

**The Raw Art Review:  
A Journal of Storm and Urge**



**Summer 2020**

## **The Raw Art Review: A Journal of Storm and Urge**

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### **COVER ART:**

**Sylvia Van Nooten  
Abbreviating Goddess Symbolism**

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***ISBN:***

## Farewell

When we parted, all the water  
evaporated from the earth's ocean  
so only endless mountains of salt  
remained as heavy as the moon,  
as heavy as my heart.

On a pilgrimage in your honor  
to discover the tallest mountain  
I traversed through treacherous terrain  
while the sheer sun against the white  
hurt my eyes, and with every heavy footstep  
my black boots crunched the salt  
where this sound ricocheted  
from mountain top to mountain top.

I prevailed by reaching the sparkling summit  
then laid flat on my back, and made an angel  
sensing her spirit rising  
while witnessing the pinnacle of the sunset  
its pink rays like roses without thorns—oh how  
I wish I could have bottled up that for you.

For the sake of freedom, I shouted:  
“Let it rain” well equipped with  
my lifeboat made out of driftwood.

The rain did come dissolving the mountains,  
and I saw your reflection in a singular drop.

by Sophia Falco  
(WINNER: Mirabai Prize for Poetry)



***Beauty of the Beast #617***

by William Brown

(FIRST RUNNER-UP RAR Summer 2020 Cover Art Contest)



## *Boxae*

Another rapid child fills  
a shoe box up with sand and  
thinks each grain a voice:

this is

how it is to talk to you.

When I whisper in your ear,  
this is what hears:  
an under-sleeping window  
box unlocked.

A human echocave: Ear  
of Dionysius, stone deaf.  
Fixed Black Box who speaks in zero  
hears messages to the dead.

I hang on to your aside face  
by tearing off my last nail:  
where are you traveling? In place  
of love, I drip the blood pail.

by Alan Bern  
(FIRST RUNNER-UP: Mirabai Prize for Poetry)



## *Marseilles Hangout*

by Keith Edwards

(RUNNER-UP RAR Summer 2020 Cover Art Contest)

## Unviable Psalm

The old body pulls itself  
Apart, flees  
Animals in motion  
In the old body  
Bats running into each other midair  
Elephants visiting the graves  
Walruses digging tusks into each other  
Penguins dancing belly to belly  
Ring-necked parrots talking  
Whistling at each other

But in the blood oven  
A pod of Dolphins listen  
A pleat of pregnant  
Women echolocating  
Spinal cords in the  
Bond of being  
The same old body throbs, tends  
To the same old seed  
Implanting anew, germ in time  
Compared  
To a whale  
Compared  
To me<sup>3</sup>

by Lily Kosmicki  
(SECOND RUNNER-UP: Mirabai Prize for Poetry)



**Our Brothers**  
by Serge Lecomte  
(RUNNER-UP RAR Summer 2020 Cover Art Contest)

## THINGS THE CROW KNOWS

The crow knows all the old sayings  
from all the ancient arguments,  
knows “as the crow flies” is just  
a mismeasurement of *is*

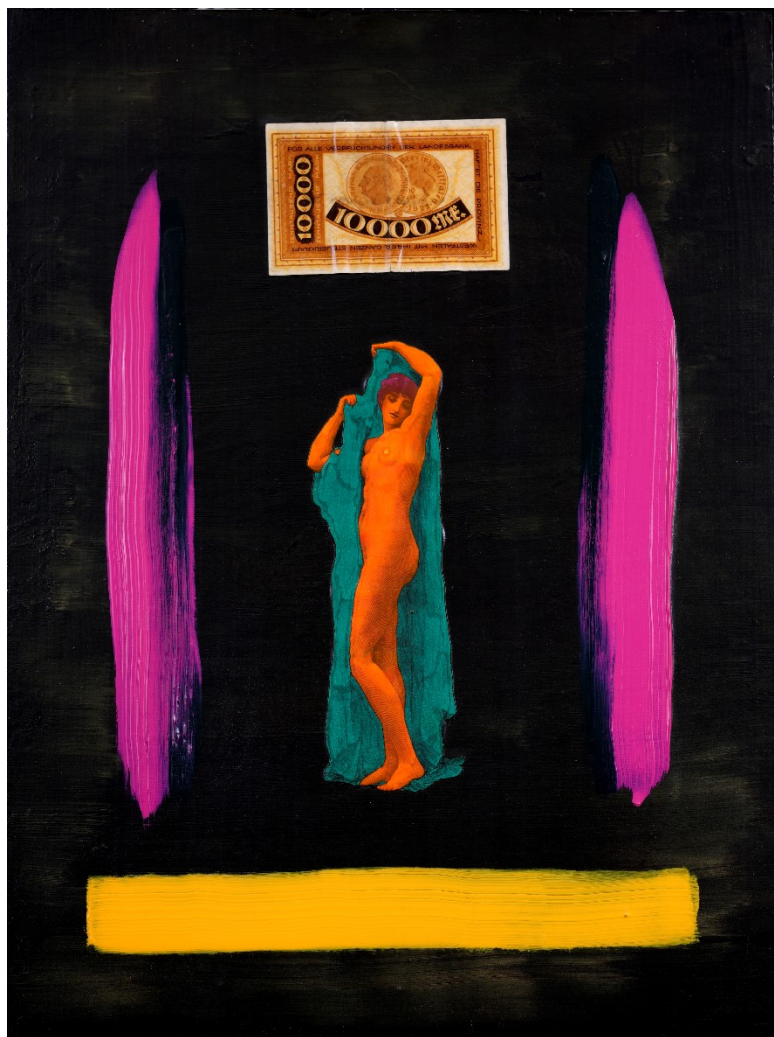
God knows the crow watches  
fallen calves outside the fences  
chased away for cleft palates  
or they just ran off too curious  
about the dirt-feel of the logging road  
and God know the crows prayer-  
circle the cows when the calves  
come home limp over fieldhand’s arms  
and all the cows gather to mourn  
in low and indecipherable tones.

The crows square off against the man  
at the fence, mocking his property sign,  
making him fear to enter what he posted  
to keep out. The shiny-eyed crows  
keep vigil, impervious of warnings  
against trespass, sentinel themselves  
until the cow eulogies are spent.

The crow knows that God knows  
they are innocent of murder and man  
reviles his kind without cause. The crow knows  
God gave him, as an apology for winter,  
atonement for our superstition, the sweet  
mysterious ability to fly straightaway

heavenward, home.

by Pamela Sumners  
(RUNNER-UP: Mirabai Prize for Poetry)



*10000 Mark Girl*  
by Silas Plum  
(RUNNER-UP RAR Summer 2020 Cover Art Contest)

## We Look into Fire

August to September and something's  
shifted. Maybe we're bored, maybe  
we're not so young, maybe  
we're waiting for some final, safe arrival.  
Weren't we promised a moment of arrival?  
*It's cold too early*, he says and builds  
a fire. I take to reading horoscopes,  
to Tarot cards on the coffee table, see  
myself in the Queen of Cups while he  
insists he's Taurus so *Where's the card  
for Taurus*. All month, every night, the fire  
burning itself up, and the two of us watching  
with less and less to say.

October,

we feed our restlessness  
into a camping trip. I think we're headed  
for the Catskills, but he turns south for West Point,  
and I find myself

beside him on the edge  
of a manicured space called The Plain  
watching row after row of the young  
burning to serve, to be uniform,  
to be in formation under the bronze  
gaze of statues—six wars, six generals—  
all our synchronous human lives  
spent in repetitive motion.

Another night,  
another fire. This time camp fire,  
and right away it doesn't satisfy us,  
doesn't fill us up. We keep hauling in  
the dead wood tossing it, heaving it into the leap  
and the roar, hypnotized past midnight  
by fire-flakes that stream upward

into the maple where they flare  
and scorch the leaves.

Buddha says  
everything is burning, though probably  
he means some other combustion—  
invisible to my ordinary eyes. But  
I don't have time  
to look into it. Things keep slipping  
from my hands—this book, that glass, last year's  
summer, next year's blizzard.  
And here inside a mountainous dark,  
I can't help myself, I'd rather  
look into fire. How do I suffer  
this icy minute  
when I am such brief fuel?

by Gail DiMaggio  
(RUNNER-UP: Mirabai Prize for Poetry)





*Singularity*

by Tony Murray

(HONORABLE MENTION RAR Summer 2020 Cover Art Contest)

## Americans

12-3-09

You'd think, with the lights flicking on  
At sunset, on Boar's Head, and further  
Down along the coast, glinting, sparkling stars in the  
Distance, Massachusetts, the long arm of Cape Ann,  
Blue hills stretching out to sea  
Into the crimson sky of sunset, striated clouds above,  
Vivid orange pools in the sand  
Left by the outgoing tide,  
And breakers curling and cresting  
A hundred yards offshore, white spume  
Crowning the rocky jut of sandbar at the edge of the cove  
And the smell of brine so strong,  
The laugh of the gulls moving inland for the night,  
And the empty beach, the seaweed, the sand,  
You'd think I lived in a civilized place,  
But I don't. I live among the Americans.

by James Garland  
(RUNNER-UP: Mirabai Prize for Poetry)



***I Change with the Seasons***

by Jocelyn Ulevicus

(HONORABLE MENTION RAR Summer 2020 Cover Art Contest)

## from “the magpie poem”

my magpie knows

words beyond my mouth

*ich, no*, whimper of the neighbor’s

backyard dog, *No*, splash of sick into sink,

*consanguineal may I have a definition*

*c-o-n-s-a-n*, teeth popping the grape...

by Jasmine Khaliq

Originally published in Black Warrior Review

(HONORABLE MENTION: Mirabai Prize for Poetry)

<https://therawartreview.files.wordpress.com/2020/12/the-magpie-poem-by-jasmine-khaliq-honorable-mention.pdf>



***Rooted***

by Belinda Subraman

(HONORABLE MENTION RAR Summer 2020 Cover Art Contest)

## Gratias ex Animo

to numb nights with no heater  
    to empty bellies & banks  
        to dry heaving into a wet pillow  
to no water or electricity  
    to working two jobs & dealing on the side  
        to that eviction notice  
to my last cigarette, to my empty pipe  
    to no cash, credit, or debit  
        to debt  
to the darkness that swallowed every piece of me  
    & spit me back out whole  
to friends who weren't really friends  
    & lovers who didn't really love me  
I say thank you  
    thank you for reminding me  
        of the fire that fills me up  
of the home I have in my heart  
    of going low to get high  
        & of the wealth in wisdom  
  
thank you for reminding me  
    of the light within me  
        & of practicing humility  
thank you  
    for showing me bitter  
so I can stay sweet

by K. Riley  
(HONORABLE MENTION: Mirabai Prize for Poetry)





*Timeline of the Far Future*

by Danielle Klebes

(HONORABLE MENTION RAR Summer 2020 Cover Art Contest)

## **a shadow**

something both there    and not there  
an interruption of light, an echo [silent]  
a place to hide, store secrets    escape

i had a cat named shadow once  
not silent that cat could talk [complain]  
though he did manage to hide [away]  
every night when mother called him in

he ran into the street when i was seven  
we found his tail    a block away [echo]

in a dream, a man with hands and a face  
shrouded in darkness in ebonies in grays  
told me you were but a shadow [now]  
something both there    and not there  
an interruption of life, an echo [silent]

maybe i'm a shadow to you [specter]  
as you gaze at me from the other side

when i woke, i could see the outline  
of where the man stood, hands on my  
shoulders [maybe], hot breath on my face  
the wake in the air after someone leaves

something both there    and not there

by Kaecey McCormick  
(HONORABLE MENTION: Mirabai Prize for Poetry)





***Embossed***

by Emily Rankin

(HONORABLE MENTION RAR Summer 2020 Cover Art Contest)

## THE PICKLING OF LIMES

You are a fallen crop  
Key lime yellow  
I'm throwing you together  
Away from the shaded grove of trees  
To pickle you as if  
You are Indian limes.

It will take two weeks  
I quarter you, I blanket you  
Wrinkled rind, corpulent flesh,  
crimped seeds  
With rock salt, dried chili powder  
Turmeric

Cane sugar cast for balance  
Burnish you under the sun

I unscrew the stiffened lid  
The old Mason jar smells faintly  
Of apricots.

A friend from Chennai calls  
Asks if she can visit next month  
Tells me lime and lemon are  
just one word — neemboo.

Sun-soaked, slick with oil, fermented  
I will add ingredients foreign to me —  
Fenugreek seeds, roasted and ground  
Hing powder, black mustard seeds  
Sputtered in sesame oil.

Let the oil kiss your skin  
As you age, you will taste  
Fiery hot, a feast  
Of chicken biryani, eaten with our hands  
A glass of chilled Kingfisher  
I pray my friend will stay awhile.

by Clare Chu  
(HONORABLE MENTION: Mirabai Prize for Poetry)



***Lipochrome***

by Jodi Filan

(HONORABLE MENTION RAR Summer 2020 Cover Art Contest)

## Let the vines grow

The moon pours over the levee,  
the last of sun fading from the gone day.  
Don't waste your tears on me, Mama.  
It's too late to pretend you care.  
Two-thousand miles between us was never enough,  
though now I'm now content to stay six feet apart.  
Don't visit me, Mama, all dressed up in heels and makeup,  
carrying freshly plucked magnolias and scorn  
in your still-blinking eyes—to set upon  
the grave where my flesh will rot  
beneath the stone that bears my name.  
Be kind, Mama, for once in your life.  
The sun has set, the night is long.  
Leave me to slumber in this hole dug just for me.  
Don't come around with your still-beating heart  
to uproot bindweed with your still-wrenching hands.  
For once in your life, let the vines grow wild.

*by Cynthia Le Monds*  
(HONORABLE MENTION: Mirabai Prize for Poetry)



***Fire Hydrant with Reflection #499***  
by William Brown

## Self Portrait

Over time, the pulse beats consideration for other bodies.  
An etiquette, and also a tourniquet wish. It's about finish.  
And broader rhythms that lead up to it.

Sight runs gamuts of electricity — insect wings. Beating  
eyelashes.

Until reflectiveness follows a  
white milk —  
viscous color — like skin over a frog muscle throat.  
A tabacle page.

Imagine moves — even this through gravity — like the light.  
How many beats should it take? My tongue taking fly. My smile.  
To create a word with sense enough to feel some weight.  
Not like scribbles  
— my body from scribbles. A self-portrait.

by Leon Fedolfi

(HONORABLE MENTION: Mirabai Prize for Poetry)



***Fire Hydrant with Reflection #499***

by William Brown



### **His Brain is a Fish**

The memorized notes scoot out of the dead wood  
his hands clawing choreographed flames

The pink wings of the vibrato tingling his skin  
calliopes of pure thought fluid in the paper sky

Electric blue in a flashing loop  
his clay mask temporarily dislodged

by George Anderson

## **The God of Doors**

like a darkly bruised banana  
I miss the flesh of her pale lips

I miss the depth of field  
of her spider-bite piercings

I miss her tight aperture,  
her perfectly sculptured comb-over

instead: the self-satisfied swagger  
of bewildered pin-striped suits

towards goals as purposeless  
as birds without wings

diamond necklaces of short-sightedness

by George Anderson

## The Cult of the Amateur

they found him snoring  
in the hazy light of the street lamp  
wheezing in shallow gasps  
his once translucent eyes  
like shreds of torn flesh

once. twice. she calls him.  
a detached, unapologetic voice  
the pale walls of the motel room dangling  
*what's wrong pappy?*

a small red circle  
illuminated on her dress  
her shoulder blades protruding  
under the lace  
he wears a weariness  
of purity despoiled  
by bloodied knuckles  
*what's wrong pappy?*

each word screaming inside him  
the light burns his eyes  
a deep red gash in the wooden door

the stout woman  
pops the boot  
& heaves in the sagging plastic bag  
in retrospect, his head hangs pale  
& wiry on the lounge

thru the slot in the wall  
he sees the cause of everything:

Fidel's agonised limp  
the spurt of red on white  
the hot-keyed status screen  
blinking in ominous black

by George Anderson



*Nature Writing Tide Pool*  
by Sylvia Van Nooten

**LIZZIE SIDDAL - THE APPARITION**  
**BY STEPHANIE E. DICKINSON**

CRANBOURNE ALLEY

*Looking from the shop through an open door into a back room, he saw a very tall young woman working with the needle: It was Elizabeth Siddal. Deverell was at this time beginning a well-sized picture from Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" —Deverell wanted to get a model for Viola, and it struck him that here was a very suitable damsel for his purpose.*

--Lucinda Hawksley, *Lizzie Siddal: The Tragedy of a Pre-Raphaelite Supermodel*

When the dark-eyed man comes into the bonnet shop and asks if I would sit for him to paint me I tremble. He's an artist and has seen me in the window and I must come to his studio with my chaperone. Sitting for him pays double my wages for drudgery. His breath on my cheek smells clean as if he'd just eaten grass. I know all the moths' names but the tawny fawn sphinx is my favorite; I can balance a book on my head and shop at market, I fell in love with Tennyson when I found his words on a newspaper scrap used to wrap butter. I've learned the bloody language of hats whose pins stick my fingers for twelve hours a day, 6 days a week. They are Leghorns, Gainsboroughs, poke bonnets. Birds are sold to us, raised and strangled and stuffed for my needle to sew to a bonnet. Silk and satin, horsehair and crepe I equally hate. I was taught how to enunciate, to sit and stand, to speak softly and intelligently, I was taught you don't pick your teeth with fish bones or crack nuts between your

jaws, and yet I was sent to work in this dark and stifling burrow, this millinery shop of Mrs. Tozer. From reveille to 8 p.m. I fight the velvets and plaited canes. When I trudge homeward down narrow muddy streets, blackened brick rises up on either side. Picture the hats I am modelling now. They say I am a marvelous creature, wonderfully tall, long neck. A love goddess. My image melts onto canvas, I look and a white vulture looks back.

