. Embracing his desire to push the boundaries of language, he is currently pursuing an MFA in creative writing at New Mexico State University. His poetry appears in *The Roadrunner Review*, *Deep Wild Journal*, and *Constellations*, among others.

Vivian Faith Prescott (she/her) is a Bi writer, born and raised on a small remote island, Wrangell, Kaachxana.áak'w, in Southeast Alaska. She lives and writes in Lingít Aaní at her family's fishcamp on the land of the Shtax'heen Kwáan. She's the author of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction books. She's a member of the Pacific Sámi Searvi, an Indigenous Sami diaspora group, and a founding member of Community Roots, the first LGBTQIA+ group on the island. She mentors Alaskan writers in two writers' groups: Blue Canoe Writers and Drumlin Poets.

Abby Pullan is a 21-year-old poet from Leeds, Yorkshire, England, who writes about mostly anything that captures her imagination. A published poet with aspirations to change the way we read poetry, she finds inspiration in the ordinary moments of daily life and seeks to transform them into something extraordinary through verse. Her work explores diverse themes and contemporary voices, believing that poetry should be accessible and relevant to modern readers. She is committed to pushing the boundaries of traditional poetic forms whilst maintaining the emotional resonance that makes poetry powerful.

Kendra Ralston holds degrees from Smith College and Fairfield University. Her poems are forthcoming in *Anthropocene*.

Jane Richards is the author of a chapbook, *The Feather Variations*, and has been twice nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her poetry has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, including *Gyroscope Review*, *After Hours: A Journal of Chicago Writing and Art*, *The Glacial Hills Review*, *Willow Review*, and *The Best of Choeopfleirn Press*. A former piano teacher and social worker, she now pursues her life-long passions for writing, nature, and travel. She holds Masters degrees in social work and creative writing.

Jana Richardson has her MA and two BA's from the University of Utah. Her work has previously been published in *Eunoia Review*. She is currently either living in Windhoek, Namibia, or traveling indefinitely.

Lauren Scharhag (she/her) is an award-winning author of fiction and poetry, and a senior editor at Gleam. Her latest releases include *Screaming Intensifies* (Whiskey City Press), the *In the King's Power* series (self-published), and *Ain't These Sorrows Sweet* (Roadside Press). She lives in Kansas City, MO. <https://linktr.ee/laurenscharhag>

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Susannah Sheffer's newest poetry collection, *The Stone Tries to Understand the Hands*, was published by Cornerstone Press in early 2025. Her previous collections include *Break and Enter* (2021) and *This Kind of Knowing* (2013). She lives in Western Massachusetts.

Michael Dwayne Smith is the author of five books, including his forthcoming collection, *Shaking Music from the Angry Air* (Sheila-Na-Gig Editions, summer 2025); his work haunts many literary houses, including *Bending Genres*, *The Cortland Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Third Wednesday*, *Heavy Feather Review*, *Monkeybicycle*, and *Chiron Review*. He's a recipient of the Hinderaker Poetry Prize, the Polonsky Prize for fiction, and several Pushcart Prize/Best of the Net nominations. He lives near a Mojave Desert ghost town with his family, rescued horses, and Calamity the California Calico cat.

Valy Steverlynck is an Argentine-American mother, artist, emerging poet and oyster farmer based in Maine. Valy's poems are forthcoming in *Poets Reading the News*, *Literary Mama*, and *Panoplyzine*. Her visual work has been shown at multiple galleries and art museums including the Center for Maine Contemporary Art, DeCordova Museum, Fuller Museum of Art, and Centro Recoleta, Argentina. When not tending to her oysters, Valy likes to take long hikes in the woods, swim in salt water, and read. Valy is a graduate of Brown University and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Wally Swist's new books include *Aperture* (Kelsay Books), poems regarding caregiving his wife through Alzheimer's, and *If You're the Dreamer, I'm the Dream: Selected Translations from Rilke's Book of Hours* (Finishing Line Press). His poems, essays, and translations have appeared in *Chicago Quarterly Review*, *Commonweal*, *Healing Muse*, *Rattle*, and *Your Impossible Voice*. *Huang Po and the Dimensions of Love* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2012), selected by Yuseff Komunyakaa, was co-winner for the 2011 Crab Orchard Open Poetry Competition. He was also the winner of the Ex Ophidia Press Poetry Prize in 2018 for his book, *A Bird Who Seems to Know Me*.