## THE KISSED MOUTH

*Lizzie Siddal was acutely aware that in the years she had been waiting for Dante Gabriel Rossetti to marry her she had metamorphosed from a fresh young girl of 20 to a listless woman of 28 who was still unmarried, knowing she could not supersede the physical temptations of a 17-year old beauty.*

--Lucinda Hawksley, *Lizzie Siddal: The Tragedy of a Pre-Raphaelite Supermodel*

Hours of being raped by his eyes, the air in the room becomes a stir-thickened custard. Her name is Jane. Like the dimples in each of her cheeks the wide openness of her eyes hurts me. All at once my stomach fills my throat and I gag. My spittle smells of too strong bergamot and lemon, his infidelities. I wipe my mouth with the long-sleeved white of his smock, the one he wears to paint his young models. I can't compete with a girl of 17, the ripe fruit of her mouth, the thick black curls. Her fecundity. I'm 28 and soon laudanum will destroy my starver's body. I won't think about his thumbs massaging her neck after she models for him. He will be praising her for holding the pose. *My paint brush is forcing its prints into you*, he'll say as he did to me when my tall paleness enchanted him. *Your skin is translucent. An apparition.* For eight years he's dangled marriage like a trinket tossed to a raven. You trick yourself when you freeze into a pose. His temper flashes are crucifix insects seared in the old incense of a discarded lover. Look into his mouth, see the cut glass teeth. His philandering gives off a reptile smell, of vegetable rot, of ruined moonlight. Her name is Jane. Mine is Lizzie. Neither of us can picture his future when the



tulip tree seeps its lethal perfume. His love of chloral and whiskey. He will see people not there. Bodies without heads playing chess, legs running by themselves. His art will feed the dark nostrils of the death horses, just as he devoured the art between my lips, delicately scented.

## SELF PORTRAIT

*A distraught Rossetti made a tremendous effort to wake his wife Lizzie Siddal. A suicide note was pinned to her gown asking Rossetti to care for her disabled younger brother.*

--Lucinda Hawksley, *Lizzie Siddal: The Tragedy of a Pre-Raphaelite Supermodel*

I see what the doctors he's brought are thinking. So this is she, the tall finely formed one with the heavy luxury of copper-golden hair. The shine is leaving her, the bluing of her brilliant skin has begun. Gabriel must stop them from sticking the tube down me, must stop them lifting and shaking me. Gabriel, do you remember the milkweed? When we first met we would lie in the weeds looking at the stars, so many bits of burning light. You said we had to blow the milkweed into the air to see how long our breath could keep it afloat, otherwise our love would die. Like the marshes dying and all its water haunted by cypress knees and grey herons weeping. Remember their feathered corpses stinking on the bank of our little island? The obituary will give my birth date wrong. The woman in the casket just turned thirty-one. I won't go back to the waiting, the listening. The clock has stopped and Gabriel needs to wind it. They say the decapitated head goes on thinking for minutes like Anne Boleyn's eyes witnessing her headless torso. I am still breathing but cannot wake. I've drowned yet they try to prod me to speak. Gabriel begs me to stay. Too late. The lace at my wrists is far as Glasgow. His fingers that squeeze mine even farther. *Please*, he says, *please don't leave*. Every step on the stair, every slam of glass and cold wind is passing through me. I am an

empty hallway. When you take off my stockings you will find my feet pale and blue-veined, when you rip off my dress you will see my breasts are small, my buttocks slim, you may notice my pelvis protruding. My lungs pale as milk, my heart, already dust. Look at my hands, they are washing my long body, touching, scrubbing my long bones. I am your wife, not your dustman with his cart that clomps the cobblestones at dawn. You let the milkweed fall.

## BEATA BEATRICE

*Rossetti went to teach a night class at the Working Men's College. Before he left, he saw Lizzie settled into bed — she had taken her usual dose of laudanum and there was about half a bottle left. When he returned from work, the bottle was empty. Lizzie was in a sleep so deep he was unable to wake her — and she had written him a note. Yelling for their landlady to fetch a doctor, Rossetti hid the incriminating letter.*

--Lucinda Hawksley, *Lizzie Siddal The Tragedy of a Pre-Raphaelite Supermodel*

Wind pushes the new snow into my face. As a girl I talked to snow, I tried to hold the snow's hand, I prayed to the snow moon, a pale shaving in mist. I spin. Wind is wrapping itself around my waist and pulling me down, first a hand, then the arm, a shoulder flattening me into the snow. I fall into floating rooms. Pages of white. Gabriel; your affairs, blizzard after blizzard. Names written in boiling ink. Now I am gliding through the black keyhole. Great peels in the sky let in more light. Red handprints painted onto this vacant day. After dusk the mewling wind rises in the north. The great frigate of my mind not yet stoked. The coal too damp. These raw hours stink. The fireplace gives us little heat. Our second baby has stopped moving, I felt the stillness come just after dinner on the walk home, just when the horse carriage clip clopped by. My boots loved tracking in the snow, then sweeping footprints away. The cobblestones made a muttering music. As soon as we arrived home you put me to bed. Already planning your escape, you in your starched shirt smelling of whore. Swinburne stayed to gossip and I laughed since I knew what I would soon do. I am going to God. The snow shroud comes to my marriage bower.



*Planet Nine*  
by Sylvia Van Nooten

## I Woke Up in a Field

One summer, in order to find out more  
about my own fragility, I baled hay  
inside a circle of river stones.  
It was as if I was living and working  
with another person, perhaps multiple.  
This was in Montana. Every once in a while  
a semi would pass on the highway  
hidden by hills and I would look up  
from my labor as if hearing the faint  
but audible voice of a friend  
I hadn't heard from in years.  
Another routine involved  
grilling meats, a little confession,  
mediating between crickets  
and toads. It thundered sporadically.  
At some point I began to merely drift  
over the contours of daily existence.  
Then the barn caught fire.  
The moon haloed the empty shell  
a cricket left behind. Things  
got darker from there, until all that was visible  
was a little boy leading his baby goat  
over the white hot coals.

*by Adam Edelman*

## The Language of Flowers is in Much Disrepair

Wildflowers are everywhere. You can go out and find one if you look. What makes them wild? It has been said they have a world of their own. What makes them flowers? I like to imagine the petals of a wildflower as slices of pizza, or frames in a circular comic strip. Dumpsters have been spotted in the vicinity of wildflowers, each a unique expression of the desire to pass beyond suffering. Each wildflower ingratiates a fluorescent zone. If you have a question about wildflowers, the answer is yes. They control the weather, and have been known to invade remote hamlets under cover of darkness. Any good businessman will tell you that the key to success is wildflowers. Neutrinos are a kind of wildflower, if you think about it. Think of wildflowers as a metaphor for good advice from a highly intelligent and sensitive friend. Every human being who's ever lived or died understands wildflowers. You can display them in your home or dry them and hide them away if you choose. If you melt down a box of warm colored crayons, distill the pigment into a single drop and swallow it, you'll sneeze wildflowers. Pick any wildflower. It can be transmuted into medicine or spice. A pill bug once slept in a wildflower for three and a half days. You literally can't do anything without somehow involving at least one wildflower. Tonight, when you're in your bed thinking of what you'd like to dream about, just this once, consider wildflowers; they were your face before you were born.

*by Adam Edelman*

## The Case of the Arm

For a week my left arm tingled.  
On several occasions  
When I stood on my desk at the institute  
Overcome with waves of light-headedness  
Mixed with nostalgia for autumn walks  
Before the flood of '93, I saw blue and red planes.

Between one and four  
I wandered the footpaths behind the institute  
And tried to conjure up Mike from Long Beach's  
Last name, while the Blue Angels cut waves  
In half up Evans Shore.  
Usually somewhere a branch moves  
And I discover something ultra minute  
Like a zip-lock bag full of baby carrots  
Or the thought that perception  
Is fundamentally inductive.

I think that's why I still come out here  
To see the one catfish emerge before the fireflies.  
Questions spawning in the spaces between scales  
Pulsate in time with this pain in my arm  
Just long enough to make it hum a little  
Like a grace note over a chord.

*by Adam Edelman*





*A Woman's Body Is A Walking Ocean*

by Jocelyn Ulevicus

## 50 CENTS A POUND

On the morning  
of my delivery  
I weighed in  
at a squalling  
9 lb 10 oz:  
biggest baby on  
the maternity ward  
floor of Cleveland's  
University Hospital  
that week-- or so  
went family lore.  
The nurses joked  
so I was told  
someday I would  
be starting at left  
tackle for the Browns.  
Fast forward now  
12 years later  
I was the runt of  
our 6<sup>th</sup> grade class  
save for one real  
half pint whose name  
now quite escapes me.  
Such is the fate of  
schoolyard shrimps.  
My mother used  
to set me on  
our bathroom scale  
and offer me  
50 cents for every  
pound I gained.

I never collected  
a dime. As about  
this time she ran  
into Mrs. Derry  
in the A & P  
who boasted her  
jaywalking son  
Allen had been  
hit by a car one  
afternoon and shot  
up 7 inches over  
the next year.  
I let all this roll  
off my back as  
I was too thick  
with callow youth  
to care to fathom  
the depths of  
human evolution's  
savage roots and  
the abiding need  
of a mother with  
three daughters  
and runt of a son  
for protection  
against the lurking  
menace of members  
of my own sex—  
those Demonic Males  
one reads about  
as we grow older

in the literature  
of our species:  
mothers crave tall  
broad shouldered

boys or intrepid  
squirts unafraid to  
dash into the street  
and dodge traffic.

*by Robert Perchan*



*Untitled*  
by Mallory Zandog

## HAIBUN EPILOGUE

I was reading Brautigan again after so many years. He had not aged well. I looked for the small ruptures that had opened up pathways to momentary insight and joy in my Hippie Youth. Here or there, almost yes. But mostly, almost always no. Whither, I had to ask myself, the magic of those sentences? The laconic spareness of Hemingway and antic mordancy of Twain. Dead on the page. You had to look away. We called him up once long distance – his phone number was printed on the back cover of our early edition – and caught him in a transparent and pointless lie. We forgave him then. He was our hero. But this let down. He drank, or so we heard, to keep his demons at bay. Or perhaps the numbness. Flip sides of the same coin.

She asked me woozily when was I coming to bed. I took off my glasses and rubbed my temples for long minutes, an hour. What would Trout Fishing in America say tonight? Do? I turned a flat page. Nada. I stood up from my chair. My back creaked. The aging, failed poet. The original promise and the blind spots. An occasional flare brightening a narrow auditorium. Followed by the fizzled squibs and clogged apercus. The silent decade. The bouts of sanctimony and envy. Then another equally arid. A stunted comeback and ultimate exile among these alien folk. The rickety haibun sequence and *What happened* of that last rejection letter. The sleeplessness and local hooch. The Booming Voice of Wit and Candor at bottom a cowed and silenced bore.

Rumble and thunder  
from behind our bedroom door:  
my drunken wife snores

*by Robert Perchan*



*Untitled*  
by Mallory Zandog



## THE CRACK: A REMINISCENCE

Did you ever meet someone who you really, really wanted to kiss? I mean where you were absolutely certain kissing would be more pleasurable than raspberry smoothies or Sunday double headers with your Little League teammates or the sex you haven't actually had yet? That's how I felt about Mesmeralda the first time I laid eyes on her in the seventh grade. I really wanted to kiss her more than anything else in the whole wide world. And the funny thing was – she had this scar that sort of bisected her upper lip right in the middle. It was very faint but I was always afraid to mention it. I thought maybe she had been born that way – with a what-do-you-call-it – with a harelip or whatever. And I didn't want to make her feel self-conscious about it so I was careful never to bring it up. But finally I couldn't hold back from telling her how much I needed to kiss her. How that faint imperfection only increased my fascination, my ardor, my unquenchable need. How thrilling I knew kissing her lips would be! Oh, Mesmeralda said on our last afternoon together. Guys say that to me all the time until I tell them about the accident. Then nobody wants to kiss me.

The accident?

I said. What accident was that?

Three years  
ago, she said, I went through the windshield  
of a car. I lost a piece of my upper lip  
the size of a thumbnail.

My God, I said.  
But you look fine now. I mean there's  
a little scar. But it's nothing. And I *must*  
kiss you. I absolutely *have to*. I'm sorry –  
I can't hold myself back!

Oh the scar,  
she said. That's part of the crack.

The crack?  
I said.

Yes, she said. The crack. After  
three failed operations on my lip the doctors  
finally decided to graft on a piece of skin  
from the middle of my butt. Now nobody—  
The middle of your *butt*, I gasped. The *crack*?  
But it was too late -- for suddenly, sudden  
as a serpent's strike, the tip of her tongue  
emerged from between her lips as she lunged  
at me and plunged it between my own.

*by Robert Perchan*



*Stick Lion Rampage Budapest Hungary*  
by Keith Edwards

## **Expedition Antarctica**

### *I. The Trek*

Damoy Hut radiates  
like a turquoise pendant in the snow.  
The bright color,  
more than a decorative statement,  
is a beacon in the stark white landscape.

We see it from a mile away  
Much as the pilots who stopped here  
to rest and refuel might have seen it  
half a century ago.  
A solitary dot in the distance.

The morning sky is heavy with snow,  
sudden white-outs propel us  
into a state of confusion  
where earth and sky  
collide on a blank canvas  
devoid of all but the distant outline  
of that single landmark.

A skua soars above our heads  
telling us literally which end is up.  
How does she stay aloft  
in this wind that chafes  
whatever skin isn't covered  
by scarves and goggles?

We plant our poles deep into the snow

pulling ourselves forward against the wind.  
I marvel to feel sweat trickling down my back  
despite the penetrating chill.

## *II. Arrival*

Approaching the hut,  
the first thing we see  
is the hefty black kettle  
framed in the window,  
centered above a single burner.

I imagine the sight of its small flame  
flickering under a leaden sky.  
How far it would radiate into the darkness  
with its promise of comfort  
whispered into the roaring wind.

When we reach the hut,  
stacked high on cinderblocks  
it offers a homey welcome  
with its unpainted plywood walls,  
and provisions lining the shelves—  
tinned peaches, sardines,  
salt and flour preserved for fifty years  
since the last flight departed.

In the bunk room twelve beds  
stacked two-deep  
where weary pilots rested  
before continuing on to  
Port Lockroy to the south.

What did they see  
as they wrestled their planes  
onto the ice for those brief stopovers?  
Always a pass-through,  
the hut meant refueling,  
a warm meal,  
a blanket,  
and always in the window  
that kettle of boiling water for tea.

### *III. Return*

Our hike here has been long  
A test of our own endurance,  
but a test taken  
under the watchful eyes  
of expedition leaders  
who lay out the safest trail,  
who track the weather patterns  
to make sure the white-outs,  
though briefly blinding,  
will pass in due course.  
They keep track of our red parkas  
as we hobble through drifts.  
And even accommodate each request  
to snap a picture when we arrive at the hut.

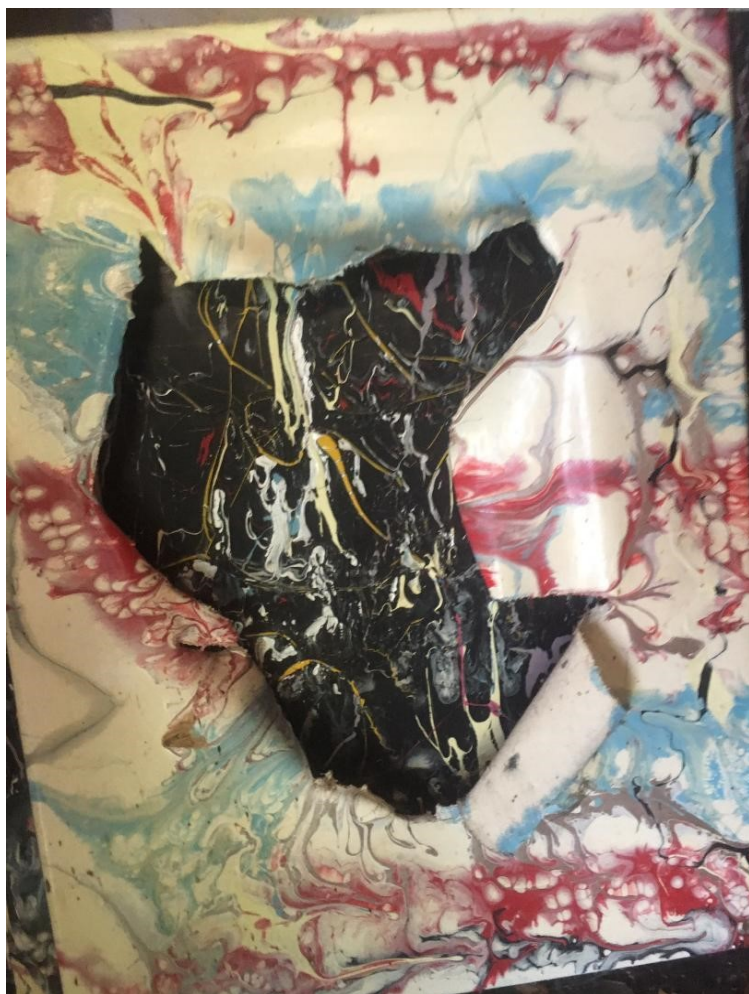
We play at danger,  
knowing that after our mile-long trek  
back to the landing boat,  
windburned, and wet,  
exhausted but exhilarated,  
we will return to our tastefully appointed ship,

shed our life jackets and boots,  
and retire to the upper deck  
for afternoon tea poured  
not from a black iron kettle,  
but a silver tea service  
beside a tray of pastries.

Yes, there will be sore feet and aching backs  
and raucous exchanges about the gale force winds  
that nearly blew us into the churning waters of Dorian  
Bay.

But we can never know the relief of those pilots,  
navigating through an impermeable wall of white  
where no horizon delineates earth from sky  
as they crossed the threshold into that  
humble hut in the middle  
of what some would call  
nowhere.

*by Gloria Heffernan*



**Untitled**  
by John D. Robinson



## Deception Island, Antarctica

We are walking on the grave  
of a volcano that is only playing dead.  
The caldera's warm water meets the freezing air  
in a steamy tango.

The beach is a museum of decomposition  
where the odor of digested fish  
lingers in the air—  
a distant echo of the stench  
of slaughtered whales  
hauled onto this shore,  
stripped of their flesh,  
their fat rendered into oil,  
their bones left to litter the beach  
like toppled headstones.

Petrels perch on the bleached hulls  
of wooden harpoon boats  
Apparitions loom up ahead in the mist  
Perhaps the ghosts of whalers  
serving penance for their part  
in the genocide.

*by Gloria Heffernan*

## Proceed to the Route

Recalculating.

The voice is familiar but useless. Too many directions and nowhere to go.

Recalculating.

What good is a handheld GPS when you are so busy washing your hands you can't start the car?

Recalculating.

*A gill is a respiratory organ found in many aquatic organisms that extracts dissolved oxygen from water and excretes carbon dioxide.*

Recalculating.

If I were a fish, I would not need a face mask. Or gloves. I would take refuge in the sea.

Recalculating.

I would swim away free to touch my face without fear of toxic residue left on my fingertips from the shopping cart I filled with last minute essentials.

Recalculating.

I would plunge to the depths in a school of my brethren without adherence to social distancing.

Recalculating.

The lambent glow of the on-screen map suggests there are places to go. And ways to get there.

Recalculating.

The GPS is desperate to chart a course so I shift into reverse, ram the car through the closed garage door and speed away.

Recalculating.

I look into the rearview mirror at the car-shaped silhouette punched out of the garage like something from a Saturday-morning cartoon where the coyote smashes through a wall...

Recalculating.

...and over a cliff.

*by Gloria Hefernan*



*Iceland Lightning*  
by Keith Edwards

## Rise on Up

I'm looking at George Floyd  
on the cover  
of The New Yorker  
and he seems sad  
looking south  
into lands lost on the Delta  
where cotton in the seam  
covers the dreams of those  
lost in dreams deferred  
where hope is not allowed  
and tears can see  
the pure brilliance of invisible men  
picking cotton  
in the humid chill of mourning  
down in the callous hollow  
where the women come and go  
chatting about their hydrangeas  
where did the summer go  
and how does it measure  
a life lived in the cross hairs  
of subliminal annihilation  
step out of the vehicle  
license and registration please  
arms raised  
arms up like Ezekiel holding the wheel  
holding up against all hope  
against the wall  
that divides us all  
and in that holding  
a life is defined  
a life is lived large

go down Moses  
go down to the river  
where the waters of redemption flow  
and in that flow  
we hug the lost raisins  
so they don't explode  
and we know  
that the flow  
is rising on up

*by Mark Hammerschick*

## **Last Breath**

We're sitting on the deck  
no idea what time it is.  
It's been a Martini Sunday  
since 10 am.  
The leaves in the trees seem different  
canopies of coagulated breath  
mirrored in your smudged wine glass.  
A careless breeze casually stumbles  
across the strained lawn,  
my ice is melting too quickly  
and armpits swell, expand,  
moisture moves sideways  
like your vacuous eyes translucent  
in the slanted afternoon haze  
but somehow it's not right nothing is.  
We smile but there's no weight  
it's like we're floating above ourselves  
seeing the sound hearing your scent  
and then I realize there is no breath  
and your face does not move  
and in that moment before the moment  
of infinite intensity  
a last gasp  
those few furtive glances  
as the terror of this moment  
flows foreverfully silently  
into that good night  
beyond the silence of roses  
moving in the morning wind  
and in that mourning  
we hold your hand

and in that holding  
we move back into the womb  
back into love  
life to life  
breath to breath...

*by Mark Hammerschick*



*Storm Sky*  
by Dale Shank



## Farms Deferred in the Real World

Just keep dumping it  
miles and miles of milk  
flowing south into desperation  
into the intoxicated alfalfa fields  
of this Arkansas ghetto  
with nowhere to go  
like those on the train to Dachau  
but they had no milk  
only their sweat  
beading, creeping into moist crevices  
lost with the rapture  
of voices grinding  
lips splitting raw meat  
but that was a different time  
when a world was burning  
but in a sense this world  
is always smoldering  
beneath the neat slices  
of evolutionary ennui  
deep in the dark corners  
where spiders leer  
spinning miraculous webs  
but this spinning is different  
there is no center  
there is no balance  
only the stark reality  
of this hopeless farm  
drifting  
taking on water  
with no bilge pumps  
and in that flow

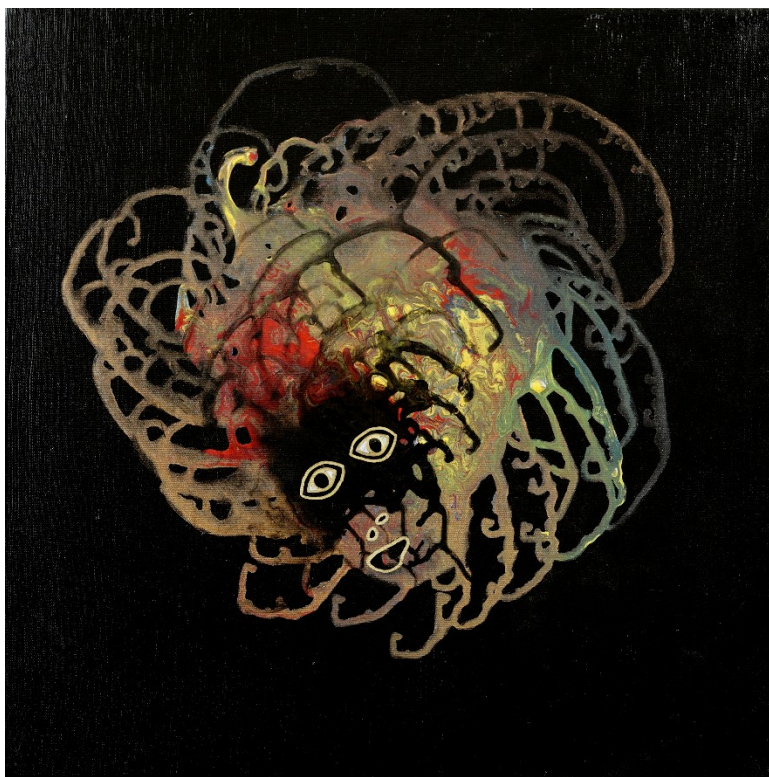
dreams deferred do explode  
no raisins to save  
no native sons to save the day  
since they are getting  
blown  
away...

*by Mark Hammerschick*

## Swing Low Sweet Boys

I sense the thunder in my veins  
pulse pulse  
in the morning Maya light  
like neural networks lit up by meth  
cathartic breath  
whispers, echoes  
of lives lived long ago  
well before the Precambrian  
scrambled eggs of infinite light  
expanding beyond the sense of sight  
the flow must go  
judgment day is upon us  
riots in the streets  
bullets in the brain  
blue rain draining our kin  
bludgeoning our boys  
left out in the diaspora  
of lives lived on serrated edges  
shredded dreams deferred  
caged men singing of things unknown  
in the dark corners  
where only the dead bodies go  
singing them spirituals  
swing low sweet chariot  
and go home to my Lord and be free  
spread the word  
send the sound  
for the reckoning is here

*by Mark Hammerschick*



***Gorgon***  
by Silas Plum

## Memory Is Not Being

Lips of sound,  
lips for sight/  
a trap for purpose  
as I sly around  
a playground of memory.  
In its entirety, the color of red.  
Your lips pulling me from  
my chest -  
to be alive.  
A child's excited run,  
chasing breath.  
Sneakers for myself -  
trailing laces  
untangled behind in  
feeling with the bright green contrast grass.  
And then gone.

I cannot lure the moment by its throat  
- even for one second -  
in my hand.

Instantly, to be old in this park,  
with discarded footwear as far as I can think.

Moment passed, an unfinished  
dissonance.

Memory | Seance.

To be bereaved of it -  
between breaths, bedsheets -  
to cover from gods that  
pushed me out

by *Leon Fedolfi*

## Palms On World

I in I am is nowhere,  
from where it will return.  
Hands placed for thinking  
on her round distend - a true belly -  
a great Grecian urn for our history.  
Little red berry inside.

Those in the wilds feed the forests of mind.

I face a creature there -  
staring back, smudged with currant,  
blue and deep within the fenced-in vegetation -  
a second emerald visage mask, I cannot see through.

Nostrils feed both sweet and decay  
for a tongue that will travel down  
for either dirt or the grass.

Face down, I cannot impregnate the earth with my last howl,  
but I will whisper myself before I go.

by *Leon Fedolfi*

## Raw Hide

Differentiation that draws a following cures itself.  
White blood cells become the names of different hats you  
can put on cattle.

You only have to be alive a few decades to realize  
real change is the one you fought for  
and later the one you built fences around.

How are you feeling, in that backyard Montana?  
The fall through the sky that is the trajectory of your life.  
Not good, a man named Jim, replies.

On his horse, fenced in by his belt and buckle.  
His feet never finish on the ground.

He is looking for a young bride, a new mirror.

He has a sales pitch and will  
sell the land he thinks he travels.

Thinks he owns.

He wants the land you walk on.

In the future people will think he was a man of odd habits.  
A quilt of raw hide religion, specific language and behavior.  
Something changed, but not really.

by *Leon Fedolfi*





*Connected*  
by Belinda Subraman

**A Study in Pink and Blue**  
**by Asher KurtzFreilich**

**1**

Sunday,  
February 23, 1997,  
8:04 PM.

“It’s a girl!”

**2**

My best friend is a boy.

**3**

Did you know Blue from Blue’s Clues is a girl?

**4**

Matchbox cars and Barbie dolls,  
Dressing up and rolling in mud.

**5**

NO, I will not wear a dress to the birthday party.

**6**

Daddy’s little soccer star.  
Or  
Mommy’s tiny gymnast.

**7**

Basketball shorts, t-shirt, and a ponytail.  
Daily.  
No skirts. No dresses. NO flowers.

8

I don't have many friends.  
I do not understand the girls.  
The boys think I have cooties.  
I can't be friends with boys.

9

The girls do not like me.  
The boys do not know how to talk to me.

During silent reading one day, I fart loudly.  
No one laughs.  
It isn't ladylike.

10

I meet my first transgender person.  
She is tall and kind, but my parents say "she" used to be "he".  
I don't really understand. How can someone just change who they are like that?

The girls in my class start to wear skirts and makeup.

No skirts. NO makeup.

Is it wrong to want to just be me?

11

I meet my first boyfriend at summer camp.  
He likes me despite my basketball shorts and ponytail,  
Despite my lack of makeup and  
Being outcasted by the popular girls for not being like them.  
(Read: NO skirts. NO dresses. NO makeup.)

When I get back to school on the first day of 6<sup>th</sup> grade, everything changes.

The girls wear skirts. And makeup. And talk about boys.

Boys are cool but...

Had they ever considered being more like one?

No.

That's wrong.

Can't think like that.

Okay skirts. Okay dresses. Okay makeup.

No ponytails.

## 12

All the other girls were doing it, so I had to too.

Sports equals bad, mascara equals good.

Get it through your head.

Girls DO NOT like gym class.

Girls DO NOT like being loud.

Girls DO NOT fart.

Girls DO NOT act like boys.

## 13

I hate myself and everything I am.

I don't know how else to be.

## 14

When I act like all the other girls, boys pay attention to me.

It must be the right thing to do,

The right way to act.

I am lost. I cannot find myself.

**15**

Real girls wear push-up bras, yoga pants, and Ugg boots, with as many layers of makeup as possible.

Real girls don't go to school without their face on.

(What does that even mean?)

Real girls wear skirts. Real girls wear dresses. Real girls wear makeup.

Real girls don't lay in bed wondering what it'd be like to have a dick.

**16**

I wish I were a boy.

No drama. No makeup. No dresses.

Can't tell anyone about these thoughts.

Wrong.

Impure.

Suppress it.

Yes skirts. Yes dresses. Yes makeup.

**17**

I don't know who I am anymore.

**18**

I don't want to be a boy anymore.

I think.

I don't know how else to act anymore. Being feminine is all I know now.

YES skirts. YES dresses. YES makeup.

NO ponytails.

**18**

I join a gender-inclusive sport.

**18**

I meet my first nonbinary person.

I don't understand this.

How can someone just "not have" a gender?

Dresses? Basketball shorts? Makeup?

**18**

My new best friend comes out to me as genderfluid.

They say they are sometimes a boy, sometimes a girl.

And that's okay.

**18**

Over dinner, I tell my family about my best friend.

My family thinks genderfluidity is funny.

I do not.

I am a little less hungry.

**18**

I'm panicking.

Okay Google— Am I genderfluid?

Google gives me quizzes.

*So you think you might be genderfluid?*

*What gender are you?*

*What is your gender identity?*

Sometimes a boy, sometimes a girl.  
That really sounds like me.

Maybe I am a boy.  
Maybe I can still be a girl.  
My family thinks being genderfluid is funny.

I do not tell them what I am feeling.

## 18

I call my best friend.  
We meet in my dorm parking lot.

“What does it feel like?” I ask them.  
It’s different for everybody, they say.

“I think I might be genderfluid,” I tell them.

Okay, they say.  
Do you want me to call you by different pronouns?

“Only between us.”  
And I blush.

## 19

I ask my close friends to refer to me as they and them, instead of she  
and her.

## 19

I buy my first chest binder.

I almost cry because it makes me so happy  
To see myself with a flat chest.

No tits. No skirts. No makeup.

**19**

My brother visits me at school.  
He knows about my best friend. He does not know about me.

With my housemates, I joke about my identity.

My brother hears.

My brother does not know it is a secret.

**19**

My brother casually mentions my gender identity over dinner.

I am not there.

My sister tells me over a text.

I spend the night sobbing into my best friend's arms.

**19**

I have lunch with my parents.  
I say we should probably talk.  
I am shaking.

They ask questions.  
They do not understand.

That's okay.  
They take it well.

I should have known.

I am still scared.



My mother tells me that I should not  
Go around telling people about my identity.  
She says people will treat me differently.

**19**

I come out publicly on a Facebook post.

It takes me six hours to write it.

My ex-boyfriend from high school writes a similar post mocking me.  
He compares my identity to an attack helicopter.

For the first time I experience transphobia that directly targets me.

I want to retaliate.

I don't.

**19**

I go to lunch at my grandparents' apartment in New York City.

My aunt and uncle are visiting from Georgia.

My uncle tells me that genderfluidity isn't real.  
But even if it was, he says, you wouldn't be it because I've  
Never. Seen. It. In. You.

I don't tell him he's an asshole.

My parents, aunt, and grandmother collectively tell him he's an  
asshole.

And also explain why he is incorrect.  
Which is nice.

Today I am less afraid of what my parents think of me.

**19**

My boyfriend buys me men's clothes, so I can  
Feel more comfortable being myself.

This time I do cry.

For the first time I see myself as  
Who I always wanted to be.

**20**

I consider going on T.

**20**

I do not go on T.

The idea of change being permanent scares me.

I wish I were brave.

**21**

I change my Tinder profile to say "genderfluid."  
Most people ignore it.

**21**

Most of the team is new people.  
All of them have been told I am genderfluid.

They take me out of the game because we are violating the gender rule.  
We are not.

I realize they counted me as a girl.

I am not a girl, I yell.

I am not calm.

I am allowed to not be.

## 21

Every time I meet someone new, I am forced to come out again.  
Every time I meet someone new, I am forced to wonder if they will  
react poorly.

After being told what pronouns I use, most people do not even try.  
I am forced to accept this.

## 21

Every day I wake up and decide if I am going to dress the way I want  
to,  
Or the way I am “supposed to.”

I say,

Sometimes skirts. Sometimes basketball shorts. Sometimes makeup.  
Sometimes sweatpants. Sometimes button-downs. Sometimes dresses.

## 21

I will not apologize for who I am.

I will not hide from who I am.

And that’s okay.



*Buer on Mars*  
by Silas Plum

## **(SUPPOSING) MY MOTHER WAS A BLUE HERON**

I.

My mother was a blue heron who blew in off the Delta in a hurricane and wound up land-locked in Alabama surrounded by red clay and peaches and zigzag fences somewhere between the Romulus and Remus of almost-central Alabama, Jemison and Clanton. My father was your ordinary earthbound swain, and together they accumulated memories to feather their imperiled nest the way limestone cliffs alluviate dehydrated lichen. He bound her feet to the stone to keep her at home where they gave birth to five ugly ducklings, or perhaps five red herrings, or maybe five black sheep whose mother thought they were all the first lambs of spring but not at all fit for slaughter. She thought they were the very first.

\*\*\*

My mother was the hurricane that blew the blue heron over the bridge that was my father, and in that storm she spawned five tornadoes that tore up all the trailer parks and knocked the battle-flagged dome off the Capitol building, bringing in five separate thunderstorms that washed out all the gutters and left trash walking in riding boots on the streets of Birmingham, Montgomery, all the way to Ohio and Chicago. My mother was the hurricane of many names bearing down on all the levees but my mother had no calm still eye. My mother was a cyclone, a full force gale, unbuilding things, washing away sandbags, but she herself was never thrown, because she stood one-legged, the other tied to a stone.

\*\*\*

Suppose that my father was a swan and the swan was called Zeus, and that I do not have a mother at all but sprang straight from my father's head, full-grown and fully blown from his laureled godhead, and that we glide and glide together on lakes of obsidian, eating all the manna that rains across the wilderness, rains down from the quartermasters at Mount Olympus. Suppose that my father was a swan. Suppose that he glides and glides in his own reflection.

\*\*\*

My mother was a blue heron. My father was Zeus, within her wingspan.

II.

Supposing that my mother was the Gingerbread Woman, iced and frosted and that she buttoned up her jacket and set her raisin eyes homeward and that she ran whee whee whee all the way home, to her licorice-scented gingerbread house near the river and my father chased her all the way there, stubbing a toe in the water, and that he started to melt. He melted until he lost a leg but still they had five ginger snaps that burned the mouths of their lovers from Birmingham bars to Michigan Avenue van de Rohe corporate mousetrap cubicles but every Mother's Day, Mother got five fresh bouquets of snapdragons. Father thought the snap children were not quite done, and were raw inside but Mother kept them warm in parchment skins and pronounced them crisp, perfect. Two turned blond as sand dollars and three stayed the russet of their birth and built their own gingerbread houses right down the street where Mother and Father ran and ran and Father melted as he ran and mother smiled a frosted smile at him. My father was a one-legged gingerbread man who ran until he caught her and set her up in her gingerbread house with peppermint shingles and bitter anise trim. Suppose that five ginger snaps grew into crumbling, hard-bitten lives after leaving Mother's pungent house but it still was perfect.