Jeffery Allen Tobin is a political scientist and researcher based in South Florida. A Pushcart nominee, Jeffery has been writing for more than 30 years. His latest poetry collection *Scars & Fresh Paint* was published in 2024 with Kelsay Books, and his poetry, prose, and essays have been featured in many journals, magazines, and websites.

Damaris West trained as a linguist before becoming a librarian and then a tutor. She spent 13 years in Italy, returning to the UK with her terminally ill husband, and now lives in Scotland, close to the sea. Her poetry has appeared widely in such publications as *Snakeskin*, *The Lake*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Ink Sweat & Tears*, and *The Friday Poem*, and has been placed in several national or international competitions including, recently, the Poets and Patrons Helen Schaible sonnet

contest 2024 where she gained an honourable mention, and the Edward Thomas Fellowship competition 2025 where she was highly commended. <https://damariswest.site123.me>

Robert Wexelblatt is a professor of humanities at Boston University's College of General Studies. He has published seventeen collections of short stories; two books of essays; two short novels; three books of verse; stories, essays, and poems in a variety of journals, and a novel awarded the Indie Book Awards First Prize for Fiction.

Sean Whalen lives on a county road in rural Boone County near Pilot Mound, Iowa, where he finds inspiration close to home. He is a retired health and safety professional, volunteer fire chief, and received his MA from Iowa State University in Creative Writing. Recent poems have appeared in multiple publications, including *Last Leaves*, *The Ocotillo Review*, *Unbroken*, *New Feathers*, *Stone Poetry Quarterly*, *Thimble*, *Assignment Magazine*, *The Chiron Review*, and *The Avenue Journal*, and are forthcoming in *Right Hand Pointing* and *Steam Ticket*.

M. Brooke Wiese's work has appeared most recently in *Bronze Bird Books* anthologies, *The Road Not Taken*, *Sparks of Calliope*, *One Sentence Poems*, *The Poetry Porch*, and *Spoon River Poetry Review*. Her second chapbook is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press and her sonnets have been taught by poet Billy Collins to his college students. After a very long hiatus she has been writing furiously again. Brooke lives with her wife and sons in New York City and currently teaches at a special education inclusion school in Manhattan to high school students of all abilities.

Francine Witte's flash fiction and poetry have appeared in numerous journals. Most recently, her stories have been in *Best Small Fictions* and *Flash Fiction America*. Her latest flash fiction book is *Radio Water* (Roadside Press.) Her upcoming collection of poetry, *Some Distant Pin of Light* is forthcoming from Cervena Barva Press. She lives in NYC. Visit her website francinewitte.com

Jonathan Yungkans continues typing at odd hours of the night, even as he hears owls hoot and watches yet another skunk meander beneath his house's foundation. He remains thankful when his writing is less noxious than the creature under his bathroom's floorboards. His work has appeared in *Book of Matches*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, *Sonic Boom*, *Synkroniciti* and other publications. He has also written three poetry chapbooks; the latest, *The Ravens Will Arrive Later*, is scheduled for release in 2026 from Gnashing Teeth Publishing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our 2025 Fall Issue is our special edition, the Crone Power Issue. This issue only accepts submissions from female identifying poets over the age of fifty (50). We're honoring our older but still incredible female poets with an issue of their own. Send us your best poems, the ones you are dying to show the world. Let everyone know what you are thinking, from nature to politics to relationships. You have valuable insights, and we want to share them.

Crone Power Submissions open July 1, 2025, and run through September 1, 2025. We will close early if we get all the poems we need, so submit early. We also close early if we reach our submissions cap for the month. Put 4 poems in one .doc(x) or .rtf document, page breaks in between poems, normal fonts like Times New Roman, and an up-to-date bio for the magazine in the Submittable bio section of no more than 100 words. Use the name in the bio you'd like to be published under.

You can put your Poem Title and under it "by Author WXYZ," but we don't need addresses, headers, or page numbers on the pages. Please, no weird formatting or underlining. It makes the editors drink. Sometimes coffee, sometimes not. Concrete and form poems are fine. If you submit more than 4 poems in a doc, we will read the first 4 and ignore the rest, causing the fifth poem to burst into tears.

We welcome poems from new and established poets. The editors have eclectic tastes, so give us a shot. Rhyming poems are a hard sell, but we still make room for a good one. We'd love to see what you've been creating.

Please read our full guidelines on Submittable: <https://gyroscopereview.submittable.com/submit/> See you Oct 1st for the release of the Fall Crone Power Issue. We return to regular, open to everybody submissions on October 1st for the Winter 2026 Issue.

Thank you for Reading!



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