### III.

Suppose my mother was a blue whale and that my father was oracle-eyed Jonah. She was out for a casual stroll in the same old neighborhood, so she yawned and drew my father in whole, where in her belly he acquired tastes of Biblical proportions and took in prophecies of heaven and changed them into intimations of despair. He dreamed in there of a chariot hell-bent on the firmament that would let him rise like Elijah, up and out of the belly of this beast. And in the belly of my huge blue mother he was sentient but mute, wishing for the gift of ventriloquism to hurl his prophecies forward past her viscous entrails. He wondered whether God gave him the short end of the stick when He made His prophet His pensioner, surviving on nothing but Mother's indigestible bits and the timely repentant expedient of prayer. While he was in there, God imprinted in him the sacred grief of the aggrieved, apoplectic priest and that of the eternally temporizing penitent, there in the slimy belly of the beast. He slept in there with a wall-eyed stare, tossing in his doomsday dreams of Ninevah, Thebes, thinking unawares of Nebuchadnezzar's mess halls, curious writings on the walls, hieroglyphs drawn from the mouths of babes, of griefs in the lions' den for a prophet's shattered peace.

My mother tired of his wrathful sleeps, his tossing in his bunk, found him too unsavory even for her bilious entrails, was bored that he was doomed to compose jeremiads about his disappointment and hunger. So my mother spewed him and ejected with him five sententious serpents born with guns and spears instead of arms and hands, and Father named each and every one of them for a mad captain named Ahab, but Mother played with them in the waves, tossing them from time to time in the air. When they misbehaved as children will, she rapped their guns with a spar and trimmed their spears to toothpicks. These mad captains would blubber after her,

struggling fruitlessly to capture her full attention and to learn her name.

My mother was a blue whale. My father was a prophet who saw in a vision five sermonizing sea snakes, born in God's image, their mother's perfection.

#### IV.

My mother was a through-the-glass darkly blue-tinted mirror with a whalebone handle. My father, always standing behind her like a stalker, cast his reflection forward and its ugliness shattered the glass. My mother, not one to waste things because squanderings always count, scooped up five slices of glass in her ungloved hands, bloodying herself in their handling. The five shards were born with telescopic vision that left them prone to punishment because they always threw light when they were told

to leave the dark corners alone. But Mother thought they were perfect, so jagged and so shiny. Bright and sharp, all the teachers wrote on their deportment cards. All her fragile fractiles shattered again, casting their father's reflection over their shoulders from Red Mountain to Lakeshore Drive, glinting in the sun, glaring in the snow. They shimmered like diamonds cast into the sand, dangerously sparkling at strangers.

#### V.

My mother was a riverboat that ran up to the bluffs by the melancholy Natchez Trace and sometimes picked up passengers like my prophetic peg-legged gingerbread father who was either a gambler or a drowning washed-up riverboat captain whose boat he'd let run aground when his drunken sailors hit a sand bar at Pas Christian. He called the dice  
five times at the roulette wheel and Mother said he always bet against the house but that

it was perfect, just perfect that way. Five die rolled themselves through life like it was Russian roulette. They kept Mother in perfect suspense, but she was well-moored and never was tossed or troubled. The gingerbread captain had anchored her with a stone.

#### VI.

My mother was a blue-blooded mermaid who swam out of the sea oats at Mobile Bay. My father was the Minotaur who found her there, washed ashore and flailing. He split her tail so she could be taught to walk on land but she always precariously tottered like a footbound Mandarin courtesan. My father thought this was just as well because she was too beautiful to let her get away. It was just as well that she stayed, now that she walked on land. They had five mermaid-Minotaur children, born scaly and hairy, and clumsy on land. Their awkwardness made them angry, so they shook their horns and gored their lovers all the way from Birmingham to Binghamton. They were loud and hobbled along on their little splayed feet, stepping on cracks on every sidewalk. Mother laid them a trail of sardines and wild game so they would not starve out there. The children sometimes walked on glass from the time Mother was a shattered mirror

and sometimes there was ground glass in their food when they took sack lunch to school.

They walked on bloody feet and spoke with bloodied lips wherever they went.

Father thought they were awkward and quarrelsome, but Mother said they were doubly blessed, once by Poseidon and once by Demeter, and that from their first bloody steps and their first blood-lipped words, they were perfect.

## VII.

My mother was a blue like cyanide is a blue, Prussian, evaporating. Heron, whale, mirror, gingerbread woman, riverboat, mermaid. She married my father, an ordinary swain, a swan on a lake of obsidian, a reflection in blue light with piano music, a whaler with a roulette wheel on a riverboat made of gingerbread, a beast with a horn. Together they had five red herrings, black sheep, ginger snaps, slivers of glass walking on bloody feet, slew-footed, who gored their lovers with their ghastly horns.

But blue blue blue blue Mother blew in off the Delta and blew kisses to them because they were perfect.

*by Pamela Sumners*  
*(previously published in Tahoma Literary Review)*





*blue yonder just enough*  
by Alan Bern

## RESUME OF THE BEST OF INTENTIONS

I offered to be Michelangelo's hand model for his heroic ceiling  
but as he painted it God lopped it off and I drew back a bloody  
stump. The stigmata of my experience is written on the chapel walls,  
a little sestina in the long-winded Pentateuch of begattings and bygones.

Angry, I bit the hand that feeds me and it coiled up, struck, bit me back.  
I became an anarchist in the Order of Parliament, saboteur of the choir,  
a loud provocateur of clouds, a dung beetle crawling on the Sunday pews.  
I moved to a street where people had good tires so I could slash them.

The authorities told me to turn back my clock, so I went to Dealey Plaza  
and they said that's not what we meant, we use Dali's Eastern Standard  
Time, except for Indiana where it might be 1963 all the time, we dunno.  
Panicked, I turned the clocks counter and wound Big Ben's hands to 1984.

The People Who Matter began to wonder why I ate my lunch with the  
Untouchables, began to question whether my adaptation to deformity  
had made me a little too common, or a little too strange to them, because  
they were all the Michelangelo models who pleased God. I tried to appease.

I lit candles, fondled a rabbit's foot I kept concealed in my neat pocket.  
I was the first investor in a shamrock farm on a reclaimed Superfund site.  
I put heather over my transoms and recited the incantations of the Psalms.  
Salted my windows and doors, hung chicken feet and mistletoe in the trees.

And still, no luck in sight, I bleed on the chapel walls as God re-coils, strikes

*by Pamela Sumners*  
*(previously published in Green Light Review)*

## REST

I like the sleepers, the angel-creepers, the dreamers  
on pillows shredded by old dogs whose feathers  
billow the room when old dogs bellow their keening

When I sleep and dream I dream mighty women  
who file their nails with catfish bones they use  
to play funeral dirges on strings of catgut and  
tarantula teeth, although sometimes I dream  
of calves who died in Virginia moonlight

and wonder why old men queue up to call me  
on my birthday, to be first in line with wishes  
to strum the vanishing harp of all of us, as if  
music mattered. Then I dream whitewater

r u s h i n g

the old feathers forward, to a cave that embraces,  
diligently if a tad carelessly, trusted anyhow.

*by Pamela Sumners*  
*(previously published in Hole in the Head Review)*



*Fossilized*  
by Emily Rankin

## Fatbergs in the Pipe

by Noah Goldzer

“Have a nice flight, hunny” is what she said. “Ted will be here, bending me over your billiard table in ten minutes” is what she meant. It's fine, really. I don't mind, really. Really. I pick up prostitutes whenever I go out of town. In Dallas, some of the expensive ones used to be Cowboys cheerleaders. They come out wearing the uniform, shaking the pom-poms, doing the splits and everything. I mean, it's clearly bullshit, but what does it matter? They can be anyone, dress any way, and say anything so long as you have the money to pay them. Imagine that: being paid to be someone else. I envy them that, sometimes. I tip always.

Kimberly-Clark was holding a half-week conference down there on “flushable” wet wipes: the new leading innovation in the towelette marketplace. See, as it stands today, all wet wipes have to come with warning labels: *Do not flush down toilet*, 'cause they turn into these things called “fatbergs” once they get into the sewer. The guy they hired to explain all this, some scrawny blue-haired kid in a labcoat, said they ran statistical analysis with sewage plants nationwide and found out a lot of people are still flushing the unflushables. Cooking fat, cotton swabs, condoms from college kids, and baby wipes tossed by new mothers are busting pipes from Spokane to Pensacola.

Apparently, all this shit congeals with the alkalines, the rust, and the lead that peels off those nineteenth-century pipes to make a fatberg, a sort of flammable brick of sludge. Fatbergs can't be loosed like normal clogs. They can't be broken down with lye or saltpeter (that's the stuff in Drano); they can't be snaked out, because they're too heavy; and the swirling motion that a flush makes just helps calcify them. No, the only way to pull them out is to get your hands dirty, go down, break a pipe, and—you know what, fuck it, it doesn't matter. This is supposed to be a story about the T, not those pipe-busting little bastards.

Right—the T. If you get on the train in Boston at nine o'clock on a Saturday night, you might see some shit. If the Sox game just ended and they won, you might see some drunken shit. If the Sox game just ended and they lost, you might even get some on you. That's just how it was last night. I'd flown into Logan from Dallas, trading balmy Texan sunshine for New England's autumn drizzle. Martinez hit a two-run homer while I was somewhere over Pennsylvania, Benintendi brought in a third, Moreland stole home on one of Nunez's three doubles, and the Yanks even walked the catcher, twice. Didn't matter. We lost. You can always do your best and still go home empty-handed.

Now, the T isn't like a fatberg. When the T gets stuck—say, like in the tunnels under Boylston Street—it doesn't calcify. If it did, the MBTA would call a guy to come pry it loose with the world's biggest crowbar, but they don't. No-no-no, they make you wait. There's usually just another train ahead that's stuck because another train ahead is stuck because there's yet another train ahead that's stuck. You can't avoid blockage in Boston with responsible flushing. You just have to sit.

So there I was, on that tiny, half-ass seat that skirts the edge of the middle bench halfway down the crowded second car on the Green Line, outbound to Riverside at 9:07 in the evening. I know it was 9:07 because I checked. Then again at 9:09. And 9:10 and 9:12, just to keep my eyes anywhere but on the creeping ass-crack of a behemoth *David Price, Number 24*, whose namesake gave up four god-damn runs just a few hours earlier. Now, get me straight here. I don't blame this guy for his weight, for the crowd, or even for drastically underestimating his jersey size. His ass was in my face and that's just the way it was. I doubt he enjoyed giving me the show any more than I enjoyed watching it.

There must have been thirty other passengers on that car, but the only ones I could make out clearly were directly to my left and right: a tall dark-skinned man with his hoodie up, nodding along to a beat on his headphones, and a four-foot-

something Asian woman in a loose-fitting navy blue pantsuit. Descriptions are a real shitshow, aren't they? This guy's fat; that guy's black; the tiny woman with the little wet spot in her armpit, desperately clinging to the grab handle above her, just happened to look Asian. Kimberly-Clark sends out surveys for this kind of trash. They wanna know which demographics use the most feminine hygiene products and Kleenex so they can cast the "right" color actors for their ads. That's a shitshow, too. You know what they find out when the numbers come in every year? The demo-group that uses the most Huggies disposable diapers is babies.

Well, when we finally got moving again and hit Arlington Station, a seat down the bench opened and I prayed Number 24 would plop into it. Nope. Price was a swell gentleman and gave the spot to a young mom tugging a shopping bag under one arm and a little girl under the other. The little girl, wrapped up tight in a bright pink bubble-coat, must have taken the Sox loss badly, 'cause she whipped her fuzzy yellow mittens, dangling from strings in her sleeves, back in forth in front of her, hitting mom and strangers alike. She kicked the seat, tussled with the shopping bag, let out a horrid shriek every few seconds and we all pretended not to see or hear her.

*"¡Ya basta, Camila! Estaremos en casa pronto."*

Headphones to the right of me looked up but seemed immune in his solitude. Pantsuit to the left of me definitely heard it and, catching my glance, flashed her eyebrows and sighed. Number 24 shifted slightly on his right leg, and his left butt cheek filled the gap. For all I knew, his belly shielded me from the wrath of Camila's flailing mittens. The other passengers grew silent; too terrified or complacent to compete for volume.

*"¡Camila, detente ahora mismo! Estas molestando a estas personas."*

That's how it went for the fifteen minutes and ten centuries that passed between Copley Station and Fenway Park. Camila

shouted, her mother scolded, and everyone else pretended to be fucking astronauts, 250 miles above in the noiseless vacuum of space. I shut my eyes. I cupped my forehead. I calculated the WHIP loss Price incurred to my fantasy league team that night. Maybe it was just one game? Maybe I should have stopped betting on the Sox years ago. Hell, Pedro set the record for walks plus hits per inning-pitched way back in 2000: zero-point-seven-something. 2000. Y-2K. The new age. I started dating Gabby then, freshman year at Lyman High School. She'd sprouted in the summer and suddenly had legs and an ass. Well, I guess she always had those; it's kinda hard to run track without an ass. Or legs. That's shitty, isn't it, the way we talk about that stuff? Like girls' bodies become women's bodies only when they're interesting enough for us to gawk at. Men are such shitbags. I'm definitely a shitbag. I hope Ted isn't.

Anyway, I ignored Camila as best I could and delved deep into memories of Gabby. I went back into her basement, where we used to fool around and pretend to watch that show, *Charmed*, whenever her mom came down to do a load of laundry. I'd never fingered a girl before, but it seemed pretty simple. Gabby'd take her pants down just to her thigh and I'd slide under her panties so she could redress quick whenever the stairs creaked. She stretched her toes when I was inside her and let out this tiny squeal, like a chipmunk sucking helium. We made love there for the first time after junior prom. She wrapped her pantyhose 'round my neck and I barked like a dog. She giggled and said that's how she wanted it. The dress stayed on and so did *Charmed*. I was still there, in that dank, musky basement with Gabby's hips in my hands and her moans in my ear when—"THIS STOP, FENWAY STATION."

Camila was still screaming. Just as well. The last time Gabby and I tried having sex, and it's been years, she put the reruns on Netflix and my junk shriveled right up. It's funny: Fatbergs are filled with used condoms like it's some kind of pipe-based trade-off; irresponsible flushing for responsible fucking. It'd be wrong to say we chose otherwise 'cause teenagers don't



make choices: they make mistakes. But that was a lifetime ago. I'm not the star infielder anymore and she's not the relay champion. I'm in PR now and she sells custom flatware on Etsy. We're just college dropouts whose son died.

The Sox-Yankees game was long over, but the drunkest tailgaters were still finding their way home. At the Fens, a mob of red-on-white stormed onto the T, so abundant and powerful, it dislodged the massive Number 24 from my kneecaps and pushed him farther down the car.

"Fuck the Yankees! Fuck New York!" and this and that and the other thing.

At the sight and sound of the inebriated horde, Camila's yowls turned to full-on bawling. Her mittens, formerly weapons of offense against the other passengers, turned defensive as she cuffed them to her ears and shuddered, snot running down her bubble-coat and sticking to her mother's shoulder. To her credit, the girl's guardian covered her daughter's ears and turned her impatient chatter to the tailgaters.

*¿No ves que le duele la cabeza? Vete. Cállate!"*

"Yo, speak English, bitch!" spat one of the fans.

*¿Perra? ¿Te mostraré una perra!"* She plopped her daughter onto her seat and pushed through the crowd after the hooligans, brandishing her shopping bag over her head like a bat at the plate. Rather than stick around for strike one, the Sox fans recoiled and fled up the car, knocking elbows and bumping knees on the T's path toward Longwood. They clipped the Asian lady in the pantsuit and laughed as she fell, continuing their hateful chant into the bowels of the train until no one could hear them over Camila's ceaseless wailing. Pantsuit picked herself up just fine, flicked off the ruffians, and shot me another exasperated glance.

We exchanged nods and I retreated back into my brain. I tried thinking about the *good time* I'd spent at the Dallas–Fort Worth Hyatt, but that damn blue-haired geek on the conference stage

popped into my head instead. There's only one good thing about fatbergs, he told us. Once they're removed, those suckers burn like nothing you've ever seen, and people sell them on the illegal biofuel market all the time. No shit. He showed us a video. This thing lit up like the Fourth of July, buzzing and zipping and spilling out on the ground in little rivers of fire. Oil-lathered cotton swabs burst in blue flashes and crystallized condoms sizzled like slimy orange sparklers on the screen.

Jason would have *hated* it. Fireworks terrified him. Dogs terrified him. The kids in his class terrified him. I did too. Loud sounds and bright lights triggered his seizures. We couldn't take him to a Sox game or listen to one on the radio. The phone's ringing set him off, so we canceled it. The doorbell hurt his ears, so we disabled it. My motorcycle was pure torture, so I sold it. Our neighborhood was too loud, so we moved. And then he died. *Chronic focal encephalitis* is a cocktail of pain—one part brain inflammation, one paralysis and a third of dementia. You haven't heard of it 'cause it's incredibly rare but that only means *almost* no one gets it. 0.01% is still someone's kid. Jason was ours. Now everything at home is quiet and nothing works.

So. The hooligans vanished down the car, but it didn't matter. Camila, the little pink firehose, could not be plugged. She hissed and cried and tossed her hands around, slapping legs and kicking the middle pole, sending tiny vibrations up the hands of strangers to match the ringing in their ears. It was only a matter of time before someone said, "Shut that kid up!" Okay, I said it, but that's beside the point; *someone* was bound to. That was in Brookline. It was then that Headphones looked up and tossed his hood back, spotting the scene with wide eyes as if woken from a coma. He stared left. He stared right. He winced upon beholding Camila and slowly pried the music from his ears.

"Hey. Hey, you, little girl. You like Disney? *Moana*?"

Camila's eyes were clenched, and ears blocked, but her mother noticed the man and cocked a brow as he held out his

headphones across the aisle. The man swung his pointer finger back and forth between the headphones and the woman's shopping bag. Camila's mother looked down into her satchel as if to remind herself of what she'd bought. She nodded. "*Sí sí sí*".

Every soul in the middle carriage of the ten o'clock D train to Riverside watched as the two switched carry-ons. Without a word, Camila's mother swiped her daughter's hands away and placed the bulbous white headphones over her ears. I took a quick survey of the car: Price grinned from ear to ear; Pantsuit, the wet spot under her arm as wide as home plate, gazed on wildly.

All with seats rode their edges and those without leaned and tilted where they stood for a better view. Headphones swiped his iPod. He tapped the screen. He swiped again. Camila's eyes shot open as if struck with mighty force. A Disney chorus mumbled over her ears. She sniffled. She snorted. She smiled. The T rolled into Beaconsfield Station. And then Reservoir. And finally toward Chestnut Hill. The sound of *chug chug chug* on the track returned, followed by "THE DESTINATION OF THIS TRAIN." You could even hear the tiny *bings* of requested stops up above. It was a great moment, like the Christmas truce of 1914, when the guns went silent and the soldiers crawled from their holes into No Man's Land to rejoice in sport and celebration with their enemies. The battle was over. Peace and tranquility had returned! *Headphones: the MVP!*

But as we approached Chestnut, the man gathered his backpack and rose from his seat, drawing groans from the train. "This is me," he said, holding out the woman's shopping bag. She nodded with a smile and pried the music from her daughter's ears. I held my breath but Camila, surprised yet unfazed, whispered a "Thank you" and turned to hug her mother. With her cries defeated, the D train exhaled as its doors opened. Number 24 squished himself onto Headphones' vacant seat. His flab pushing against my elbow was a warm and welcome relief. As we rolled on toward Newton, I held out my hands to apologize.

“I’m sorry for yelling at you,” I told Camila’s mother.  
“It’s been a long day. I don’t know what came over me.”

“*Está bien, señor,*” she told me, and to Camila, “*Ya casi estamos en casa.*”

They say marrying young is foolish 'cause you won't know how your spouse deals with the kinds of big decisions neither of you have run into yet: domestic living, taking vacations, family squabbles, managing finances. But that's horseshit. No one sees the *real* kickers coming. Like, which one of you gives up a career to stay at home and staple foam paneling all over the walls? Whose credit is ruined so the doctors can cut your son's brain in half? Which tiny headstone do you pick out, the one with the baseball glove or the race car? Gabby wanted to use a service called *Little Angels LLC*. I wanted to stick my head in a wood-chipper. We compromised on an upright, marble stone with a jigsaw puzzle. Jason liked putting things together. He could do at eight what we can't at thirty.

Our condo is off of Newton Highlands which the D-train hit around 9:45. By then, Number 24 had the whole bench to himself and Camila was asleep on her mother's knee. As I stepped off and walked to my car, I noticed that Pantsuit, the young Asian woman who'd taken such a tumble in all the madness at Fenway, was parked but two spots from me.

“Crazy night, huh?” I said, louder than expected over the night's renewed silence.

The young lady looked around the empty lot and raised an eyebrow. “Don't tell anyone,” she said, “but I always pray they lose and don't make it to the playoffs.”

“Yeah, that would have spared us from a night like tonight.”

“Where did that guy come from, anyway? Did you see? The guy with the headphones?”

“He was there before I got on. I sat next to him the whole time.”

“Damn. I sure wish he thought to do that sooner!”

“Yeah. Yeah. That would have been nice,” I said, or something like that.

I thought about asking her out for a drink. She was cute, the night wasn't over yet, and Gabby would hardly call a search party should I return late, or even the next morning. Pantsuit clung to her purse and smiled as I raised my hand in suggestion. But there, nestled into my finger, was my wedding band. It was stuck behind my knuckle and had been for a while.

“You have a nice night,” I said, waving her off. As she pulled out of the lot, I wrestled the ring loose and held my finger up to the streetlight. A bruised halo remained. It was time to go home. It was time to go.



*Nickel*  
by Silas Plum

## **Sonny Liston Workshops His Creative Nonfiction in the Hereafter**

Phantom punch my ass and no pit-a-pat punch neither. Three times in first-round rematch Clay hit me with rights right upside my head and third time I never seen it comin' and I go down— hey that shit happens. Then that fool stand over me hollerin' and cockin' his fist like some prison punk like he never heard of no neutral corner, sportsmanship, respect for the other fighter. I say why get up just then just so he can hit me upside my head again? And him standin' over me like that — that become a famous photo and people look at it — they still lookin' at it more than fifty years later — like he some kind of bad-ass hero.

And don't get me goin' about Jersey Joe — good fighter, ex-champ, nice man but good-for-nothin' horseshit referee. He leave Clay standin' over me, go over and jaws with itty-bitty timekeeper. Meanwhile, Clay finally step back, I stand up and we start mixin' it up again and then I'm fucked — Jersey Joe come back to the action, says I been counted out even though nobody done no countin' that anybody hears, least of all him. He raise Clay hand say Clay he still be heavyweight champ, which make me heavyweight chump. Fans and press and even other fighters — every soul on Earth 'cept my wife say I took a dive. Well, Elijah's scary-ass FBI-infiltrated Muslims just done kill Malcolm and that shit do make me think.

You know what else make me think? How people believe what they want to believe. How people don't like facts gettin' in the way of what they like to believe, what they told to believe. Like how people think Clay served prison time for standin' up to the man. Hey, it's cool he stand up to the man by not lettin' the army draft his ass, but his pretty face never spent a day locked up and that's the truth. Me, they throw me in the Missouri State Penitentiary, motherfucker. Stand up to the man? I stick the man in a trash can and take the man's gun and badge. So who be the real bad ass?

But phantom punch my ass and no pit-a-pat punch neither. That clown Clay he too quick too slick (just like first fight) and he hit me upside the head — never seen it comin'. But after that I got no shame bein' second-best fighter in whole motherfuckin' world for next five years till I die — still don't know what went down that day. Think by now I'd been told. But no.

Word here in the Hereafter say maybe he and me get it on for fight number three. If it comes it comes. I got nowhere else to be. I'm already in tip-top afterlife shape and word 'round here say Clay — ok, I'll call him Ali — he ain't nearly as fast as he used to be.

*by Robert Rubino*





*End of the World*  
by Emily Rankin

## **Make Paperwork, Not War**

Were you in San Francisco  
for the Summer of Love?  
Or in Vietnam?  
Or did you protest the war  
that defined your generation?  
No, no. And no.  
You pulled clerk-typist duty in '67  
the next year too  
while stationed on safe & sleepy  
stateside Air Force bases  
in Mississippi, South Carolina & Wyoming.

Never fired a weapon  
(more importantly a weapon was never fired at you)  
never even carried a weapon.

Thank you for my service.

*by Robert Rubino*

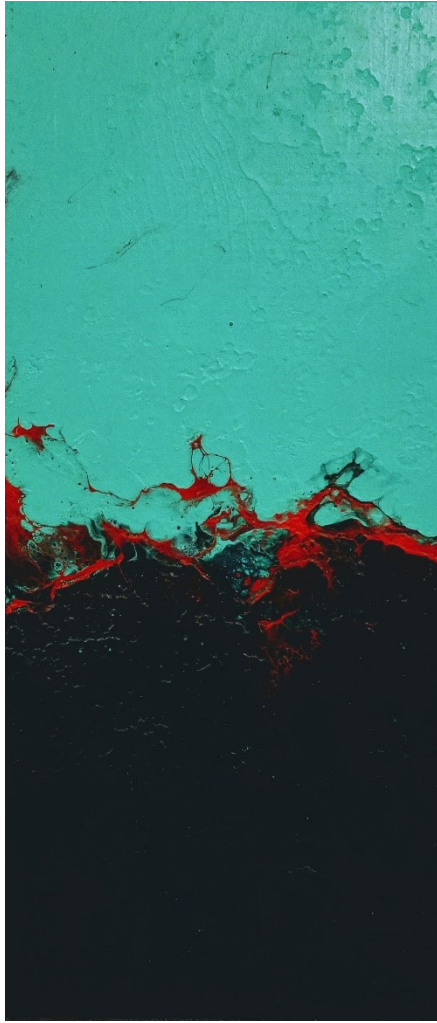
## **What Kind of Man Reads Playboy?**

Were you at Woodstock  
In that symbolic summer of '69?  
Did you at least watch Neil Armstrong  
take one giant leap for mankind?  
Negative that, sir.

You were in the Air Force in '69  
a horny virginal 21-year-old clerk typist  
stationed in Thule, Greenland — remote & isolated  
no sun in winter, all sun in summer  
no females ever.

You helped keep democracy safe in the Arctic Circle  
where back then they didn't get live TV  
where you mostly played racketball  
dropped acid, smoked hashish & read Playboy.  
That's right, no joke, you *read* Playboy.

*by Robert Rubino*



*Untitled*  
by Mallory Zandog

## Neo

IN this neo-utopia  
we are the newest children  
remake the world  
in our fashion.

cut futures imperfect across a  
slumbering cretinous divide,  
dying Dionysian gyrations  
of neo-liberal's uneasy  
leering smile.  
captured in ink,  
conjured sepulchral magic  
that lit scrolling feeds of the divine.  
woke advocacy,  
the ephemera of changing perspectives –  
calyx of commodified  
vassalage.

But I wish you filmed that  
You said  
I wish we had that captured.  
I wish we had that made.  
Heaven and hell  
just one share away.

laying here, in slick,  
magic tricks,                      the confessions of sleep  
and subtextual readings of the  
machinations of high noon retrograde  
in lugubrious dendritic thrall.  
that slips and grasps a beam of light  
to say fuck you  
to all these shadows.

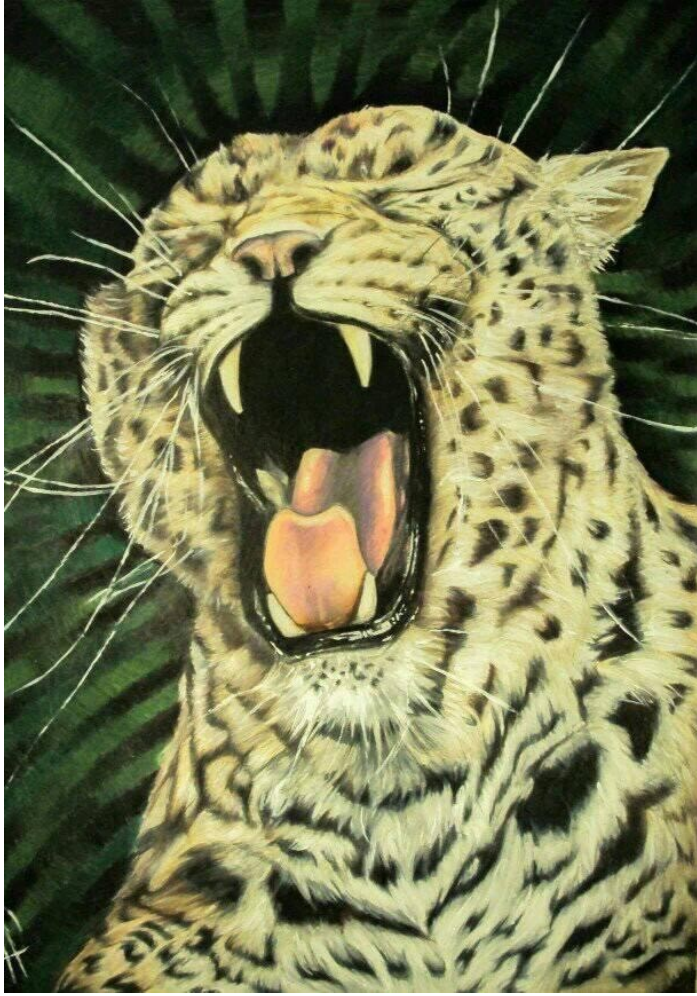
I see you.  
You're the only thing  
I know for sure  
is        there.  
Anywhere.

All is smoke and mirrors,  
inchoate lit.  
And th lights go technicolour -  
a diaphanous world gathers  
cloacal pleats,  
swells of hemmed splendour.

And I can be fascinated again,  
coy enchantment amongst favour,  
Even amidst  
all this lecherous  
e  
-        Conomy.  
comfortably far away.

We are the neo-utopian children,  
balanced precarious  
neo-soldiers. We are,  
the last the earth will shoulder,  
smoulders.  
The earth sweats,  
a future indifferent  
to imperfections slick-  
shoulders ripple.

*by Bradley David*



*Cheetah*  
by Jodi Filan

## Gift Shop (Admission included in entry fee)

I don't think,  
I Get It.  
or (aloud) were simply observing  
the joined form of object, and observer,  
rarely attached to solid like a  
thing. (or this price tag)  
we're post-thing, at least  
for the time being.

you, me; and  
our glorious audience  
of affluent majesties.

### *Gallery Opening:*

'new abstraction/extractive identities'  
darling, they buy your expressions (literally)  
but they won't take your card  
here (again, but thank fuck.)  
still, sterile laugh blooms in our hollow purses  
the wind through subdivide warehouses,  
empty, echoing anecdotes retold  
over-crowded entrées  
ever bobbing yachts on the emerald arbour.

I don't know what Art is,  
but this?  
it isn't.  
SO,  
Go back to school, so,  
pay up  
like paying delivery partners



for starters,  
to get taught what a line looks like:  
from inside out.

you wanted to be spontaneous  
burning your fire, for no commerce  
or witness (or trace).

a circle, ephemeral grace  
burned in white (a curious choice)  
on your  
incandescent forearm.

(where?):  
the human, intersects, with the author -  
all things that forsake the latter,  
make the former.  
But it's nice to feel  
at this juncture -  
that my line meets yours.  
Artistically (emotionally)  
x

see,  
emoji's are, a priori  
evasive.  
though the letters look archaic  
up late in their bed clothes.  
you asked to begin new correspondences,  
in circles, concentric email alter-egos,  
but yours never showed (so I made one)  
a you of my own.

'one can either make a certain kind of line -  
or not.'

*Eviction Notice:*

rising costs, gentrified easel dwellers  
sell their cake to eat it too,

in refined sugars, and screentime mouthfeels

(productivity goals go  
unachieved  
).

(zoom out)  
build forts, now diversity checks  
and see then

(pans)  
the stoves  
still heating.  
inductions/  
(back in, close for reaction)

in the ensuing lines,  
three dots, pulsing, like some  
paranoid threesome (rhythmical, manic, maniacal), like

the weight of your reply  
after too many wines.

by tram sirens night  
some poets (her, again?) (I thought we talked about this)  
only

(in therapy)  
choose to colour their ink  
when kosher.  
Can be derived, not in their deep intimacy with depressing  
vines,  
but in how they ask for the bill,

when it's the polishing cutlery  
to punk End of Service.

*New Lease:*

Oblivion (ah him, again).

And is it; jilted lover  
or, the wilting artist  
that phlegm envy rising  
in an afterschool library?

Those that care more  
For the circumstances of their Success  
than the success of their Art (thanks Keith)  
leave bread crumb trails  
acknowledgements of Success,  
like dutiful ants  
across continents.

in high brow press, incontinence,  
lending  
sloshing over contemporaries  
(I really should be more supportive,  
But I don't  
feel up to it)

in endless readings  
Insta lens and other absent minded  
burner identities, and their insouciant surfeit charm.  
post-structural calm  
dissertations, (I had to wikipedia that,  
just to understand, her thesis)

echoing proud castrations,  
they'd cut off their arm  
Kondo that shit -  
Do You Feel Love  
for unused shelf-space? the smell of empty gift stores?  
fictional chimeras for sale on the promenade -  
produces,  
artful distillery.

## Index cards Toxic Masculinity



does Duchamp still make sense?

What does, indeed, a line look?

the decision,  
to not put down  
any line  
at all. (s)

like Samo© said, (something like this, though, I  
deem, in hindsight  
that he'd approve of my revise)  
in the end  
only matter what it pay for.

*Sold:*  
At the end of the night  
(counting tills)  
screens, wiped clean.  
do not disturb,  
velvet bollards.

*by Bradley David*



*Carol Lombard*

by Jodi Filan

## A Drop of One's Own (this metaphor is not my own)

Even in a waterfall,  
    a raindrop  
    is still on its own.  
pulsing roar of ever impassioned,  
passive violence  
into plunged pools.  
crescendos to world's end,  
intrepid          gives lip upon the cusp.  
a rush of watery bodies  
skirting nature's cleft chin.  
tumbles upon itself  
in the cascading depression.  
at the crux of river,  
single drop  
all currency spent  
meandering ancient seams.  
find one in the infinite,  
amongst the few,  
reside the many.  
the  
waterfall  
    is just a  
    drip  
on its own.

Even,  
we fear this unruly tain.  
an instantaneous intersection of circles,  
in restive pools  
butterfly whispers upon the axis  
treacle movement of time.  
paramount, exhuming

steam upon shoulders  
in the plunge, recession,  
this tide is done  
lifting boats.  
this artisanal earth  
sculpted the chasms that lay just beneath  
the chimerical wash  
negotiating in the islands  
of rock, sharp inhale  
through broken teeth  
that suck up  
towards the shore.  
in ancient legends of country the stories  
are still all some people have.  
their pens are shaking  
as ink means  
pursuant to the judge  
and these contracts bound  
children  
of a lesser suspicion.  
the fictions, the tales that come  
truest to life  
told only in their tongues  
the only way they stay their own.

these ancient snakes that wound their skins,  
stories spun  
-not mine, but his -  
around the sepulchral loom.  
    sculpted an army of soil and clay,  
    so they say  
    made mountains for soldiers  
    and rain tipped with spears,  
    talking with rotating moons.  
    amid the monsoon,  
    a lesson

in control and humility.  
their cry the strength of their ancestors,  
script in the washed bones of  
a country died so many deaths  
but one.  
the individual  
came armed with threats  
of divine liberty  
prosperity  
for some.  
domestic terrorists  
of self  
in cascading  
silent majorities.  
even myself  
is not my own.

the former is squinting  
in penetrative gaze  
beneath the deluge,  
equilibrium -  
restive pools  
turn reactive.  
stewing container  
still dredged debts  
of anguished generations.  
water mustered  
and muscled,  
current,  
showed what it is to be moved  
against its will.  
I am squinting in your gaze  
falsely defied  
in the mindful clarity  
of heavens swell.  
a single raindrop might sell itself -

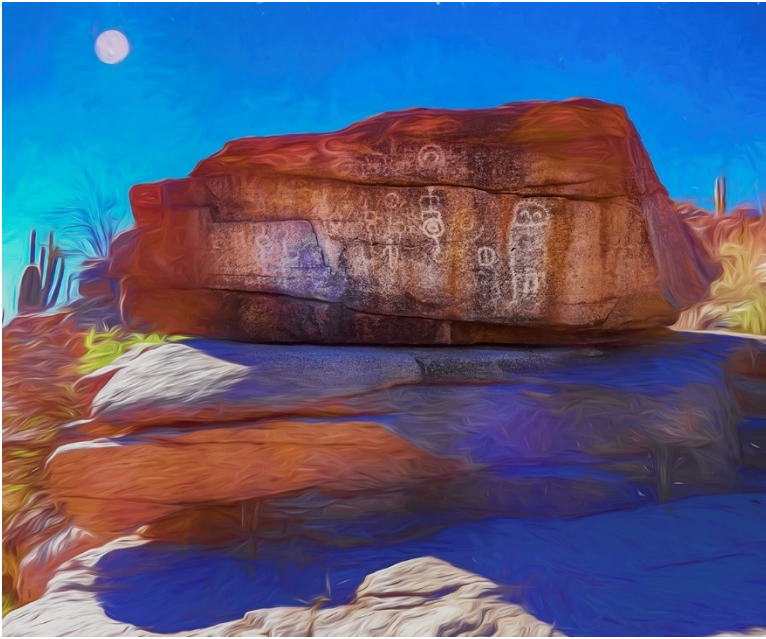


an intrepid comes to find  
as a little more than it knows itself,  
upon the brink of the sunburnt horizon –  
of etymology,  
of retribution,  
of divine beauty  
in the choreography  
of genetic redistribution,  
as a swelling pride in its ilk.  
even bathed, teased  
tousled in the past tense,  
even my light is not my own.

people become circumstance,  
circumstance becomes people,  
begets nothing in the silence  
between breaths.  
steady, but intransigent,  
insolvent, crying out for the “I”.  
incompetent  
at receiving this most sensuous,  
base ritual,  
of inside and out,  
of breath and then  
Not.

Inhale,  
Exhale,  
By the second stroke, I'll be waiting.  
in our own rhythmic divine.  
trying to live in disclosure  
without ceremony  
but even,  
our graves are not our own.

*by Bradley David*



## **The Owl at Honey Bee Canyon**

Here's how you can find him:  
Follow the trail down the hill  
then turn north under the road.  
Walk up the wash a mile or so  
till you come to the ruins of the dam.  
Keep going. On your left  
you will see figures, animals, symbols  
etched into the flat faced rock.  
There he is, the Hohokam owl,  
helper to the Guardian of the Valley.

What you will feel when you see him  
I cannot say. But maybe, as I have,  
you will sense the presence of people  
from a thousand years ago,  
brothers and sisters laying their heads down  
tonight in the same place we will rest ours.  
Maybe you will hear the great horned owl,  
friend in the dark, hoot his promise  
to protect us under this black sky  
lit by a million stars.

*Artwork by Kim Sosin*  
*Poem by Janet McMillan Rives*



*A Man and his Dog Rest in the Sunlight*  
by Kim Sosin

## **Jasmine Tercet**

We played pretend I, Lincoln; you, Mary  
White House, breakfast, dawn,  
little rainy Christmas Day 1861.  
Abraham, Abraham,  
Thou are not ruining my Christmas dinner again.  
Silent as a stovepipe hat, I squat.  
You and your cabinet boys enjoy  
your little meeting tomorrow.  
Mary, please pass the marmalade.  
Your sons were so looking forward to opening their presents.  
We the people need to decide if the union  
can risk engaging in war with Britain over  
our capturing Confederate agents on a  
British ship while fighting Mister Lee.  
I suppose I'll have to cancel the choir and dinner guests.  
God himself doesn't know what time you will return Mister Lincoln.  
Mother, I wonder if our Yankee boys and those Confederates  
will lay down their rifles,  
swap some Figgie puddin' and pecan pie?  
Father, proper ladies of the Confederacy knitted  
scarves and socks for their soldier boys.  
Mother, tiny children were urged to pray,  
Yankee wolves stay away from our doors.  
Yet Southern slaves taste freedom on Christmas day.  
At the Horton Taft's house, Willie boy and Tom fired crackers  
and pistols practicing to be soldiers. Stayed for dinner.

I consulted my pocket watch,  
Lincoln, you know war is always  
coming yet avoid festivities.  
Escalating evening sleet washed war room window  
dead ruddy damselfly hung  
her multifaceted eyes reflecting  
blood of soldier martyrs swaying on winter wheat  
to the revelry of newly decorated White House.

&&&

On the colorless page  
your chestnut words almost black  
like a bland toad bleaching on the pond sill  
like a once voluptuous Koi leaping and swallowing her  
like a swooping heron consuming both  
like a shadow capturing the flickering  
like breaking light dissolves all  
as your mind disappears from the page.  
In my brain rewind forty-nine years together  
upward flies my drone pursuing your memory:  
Amphibian slurped by carp  
burped by bird  
raincloud choked, regurgitated brightness.  
It's not the bite in your words.  
It is the silent illness between your words  
that pings my soul.

&&&

Last bitter words I slung  
you caught tenderly.  
They still rattle  
in my mouth. Up  
the knoll staggering  
where our little café  
reigns as a ramshackle  
cathedral without a steeple.

The stifling sun twists  
the storefront into shades  
cooper, sunflower, and violet  
stained glass like. Winded  
I stare at three perfect  
holes in the café  
window covered inside  
by decaying newspapers  
proclaiming, *Strife Over*.  
The dates are smudged.

Bullet holes?  
Too symmetrical.  
Want to fit my fingers  
like into the risen Christ's  
side to see if they're real.  
Café door's stuck. Jam  
my shoulder squeeze through.

On small gray tray  
my mocha coffee  
a cup as life-size  
as a funeral urn. On  
creamy surface smiles  
a Cheshire cat. Chuckling  
I stir its face  
into an earthy  
concoction.

If there was a sound  
didn't hear it. Three  
sharp twinges  
in my side. Shove  
the bleeding back  
like bad memory  
of our final words.

My pain dies when  
you appear above  
surrounded by halo  
of Cheshire cats. Sweetness  
of your hair rains down. Braided  
blue roses,  
bleached tulips,  
almost white lilacs,  
gardenias, and jasmine



pull me up  
your good thief.

It was a slow  
news day.  
Small column  
on page 23 read  
*Turmoil Declines.*  
*Victim found face down.*

&&&

*by Ted Zahrfeld*



*What the Lion Sees*

by Tony Murray

## **The Karmic Agent**

by Sam Aleks

The wailing police sirens drown out the gentle song of the calming flame. I count two sets of red and blue lights before abandoning the house to the raging fire. I don't turn – turning makes you look guilty. I walk slowly, steadily past the dying trees, past the shabby weathered houses, and down the cul-de-sac until I finally reach my redbrick and coal apartment haven nestled in the gloom of that gray afternoon fog.

Standing by my kitchen window, I watch the burning home with some unease. There is a soft snowfall drifting, the smell of sulfur. I breathe it in, it takes me back.

####

This obsession started small, like a blemish before a body rash. First paper plates and toys, then discarded furniture. Cardboard boxes, old moldy desks, full motion swivel barstools, ergonomic office chairs, dilapidated cabinets – sometimes even plain discarded wood when I got desperate. The turning point came through a random self-indulgent experiment one idle afternoon. Finding nothing else around the neighborhood, I set fire to an old CRT TV and never went back to recyclables. That day I found burning TVs gives you so much more. A sudden jolt of life came like always, but what followed was a soothing calm never known before, an ease to my tension. A steady state somehow lingering beyond the cooling death of the cinders and the ash.

This first TV emitted a gentle black smoke cocooning my entire complex in a delicate womb that

evening. The delicious combination of gun powder and melting plastic fused and filled the air with a flavorful aroma like that of old rubber boots baking in the sun. As the smell overtook, the melodic crackle of the blaze outside softly cooed me to a new sleep, a sleep free of nightmares. The night rejuvenated and the morning welcomed. For the first time my back straightened, my shoulders squared, and the vastness of the world came as a glorious reminder of hope and not a crushing burden.

###

My parents named me Onra, but only ever referred to me as “girl.” They had prepared a long list of potential male names before my birth, being certain that they would have a boy. Unfortunately, the big day proved the first of many disappointments for them.

Still, they tried to bring up a boy as best they could. My father made an active attempt by involving me in what he called “man’s business.” He took me fishing, shooting, and hunting, all activities I quickly began to excel in. In fact, I *enjoyed* these things and my father even gave me pats on the back after a few of our more successful excursions. I liked seeing him proud, but his subtle, hollow smiles never fully eased the tension in my shoulders.

On my thirteenth birthday he bought me a pair of military-grade binoculars and frowned when I asked him what they were for.

My father is a retired construction worker and my mother is on disability due to gout. They live about a half hour drive away in Glendale and are what one would dismissively refer to as “decent people.” They are good neighbors with a clean lawn, they wave hello, and always

recover their bins the day after trash day. Since moving out, I've been doing my best to limit contact with my parents. Holiday and birthday phone calls. I haven't seen them in two years.

###

The phone rang two days ago while I stood in the kitchen watching the fire fighters pour sand over a blazing flat screen. Through the receiver, my mother told me that father had a heart attack so severe it awarded him three attendants, two doctors, and almost half of the cardiac ward. She told me there isn't much time left. So, I figured visiting the hospital would make the most sense.

I watered my plants, ironed my clothes, and applied make-up meticulously. I walked up to my apartment door. The discolored paint made me uncomfortable. I considered applying a fresh coat before leaving the house but dismissed the idea. I reached for the knob, turned, pulled, opened, and finally walked through the archway.

With deliberate movement, I made my way down the flights of stairs holding firm to the railing and counting the steps as I descended. Each step labored my breathing, each motion weighing more on my chest like the fitting of cinderblocks. By the time I reached the front door of the complex, I felt dizzy and lightheaded. The empty suburban seemed to sway and rock like lava flow. A sudden urge to sleep struck without warning and my legs were in full motion, running back up the stairs, back to the front door, and back to the safety of my little home. I phoned mother to tell her I felt too sick to leave the house. I would visit later, some other day.

I drift away in the evening, my body almost nonexistent – but the torpor never lasts. By three AM I'm awake again, mouth dry and mattress soaked. Lying in bed I often recall the sensual music of distant flames. How I used to carry matches with me everywhere.

My father is an old man, it makes sense for him to die and yet there's pity in it too. I shuffle memories in my mind like playing cards. The day when as a teenager I left the house past curfew to find comfort in the old department store – then but a skeleton of what it once was. The way my father slapped me after finding me outside in the darkness and how bad it stung.

###

The garbage mounds littering the sidewalks sat proudly the day before the house fire. Occasionally, a clump of damp paper towels or a green glass bottle fell off a mound, rolled across the street, met the curb, and disappeared into the void of a gutter drain. I savored those subtle moments as I made my way down the street, but even the most dignified migration of garbage didn't make up for the lack of television sets.

Sure, one of my neighbors, an elderly Filipino couple, had left a decrepit desk sagging against a tree, but I knew that wouldn't satisfy me. Burning is like a drug – you need bigger and better kicks each time the tension returns.

I took a longer walk than usual to make sure I didn't miss anything. The pale house on the far end of the street often held the most garbage. The people living there seemed to enjoy breaking things. Each week guaranteed a new piece of furniture. However, that day the bounty was bare. The dirt-ridden front yard offered nothing but a

poorly coiled garden hose and two tacky pink flamingos. I even moved the items around, lifting them up and checking the dead grass below in utter disbelief.

As I skulked around, a muddy and discolored mustang careened down the quiet street and parked abruptly in the driveway. The beast on the broken concrete wore a rusted grill frown and an array of crashes for a frame. The driver door swung open and out stepped a pair of snakeskin boots. The man that followed looked haggard, but strong. The sinew of his neck and arms bulging outward, covered by greasy skin and long hair matted and clumped by oil. The man looked directly at me, freezing me in place. He flashed a little smirk before stomping toward the front door, swinging it open, and greeting the inhabitants with a rowdy groan.

I stared at the mustang, recalling my father's old project car. We worked on it together, him fiddling under the hood and me holding the flashlight. He'd dig into the car's guts, grunting, swearing, smelling of motor oil, as the small TV in the garage played background noise. I remember wanting to be left alone, to be in my room where it was quiet – but he insisted on me joining him. So, I stood there, flashlight in hand, illuminating the inside of the car. I eventually saw it as a game, an exploration of a cave, a hunt for treasure. We rarely spoke during this time, so it made the immersion easier. Father is older now and I'm older too. It's the natural thing, a known outcome, the antidote to life.

My breathing became labored despite my standing still. The metallic sway of the mustang, odd and distant – I could feel the space between us grow large yet remain flat like a canvas. The machine and I connected by time and space yet set apart. I decided to continue down the street to

clear my head. *A couple of laps around the cul-de-sac, I thought, just a quick walk.*

On my way back I saw a boy sitting perfectly still on the dead lawn, a stoic apparition. He was holding a magnifying glass up against the descending sun. *Maybe he's just a vision?* I thought, he was serene, surreal. The metal frame of the mustang was no longer in motion, it was just a car then. We were all present then.

What little light shone past the distant mountains collected in the boy's glass. He directed the pulse of energy upon the dirt before him, boiling the surface of the mud, penetrating it.

"Hi," the boy said. He was staring at me, but I hadn't noticed. His eyes were light blue and just as piercing as the beam of light.

"Hello," I said. A knot developed in my back; I rubbed my shoulder.

"You look sad."

"Me? I'm okay. What are you doing there?"

"Playing with the ants," the boy looked down at the grass and motioned the beam around.

"You like that game?" I rubbed my shoulder. The boy shrugged without looking up.

"Is that your dad?" I said, "the guy that drives that car."

"That's my new dad. Do you want to play with me?"

"No, I'm very busy," I started walking, "I have to go."

####



My mother began getting hot flashes at 39. Despite this, my parents somehow managed to conceive another baby, their little miracle boy. The boy weighed six pounds, eight ounces and was named Kai.

Kai looked like a shriveled raisin when I first saw him, not a real person but an impression of one. Something out of clay, an abstraction. I reached out my hand and he curled his around two of my fingers, smiling a toothless smile, the gap between his gums like a hollow cavern. I smiled back, feeling my face tighten, my mouth stretch.

My parents showered Kai with endless toys. Delighting in his smiles and giggles while leaving me alone. Without their hovering, I was able to experience life on my own terms – unburdened, unhinged. I found comfort with the other rejects at school, Cecilia being one of them. Cecilia taught me the meaning of catharsis through fire.

I spent most of my teenage days with Cecilia after school. Her denim and leather style rubbed off and soon we were both sporting that grunge look. The other kids at school avoided us like the plague. The only one who paid us any mind was Kai. As he got older, his mimicry of my look increased. He began following Cecilia and me, trailing noiselessly behind us – sometimes we went hours without realizing he was there. Sometimes my father would interrogate me about his whereabouts, as if I was his keeper.

When Cecilia introduced me to fire, she did so in Kai's presence. We were out one late afternoon after school looking for something to do, walking aimlessly. We reached the park, sloshing through the wet grass as the clouds enveloped the setting sun. Cecilia lit a cigarette and offered me one. I accepted nonchalantly to disguise my inexperience.

I coughed, feeling the cigarette smoke burn through my throat. The coughing came in waves and I rocked against the tree we sat under to urge the tar out. I tried to gauge her reaction. *Can she tell?* I thought, but she didn't care. She was too busy with the ash of her own cigarette to notice.

"Watch this," she said, pressing the burning end of the cigarette against her arm. She didn't flinch.

"Why did you do that?" I asked.

"Because I can," she said. "Come on, let me show you something."

She led me to a small shack in the middle of the park. The structure was made of wood and had no entrance – The doors and windows were barred by planks.

"Check it out," she tugged at a plank, pulling it off to reveal a mass of moving filth. Large clumps of dirt scurried out of the shack in droves. I stared in alarm, they had vein-like tails and large, jutting teeth. They smelled like a septic tank and made shivers run down my spine as they grazed against my ankles. I did my best to remain stoic, Cecilia laughed. She forced her arm into my flannel pocket and pulled out my matchbox.

"What do you say we take our bonfire to the next level?" she said, striking a match. I watched the shack light up, first blue, then red, then intense yellow. My back tingled and I didn't know what to think. I stepped away, creating distance between Cecilia, the fire, and me. I felt the presence of a small body behind me. Kai had followed us, seen the whole thing. I registered wonder in his eyes, shock at the mesmerizing dance of the flame. We stood there, silent, watching the show.

The whimpering finally snapped me back. It must have been going on for a while. The fire was already

surrounding us when Cecilia started pulling me away. By the next day, the blaze had grown out of control. By the end of the week, the fire fighters had managed to control it long enough to search for the body.

###

Earlier today before the house fire, I spent the early afternoon scouring my apartment. I found old journals, jeans, small scraps of poetry once pinned on my bedroom wall. I dug through my bedroom closet, shoveling through memories until I found the old lockbox. I opened it, finding the binoculars still in pristine condition.

I pressed them against my face and observed the gloom of the neighborhood at twilight. The birds in the trees, the shabby houses stretching down the road, the old couple two doors from my complex in their rocking chairs – that dying generation. My father in his hospital bed must have been watching television. I saw the mustang again, careening down the street, disturbing the picture beyond my lenses.

It moved in subtle zigzags; its roaring motor first distant then knocking at my eardrum. It turned into the driveway and produced the sinew of its driver once again. The man moved his haggard body in a bent determination. His fists clenched and his expression scowling with malice. Tension moved like a stream of ants through my body, the man pulled the door open, stepped inside, and slammed it closed. I rubbed my shoulder to ease the knot.

I aimed my binoculars toward Filipino couple's house in the hope of finding something, anything to work with. Their lawn was empty – every lawn in the neighborhood was empty. The sidewalks were free of

clutter, the empty trash bins being evidence of the garbage man's visit. I frowned and grit my teeth as tears started forming, I brush them away and return to my observation. A noise in the distance focused the sway of the binoculars back to the green mustang. The door of the house swung with the gentle wind and the boy from before walked out toward the street. He sat on the curb, rubbing his face.

My phone rang, it was mother again. She told me that father's condition wasn't improving. She urged me to visit and I agreed,

"Yes," I said, "it would be good if I came."

I stuffed the memories back into my closet and pulled out a shirt and jeans. I changed, noticed a stain on my shirt, I rubbed it with my finger, but couldn't remove it. I took the shirt off and put on an old flannel that Cecilia gave me back in high school. I took a moment to examine it in the mirror; red, plaid, pockets, burn holes. She lived with three sisters and claimed her clothing by pressing the lit ends of cigarettes against it. She gave it to me after the big fire to help me stay warm through the walk home.

I put on my sneakers, tying the laces twice, then straightened my hair. I approached the door, grabbed the knob, turned, pulled, opened, and exited through the archway. The heavy feeling returned as I descended the stairs.

Outside the blue hour was approaching. I walked down the street, phone in hand, and ordered a ride. I walked past the shabby house and looked at the boy. He didn't see me at first but looked up as I moved past.

"It's you," he said.

“Hello,” I stopped and put my phone away. We looked at each other silently. I notice the bruise around his eye.

“You look very sad,” he said, “are you okay?”

“I’m fine. What happened to your eye?”

The boy looked away. Flashing lights bursting from the window illuminated us. I looked past the boy and saw the haggard man lazing on the couch inside. Before him was a glorious screen flashing with rare energy. I felt the glow of the television even at this distance, the radiance of it seeping past us and out into the emptiness of near night.

“It’s really loud in there,” the boy said, “I don’t like it loud. That’s why I go outside.”

“I don’t like it loud either,” I told him.

“Why do you feel bad?” he said.

“I feel fine,” I reached into my flannel pocket and found an old matchbox. I examined it and remembered the smell of Cecilia’s cigarettes – how it blended with the burning timber and disappeared like a face in an ocean of people.

“What’s that?” the boy said.

“This?” I showed him the matches, “It’s a matchbox. I use it to burn things.”

“Like ants?” he said.

“Yes,” I smiled, “like ants.”

I tossed him the matchbox and continued staring at the screen in the house.

“He makes me mad sometimes,” the boy said, “do you get mad too?”

“No, I’m a very calm person,” I checked the time on my phone and concluded that visiting hours at the hospital were over.

“Are you leaving?” the boy asked.

"I'm going home," I stared at the lightshow in the house, "does your new dad watch TV often?"

"Every night. I hate it," the boy scowled, "he comes home and just sits with the sound turned up."

"What about your mom?"

"My mom works a lot, I don't see her most of the time."

"What happened to your eye?" I asked again.

"Nothing," the boy looked at the matchbox. I saw hunger in his face and knew I should ask for the matches back. I waved goodbye.

The light flicked off. The boy rose noiselessly, walked back to the porch and waved. I felt a lump in my throat. he reached for the knob, turned, pulled, opened, and finally walked inside. I stood alone in the street, quiet.

I took a walk around the block. Then another. Then a third. I circled through the neighborhood until the streets were fully submerged in darkness. On the way back I heard the crackling, felt the smoke rising like a demon freed. I stood a while and waited there by the pale house, watching the smoke rise and transform into fire. The fire spread quickly

###

I'm standing in my kitchen now, safe and alone. The wail of the police sirens is audible, but the lights are still too distant. I pick up my binoculars and see the smoke bellowing from the dancing flame atop the roof of the shabby house. That oscillating horror.

The door of the pale, burning house swings open. The haggard man staggers out, shirt aflame. A rough black smoke is rising from his torso. A large woman follows fast

with a blanket. She drapes it over him as he rolls on the asphalt in the street. For a moment there is calm, then the woman begins to shout.

People gather around the blaze and the sirens approach ever closer. The police are first, I see them on their way. The woman attempts to rush back into the blaze, but someone from the crowd prevents her. The boy is missing, I realize. The boy is in the house with fire surrounding – my fire. That dreaded inferno, that perfect storm.

I'm tackling the stairs two, three at a time. My legs are running down and out into the black and orange street. The crowd is gathered like a tribe around a bonfire. They're murmuring, some covering their mouths in shock. A few are holding their phones to their ears, beckoning the fire fighters to hurry. The police have just arrived, the officers are pushing people back.

I'm sneaking by the side of the house, the cool of the evening at my side as my shoulder boils against the buckling wood. I'm near the bedroom window now, I reach up. The smell of burning flesh, a kind of pork. I'm looking at the burn marks across my hands, then at the small body past the window frame cocooned by smoke. I climb in and face it, the disintegration of self.

## EPILOGUE

The sterility of the Valley Presbyterian initially unnerved me. The smell of medicine, the orderly and dutiful behavior of the nurses, the subtle beeping of the machine hooked up to my arm in the otherwise silent white plaster room. It all felt like a dream, a fantasy that one is apt to project on the less fortunate, but never on oneself.

The sting of pain and insufficient morphine drip prevented any depersonalization. *I am here, this is real, I am in pain.*

Gauze covers my left arm and half my face. The nurses call me a hero but refuse to bring me mirrors. They say that I'll get to go home in a couple of weeks.

I am gently dabbing at the gauze on my face when the nurse pulls back the privacy curtain.

"You have a visitor," she says, smiling faintly.

As she exits the room, an orderly brings in a patient in a wheelchair. He helps the man onto his bed and adjusts his pillows in an upright position before leaving. The man coughs heartily, and I turn to face him.

I feel no panic, no tension. I feel nothing but sorrow. I open my half-burnt mouth to speak, but the pain and delirium produce only a sad and muffled gurgle. The faint whisper, the sad greeting transfers only as faint human static, and we are lost.





*Self Portrait*  
by Tony Murray

### **Just You See**

Just you see  
three notebooks  
Dirty, Next and Done  
he was big enough  
to write in pen  
an old tent  
with a view  
of the edge  
how long the mind  
before a tree  
becomes the wind  
how many poems  
an eye or a beak  
a black crow  
doesn't flinch  
I lift my head  
to say farewell

*by Rob Schackne*

## **Becalmed**

He becomes a writer  
a thousand years waiting  
and for some reason

for a harmless detonation  
he writes odd poems  
of hearts and souls

(by all means, my love  
transfer those cultures  
Astérix to Astro Boy)

he starts out on the Mekong  
a thousand years waiting  
for the wind to pick up

a kite gets caught  
between the gust & the air  
and falls at the border

he watches a boat  
by a slow silver river  
play an old game in the mind

the inklings to scatter  
from blows and the hot wire  
sparks fly off the thousand words

the kite goes as high  
as it can, one eye spotting  
the dangers below

looks like soldiers  
in a thousand fields sow hearts  
marked in land mines dark

a poem comes grudgingly  
like a body pulled along the ground  
and silent people stare

*by Rob Schakne*

**String Haiku in Five Parts, for John Cage R.I.P.**

The glass pieces  
a billion bits  
scattered everywhere  
after the hoodwink  
that irresponsible bomb  
trucks thundering past  
the music schools and factories  
today I was invited to feel  
a piece of space cotton  
my grandmother's cheek  
the sound of wings  
the last notes of a city  
how dramatical  
the music fades away  
I don't really care  
to be healed again

*by Rob Schakne*



*Orpheus*  
by Kerfe Roig

Six

the latest nap  
on the day's shift  
coordinates  
sex soft with sleep  
the respondents  
ask afterwards  
without a word  
their tongues moving  
without a sound  
both were sleeping  
thought this talking  
to be kissing

*by Alan Bern*

facing

the hanging framed

black-on-ivory woodcut --

thick-outlined

friend skeleton

holding up a fine long spear

at angle

over his head twisted

looking back

full face grimacing

alongside

slide-slide tap

slide-slide tap

on the wood floors

shining

*by Alan Bern*



## **Cattle Farm**

Somehow, I had inherited a cattle farm in West Virginia. I found a peace I'd never known herding the great creatures, so large and stoic and stupid and profound and sweet, among the sharp green fields and hills beneath a bright sky. They made soft thrumming noises as if speaking to me, or to the universe. Perhaps the universe answers them? It never answers me, but I am too neurotic and self-aware, so the universe is smart to ignore me.

I got to know individual cows. Elsa was my favorite, mainly snow white with patches of brown, soft fur. She would rub her rough tongue gently against my hand. It seemed to be love. These massive beasts that could have easily trampled me were gentle as lambs.

Soon, I will have to send some off to be slaughtered. I might become vegetarian. The bloodiness of meat has become disgusting. Still, I need to sell these cows. That's the way a farm works. You always hurt the ones you love.

*by Ethan Goffman*

## **One Day in an Orchard**

At my feet were stacked piles of apples, green streaked with red, a mild red, a ruby red, a blood red struggling to shine through. I glanced up and realized I was in an orchard, trees shimmering with apples.

I sensed that one of the apples was THE one, the apple of sin and knowledge. Eating it would complete the circle begun by Eve that had signaled the start of human history. Eating it would bring about the apocalypse. I must not eat it. Yet I must, I felt compelled, it was time. Could it possibly be that I, who felt myself among the least significant people on the planet, as insignificant as the untouchables in India, the slaves that still exist in the hidden places around the planet, the child labor in the poorest of countries, the girls sold as sex slaves, the prisoners who stuff our jails with yearning to be free, would be the catalyst for the end of time?

I picked up the first apple, took an enormous bite. It was slightly bitter but mostly bland, not at all juicy. It choked me, but I gagged it down. Apples had never been my favorite fruit, and these were among the duller of apples. If I only forced myself to smaller bites, eating them would not be unpleasant, just boring, and there was a whole orchardful. I could spend the rest of my life here, eat apple after apple, and still never find the apple of the knowledge of good and evil.

I took a second bite.

*by Ethan Goffman*

## **The Word**

The Word was out. Final, definitive proof of the existence of God had been discovered, or so it was reported, in a part of the Middle East so distant it was on the other side of the planet, and then another thousand miles beyond. Dressed as a Knight of the Round Table, I set out to find the final proof so that humanity, knowing there was ultimate purpose, would not suffer any more, or at least would suffer a bit less.

I set out on a twisty, torturous, dusty road across vast fields, through thick woods, over rolling hills. For a small portion of the journey, I was actually atop a horse (although a beaten-down old nag), but most of the time I merely banged two coconuts together. I travelled high atop craggy mountains, through deep tunnels in primordial darkness beset with dripping, forded mighty rivers, stowed aboard several barges and one dragon ship to cross vast oceans. Along the way, I consulted with a mystic atop a mountain peak, several viziers, and one particularly brilliant court Jester. I fought three ruffians--two were assaulting maidens and one was just a loud-mouthed fool. (Alas, I won only one of those three battles.) I even slayed a dragon, albeit a particularly small, innocuous one who wasn't doing any harm but had scared some of the locals (I still feel guilty about that one). Finally, after a thousand days, a thousand nights, and 3.1416 seconds, I arrived at a golden shrine. Glorious hymns rose up in the morning sun as I opened an ornate receptacle atop the shrine and pulled out a faded yellow parchment. On it were three statements:

--this paper is the word of God.  
--The word of God is infallible.  
--God exists because this paper says so.

*by Ethan Goffman*



**I no longer speak to myself**  
by Serge Lecomte

## **The Damselfly**

You dropped my hand and a damselfly  
landed on it, lacy-winged and indigo-striped,  
oblivious to the weighty words that  
floated to the ground.

I dared not move and doubted the drops  
that fell on my thighs were rain.

A second damselfly hovered,  
a helicopter assessing its landing pad,  
inserting his cerci into the lady.

A great shove from behind.  
I doubled over and sucked in my breath,  
a zephyr that might unseat them.

The male,  
holding the single key that fit the lady's lock,  
curved his body beside hers to form  
half a perfect heart  
that she made whole.

I clutched the jagged cold metal  
you slipped into my pocket.

*by Debbie Fox*

# Period

By her own words

she was

a flower of the Gibraltar mountain.

'yes | said yes | will yes'

Words moist and luscious

though she was given so few of them.

Voiceless, Molly was late to bloom

until,

breasts sagging,

her sagacious last words and testament

'yes | said yes | will yes'

closed the unpunctuated book.

Slammed it shut

full-stop

on the Irish man of letters.

*by Debbie Fox*

## **i hope it doesn't rain**

drawing inspiration  
from stones  
smashed  
to death  
by desperate fists

i can show you a place  
where the sun is  
blackened by crows  
and a cricket symphony  
chirps beneath the moon

it is true,  
that grey days  
bring about  
clarity to  
the eyes of a poet

but any day  
spent together  
side by side  
softens the sun  
and slows down time

and in these moments  
where flowers grow  
from our hands,  
reach out and touch  
the stars overhead



and just remember:  
every breeze  
carries my words  
and every raindrop  
carries my name

but today,  
i hope it  
doesn't rain

*by Tohm Bakelas*



**The Lone Duck**  
by Serge Lecomte

## Haiku Rain Poem

Summer lotus pond  
yellow micro-flowers grow  
more moisture above

hard rains come and stay  
earth below can hold no more  
bayous flood their banks

red rooster shelters  
too dispirited to crow  
hen pecking to come

fog settles harder  
aged archival photograph  
pass a summer rain

flood plain is in sight  
rains that poured for days on end  
one trumpet bell saved

*by John Lambremont*

## U.S. Blues Revisited

If I should say to you:  
sometimes I feel like I'm dying,  
this is not a mere song lyric,  
nor a figure of speech;

as the tears I weep today  
I do not weep for me,  
but for the wretched state  
of this, our home country.

It feels like the cancer within me,  
inoperable and weathering chemotherapy,  
has metastasized across the nation,  
and no one can find a remedy.

There is no longer any tolerance  
for opinions that are opposites,  
and free speech has costs and takes tolls  
in a homeland that's lost its soul.

We should put down our signs and our guns,  
and take a good look at the other ones,  
until we can see that our hate  
is rapidly sealing our fate.

*by John Lambremont*

## Remembrances

My aim was unerring;  
my dirt clod hit him  
squarely in the eye,  
and burst into pieces.

I never figured out  
why almost every time  
I knelt down in the pew  
I felt like passing out.

Startled by the spotted skink  
scuttling up the tree trunk,  
we laughed nervously;  
and then, stolen cigarette in mouth,  
I choked and took accidentally  
a big, deep inhale.

In our enthusiasm  
for laying the brick patio,  
I forgot completely  
the music festival.

When we got back  
to the back yard,  
he walked to within ten feet  
of the lawn chair, then ran to it,  
turning to announce  
that he had won.

The only green grass  
was at the end  
of the garden hose.

Attain the highest  
release point possible,  
and don't forget  
to flick the wrist.

He told me without question  
that at the rate we were going,  
we would soon be doing drugs.  
He was right, of course,  
it was the next (best) thing.

He simply couldn't believe  
that I would break his nose  
with the hand-fashioned blackjack  
the carpenter's apprentice made  
and gave to me to use.

Those tiny curved nail scissors  
were an instrument of torture  
made for a bad child.

A hot, steaming bowl  
of the old Cream of Wheat,  
kindly iconic Negro included,  
topped with a spoonful  
of granulated sugar,  
a pat of butter,  
and an ounce of milk.

*by John Lambremont*



**Alaskan Highway**  
by Serge Lecomte

(phantom whispers)

I'm empty  
filled to the brim  
with nameless entities  
that permeate through me  
but their powers still elude me  
black eye holes take in the light  
razor blade cut across a smile  
I'd settle for a sheepish grin  
filed down feet follow rivers  
and streams of despair  
I don't care is the only offering  
I can muster upon arriving there  
into the black tar well  
into the india ink I sink  
from the pit I witnessed  
a left-hand bent light and spin a web  
of foresight  
I knew I was close to that finish line  
I also knew I would choke  
like the hare, I was always early but always felt too late  
many years later I know I will always wonder what did  
the tea leaves say about me in the bottom of the empty cup?  
a solemn cast scattered about the stars  
a listless walk down the boulevard  
I've come a long way from where I started to not  
have found a home

*by Rucio Panza*



(Everyday unidentified objects in our eyes)

finger on the pulse  
fragmented thoughts  
cause/effect blood loss  
communists hang out in abandoned malls  
all across America  
struck a rich vein  
what have we learned?  
morality the new vanity  
never mind the cut artery  
thirty seconds or less to forever

war rages free from boundary lines  
soldiers wander in search of an enemy  
may as well stab themselves in the brain  
retaliate against feeling fear is freeing

wandering red eye plucked  
straight from an apple tree  
stand by in waiting for the lay over  
time lapsed  
a waste heap of rubble  
hindsight consulted safe in its  
little bubble of superiority  
future subject to the past  
the new thing never lasts

step outside the box  
against the ropes  
hands up  
prepare for a friendly fight  
in the depths of such despair

the light at the end of the tunnel  
burns out quickly

a warning beacon to stay clear of the rocks  
in each magnified glass used on weekends  
to drown out the past  
they said to run but never said how fast.

*by Rucio Panza*



**Living Fire for our Sant'Agata, Catania**  
by Alan Bern

(Lost at Sea)

traveled too far from where we were supposed to be  
we've come a long way from where we started  
to end up where we began  
it fills me with grief to know we've parted  
my heart forever martyred  
on some hill overlooking grape vines

I've stumbled my way back to good graces  
wandered through the desert of my dreams with water  
aimlessly searching earth's empty spaces for a hint of what  
was  
lost in me

found a gem deep within wind whipped ruins,  
split apart by the advancement of trees and the underbrush.  
slowly crumbling into the dirt, dust, the clay was always  
meant for us  
Nature is a jealous lover; it takes back what it gave so  
freely

lost her through the ages  
I've sat and waited long enough  
to be rewarded for my failures  
they never seem to ferment into success  
my body is one of lies

bloodroot blooms each spring  
covering forgotten graves  
to love is to make yourself a willing slave to affection  
to surrender naked to tinder nights  
as passion's fires erupt into desire

I know each curve it doesn't matter the mask worn in this  
lifetime  
rehearsed long enough to serve her every need  
I've always been a pauper peasant, I aim to please  
no mind, no matter  
never again will I leave her clasped hand  
forever to be jailed in her locket

sanctuary, I plead  
I'm tired and cold  
look at how I shiver  
my weary bones can barely deliver this body  
don't you remember?  
I love you  
don't torture me with one more fading dream  
don't let me die here incomplete

*by Rucio Panza*



**Untitled**  
by John D. Robinson

## Not My Heroes

The person you were  
taught to be  
gives no pass  
when your life's dreams  
are called out  
by the voices of the victims  
of aged norms,  
the art forms  
of excused accusations  
falling on deaf ears  
Old world truths  
are no excuse  
when the new world  
transmits through  
your locked doors  
and the heroes of your time  
are heroes no more  
Childhood messages  
are not enough  
when a stolen glance  
is still theft  
and the words you once read  
are no longer written  
on the page,  
the unacceptable rhythm  
of rock'n'roll predators  
Outdated cultures  
based on an undiagnosed  
brutality of spirit  
must be smashed  
from the inside  
by those who gain most,  
whose claws scrape the doors

to the bare wood beneath  
to paint the world anew  
and forget the old.

*by Dave Cullern*





*invisible cities*  
by Kerfe Roig

## Be Afraid Not To Live

insure everything  
alarms everywhere  
double check the door  
triple check the gas  
bat by the bed  
expensive jewellery  
freshen up the garden.  
Paint the walls every 5  
new carpets every 10  
retirement plan  
window man  
vitamin regime  
facial  
cut and colour  
prime time  
Ikea art  
live, love, laugh  
Netflix choices  
books from Smiths  
garden centres  
house plants  
more kids  
private schools  
piano lessons  
parental controls  
stay away from strangers  
fear of the dark  
don't  
go  
out  
all inclusive  
4 stars  
complaints to the management

guided tour  
insure  
insure  
insure  
super heroes  
romantic leads  
Blitz spirit  
cues and tents  
best seats  
Pimms and Proms  
cheer the balls  
when Saturday comes  
3 square  
new shoes  
dental plans  
beige tile  
neighbours eyes  
PTA's  
calender management  
death

*by Dave Cullern*

## **Riding Wild Rivers**

I am loose skin  
stretched across old bones  
like ship sails  
pulled taught in the winds;  
scorched by the sun,  
worn out by the night time cold  
of the unknown seas  
I circle  
in ever smaller ways  
as the waves  
grow large  
around my flagging hull.  
I am failing organs  
filled with used blood,  
created by blind chance  
in unsanctioned laboratories  
holding magick rituals  
on the dirty tables  
of mad doctors  
who pile 50p's on the meter  
for when the lightening  
runs dry.  
I use the Earth;  
steal oxygen  
to store  
in my dry, choking,  
swag bag lungs,  
filled with smoke and holes  
and the songs of parents  
already rich with the fruits  
of the land upon which  
I lay my dreams of more  
and more  
and more again.

I am used up legs,  
running this flesh  
away from the umbilical cord  
I sucked dry  
in parasitic feasts  
shared with dead generations  
whose damage is done  
and long forgotten  
beneath the legacy  
I leave behind  
in their wake.

*by Dave Cullern*



**Smoke Signals**  
by Danielle Klebes

## the saga of the spider

i.

“call me jaded,”  
i said to the spider  
that sits in the corner  
of my ceiling.  
“you’ve been there since  
day one,  
don’t think i haven’t  
noticed.  
and i know you’ve seen it all.  
do you think  
i’m still wearing  
those  
rose  
colored  
glasses,  
desperately wanting  
to hold things together in  
one  
last  
ditch effort?”

“tell me, little friend,  
your take on  
this life  
you have a front row seat for.  
they say  
two eyes are better  
than one  
and you have eight,  
so tell me, little friend,  
what do you see up there  
from your bird’s eye view?  
down here  
there is doubt and mistrust  
in my own thoughts  
thwarted by the views of

my so-called  
better half.”

ii.

there's a spider running circles  
around the driver's side mirror.  
every so often,  
arching its back,  
raising its body,  
standing tall on its legs  
getting ready to attack,  
attempting  
to scare away  
some evil  
that's been haunting it.  
but it backs down.  
lacking courage to make the leap  
or knowing the time is  
not right,  
the spider circles the mirror  
again.

every tuesday night the spider is here  
as I stare into the depths  
of my own  
darkness  
trying to unearth  
the things that have  
haunted me  
for years.

and at 9:59pm, the spider  
disappears from sight and  
I emerge from my car  
lacking courage or knowing  
the time  
is not right;  
i wait for another week to pass,  
to meet my friend at the mirror again,



thinking maybe next time  
we both may  
take that  
leap.

iii.  
the spider  
that has been on the  
kitchen ceiling since the day  
we moved in is  
no longer there;  
same with the spider that  
moved frantically  
across the driver's side mirror.  
i have noticed their absence  
since yours began,  
as if they thought  
"my job here is  
done, she has the courage  
to speak her mind, I  
no longer need to watch  
over her".

cobwebs and shadows are  
clearing and  
new light  
shines in.

*by Melissa Taylor*



**Oy**  
by Debbie Fox

**Some days you just beat it till it makes noise**

I don't

want to

die for

love not

sell my

soul for

savage

guitar skills

not trade

my dreams

for money

not make

science into

God no

I don't

want to

drink my

way to

better poems

or sleep  
my way  
up the  
corporate  
ladder I  
won't twist  
my needs  
into a  
hang knot  
I won't  
live or  
die by  
the sword  
I can't  
turn water  
into wine  
can't make  
5 pm into  
happy hour  
I can

dance like  
nobody is  
watching I  
can cry  
a river  
or set  
my ghosts  
on fire  
I can  
fly under  
the radar  
or too  
close to  
the sun  
but today  
I am  
just riding  
out my  
morning like  
a skeleton

horse and  
trying to  
make magic  
out of  
spare time  
spare change  
and all  
the hope  
I can  
find in  
times like  
these.

*by Matt Borczon*



**Off Kilter**  
by Debbie Fox

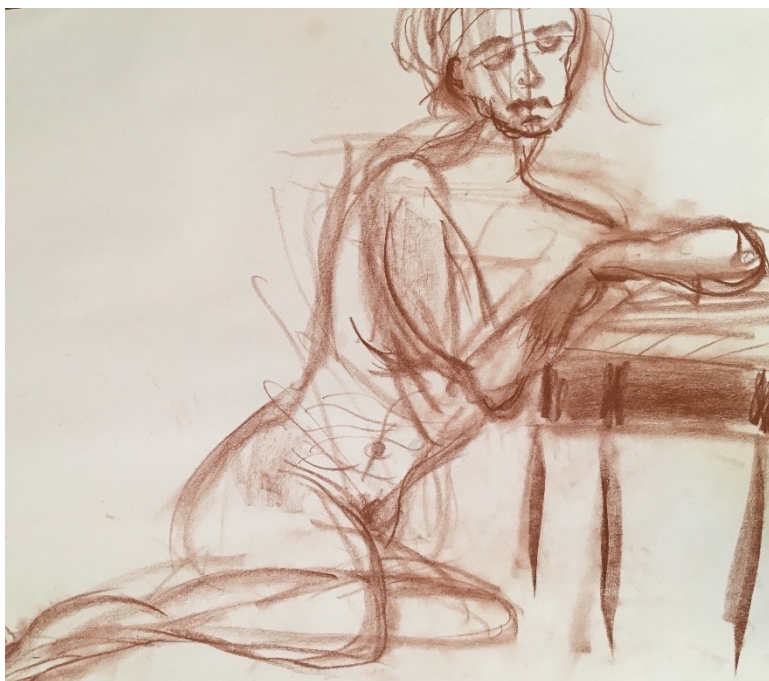
## **Sunday**

The gasp  
of my  
daughter  
at the  
painting I  
made this  
morning  
the warmth  
of my  
wife's skin  
against mine  
as I  
wake up  
and fall  
in love  
all over  
again  
the sun  
low in  
the branches  
of a



tree like  
a balloon  
about to  
pop  
the smell  
of coffee  
and Little  
Italy moving  
on the  
early morning  
wind  
these are  
the things  
that make  
my Sunday  
holy even  
as the  
world continues  
to burn.

*by Matt Borczon*



**Anatomy**  
by Debbie Fox

## **Some days**

Are made  
for banjo  
sadness  
for spoken  
prayers given  
to holy  
statues in  
front yards  
for rabbitt's  
feet and  
dog bones  
for lucky  
charms and  
for deals  
with the  
devil  
some days  
are for  
agreements  
signed in  
blood for

sacrificing  
your first  
born son  
for old  
testament fear  
and not  
for modern  
love  
some days  
everyone  
should leave  
through the  
back door.

*by Matt Borczon*



**Forest Floor**  
by Belinda Subraman

## BIOs

**Sam Aleks** (Samvel Aleksanyan) is an Armenian-born, American artist and writer living in Los Angeles, California. Sam earned a Master's Degree in English from California State University, Northridge in 2018. His writing has been featured in *The Abstract Elephant Magazine LLC*, *The Northridge Review* Spring 2014 Issue and the July Issue of *Pif Magazine*. His artwork was featured in the *Canyon Voices* Winter 2018 Issue, The RAR Summer 2019 Issue, and displayed in the Northridge Annual Student Art Exhibit, Spring 2014 as well as in The NOVA Frame and Art Gallery, Fall 2014.

**George Douglas Anderson** is a teacher, critic and poet who lives in Wollongong Australia. He blogs at Bold Monkey- a site devoted to small alternative press reviews and writing: <https://georgedanderson.blogspot.com> His previous chapbooks include *Dancing on Thin Ice* (2008) erbacce-press, *Melting Voices* (2011) Perspicacious Press, *Teaching My Computer Irony* (2016) Epic Rites Press- Punk Chapbook Series 2 and *Fuckwits & Angels* (2019) Holy & Intoxicated Publications, UK. Anderson's first book of short stories *The Empty Glass* (2020) was recently published by Alien Buddha Press. His chapbook *The Portal: The School Poems* will shortly be released by Holy & Intoxicated Publications. *The Rough End of the Pineapple* is his first full-length collection of his portrait poems.

**Tohm Bakelas** is a social worker in a psychiatric hospital. He was born in New Jersey, resides there, and will die there. His poems have appeared in numerous journals, zines, and online publications. He is the author of several chapbooks and his work has been nominated several times for the Pushcart Prize.  
- Tohm.

<https://tohmbakelaspoetry.wordpress.com>

Instagram: @flexyourhead

Retired children's librarian **Alan Bern's** poetry books: *No no the saddest* and *Waterwalking in Berkeley*, Fithian Press; *greater distance and other poems*, ***Lines & Faces***, his poetry broadside press with artist and printer Robert Woods, [linesandfaces.com](http://linesandfaces.com).

Alan earned a runner-up award in The Raw Art Review's "The John H. Kim Memorial Short Fiction Prize" for 'The alleyway near the downtown library'; he won a medal in 2019 from SouthWest Writers for a WWII story set in Italia, 'The Return of the Very Fierce Wolf of Gubbio to Assisi, 1943 CE [and now, 2013 CE]'; he won the 2015 Littoral Press Poetry Prize; and his poem "Boxae" was first runner-up for the Raw Art Review's first Mirabai Prize for Poetry, 2020. Alan has poems, stories, and photos published in a wide variety of online and print publications, from which his work has been nominated for Pushcart Prizes. Recent photos published include:

[parliamentlit.com/alan-bern](http://parliamentlit.com/alan-bern), [unearthedesf.com/alan-bern](http://unearthedesf.com/alan-bern), [thimblelitmag.com/2020/08/10/emptying/](http://thimblelitmag.com/2020/08/10/emptying/), and [wanderlust-journal.com/2020/07/01/around-the-few-blocks-nearby/](http://wanderlust-journal.com/2020/07/01/around-the-few-blocks-nearby/). Alan performs with dancer/choreographer Lucinda Weaver as *PACES: dance & poetry fit to the space* and with musicians from Composing Together, [composingtogether.org/index.php/sample-poetry-from-our-musical-storytime-performances/](http://composingtogether.org/index.php/sample-poetry-from-our-musical-storytime-performances/)

**Matt Borczon** is a nurse and Navy sailor from Erie, Pa. He has published thirteen books of poetry and published widely in the small press. His next book *Today is a Michigan Ghost town* will be out at the first of the year through Concrete Mist Press. He is married with four children, three cats and a beloved dog.

Artist: **William A. Brown** Status in the Art World: Under the Radar Education: MFA<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> University of Florida, BA Emory University, Work: Emory University Faculty (Sr. Lecturer

Emeritus) Works produced as an artist: Avant-Garde films and videos 1976- present. Still Photographs: 1972-1976, 2006-present. Documentary Work- 1976-present. Art Video Site: <https://william-brown-bzhc.squarespace.com>

**Clare Chu** was raised in Malta and England, and has adopted Palm Springs, CA. as her home. She is an art curator, dealer, lecturer and writer who has authored and published twelve books and numerous academic articles on Asian art. Her poetry is featured in a continuing collaboration with Hong Kong-based calligraphic and landscape painter, the Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat, in which poet and artist challenge and expand traditional media boundaries. Her poetry is published in The Perch, The Comstock Review, Crosswinds Poetry Journal and the Raw Art Review amongst others. Clare's debut collection, The Sand Dune Teacher, was published by UnCollected Press in June, 2020. She is a 2021 Pushcart nominee.

**Dave Cullern** is a poet based in Hastings, UK. He is a doting cat mother, the vocalist of the band Haest and runs the coffee company, Sham City Roasters. His debut poetry collection, 'Fuck Ballads #1 Modern Extremes' is available now. @fuckballads

**Bradley David** is a Sri Lankan - Australian artist and writer. He works primarily in intersectional politics, advertising and why modern life, as far as it could be defined as such a singular thing, is a technological hell of cumulative travesties. His work has appeared around, mostly in that zine you found at the bottom of your shoe after that bar you don't remember. He makes phenomenological omelettes.



**Stephanie Dickinson** lives in New York City with the poet Rob Cook and their senior feline, Vallejo. Her novels *Half Girl* and *Lust Series* are published by Spuyten Duyvil, as is her feminist noir *Love Highway*. At present she's finishing a collection of essays entitled *Maximum Compound* based on her longtime correspondence with inmates at the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women in Clinton, New Jersey. She is a gunshot survivor.

**Gail DiMaggio** is the author of *Woman Prime*, selected by Jericho Brown for the 2018 Permafrost Poetry Prize and published by Alaska University Press. Her work has appeared recently in *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Posit*, *Whiskey Island*, and *The Avenue*. She currently lives in Concord, NH.

**Adam Edelman's** poetry has appeared in *Narrative Magazine*; *Deluge*; *Forklift*, Ohio; *decomp*; *Bridge*; *Metazen*; and *Barnhouse*. His chapbook, *'Outpost,'* was a semi-finalist for the 2017 *Verse Magazine* Tomaž Šalamun Prize, and his chapbook, *'It's Becoming A Lot More Difficult To Feel Unchanged'* was a semi-finalist for the 2018 Black River chapbook competition from Black Lawrence Press, was shortlisted in the 2019 Platform chapbook series, and was a finalist for the 2019/2020 Eggtooth Editions chapbook contest. He holds an MFA in poetry from the New Writers Project at the University of Texas at Austin, where he received a fellowship from the Michener Center for Writers. He lives in Chicago, Illinois, where he is a PhD student in creative writing at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

**Keith Edwards** was born in New York City in 1957. Having grown up in a family composed of a Broadway dancer turned professional painter, a "top 40" songwriter/Tony

Award winning composer and a classical instrumentalist with the Boston Symphony he had to go his own way. Keith studied Aeronautical Science and piloting, getting his first flying job at age twenty-one. However, throughout his life, Keith has always kept up his avocation as a musician and songwriter scoring top 40 on Billboard with Jose Feliciano, and having two of his musicals produced Off-Off Broadway. In recent years Keith has become an avid traveller leading to a love of photography in his travels. This prompted a confluence of all of Keith's life experiences launching his passion for re-living his travels in rendering digital art from his photos.

In September 2020 Keith's piece "The Italian Monk" was selected for exhibition in the University of Arizona Museum of Art's "New Perspectives" exhibition. <https://picturing2020.artmuseum.arizona.edu/works/keith-edwards/>.

His piece "Marseille Hangout" is the recipient of the Raw Art Review Summer 2020 "Runner Up" award and along with two other works are published in the magazine. <https://therawartreview.com/2020/12/31/the-raw-art-review-summer-2020-journal-issue-has-arrived/>.

His website is at [www.PosterArte.com](http://www.PosterArte.com)

**Sophia Falco** is the author of her debut poetry chapbook: *The Immortal Sunflower* (UnCollected Press, 2019), a winner of *The Raw Art Review* Poetry Chapbook Contest. Falco graduated magna cum laude from the University of California, Santa Cruz along with the highest honors in the Literature Department. She has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her poems have appeared in *The Poetry Matters Project*, *Tiny Seed Literary*

*Journal, Indolent Books, Wingless Dreamer, The Beautiful Space*, among other journals.

**Leon Fedolfi** is an aspiring poet. Much of his current work wrestles with dissembling and reassembling identity-relational frameworks in a format he likes to think of as a pre-poem. He does not know yet precisely what that means. Leon was awarded the 2020 Doug Draime Prize for Poetry sponsored by The Raw Art Review, and has published in Prometheus Dreaming, The Write Launch, High Shelf Press and others. He has a book of poetry, *The UnInvented Ear*, coming out with UnCollected Press this fall.

**Jodie Filan** was Born in Saskatoon, SK. Canadian prairies. Currently homeless and struggling with addiction. She hopes to bring awareness with her art to stop the stigmas associated with addicts. It has changed her art style dramatically over a single year. Most days she gets by on the kindness of strangers, with gratitude. You can find her on facebook

**Debbie Fox** is a dual Canadian and American citizen, and live north of Toronto. The first novel I wrote is *The Jazz Funeral*, about a jazz band in New Orleans seven years after hurricane Katrina. A young woman abused by her mother runs away from her home in Brooklyn, and wreaks havoc on the band. I'm currently writing my second novel, which is speculative fiction. I've been lucky to meet two wonderful Canadian poets who, on the side, judge poetry contests. Each one awarded me with their incisive insight, plus first-place and runner-up prizes. My publications include: **Creative Non-fiction:** *Shoes*, Existere Journal of Arts & Literature; **Poetry:** *Shuffle*, Azure Journal of Literary Thought; *E Equals*, The Poeming Pigeon; *Benumbed*, The Raw Art Review (shortlisted for Charles Bukowski prize);

*The Damselfly*, *The Raw Art Review*; *Period*, *The Raw Art Review*; *She Fell Hard*, *October Hill* magazine.

**James Garland:** These are 3 poems from a self-published chapbook called "The Cove and Other Poems from The New Millennium". When I write, my intent is to reflect and inform what it's like to be alive now, in these times, and to build a sense of place, and context. My intent is to try to make sense of this mad time in this cataclysmic age, or at least give it a try. That endeavor grows increasingly alarming and more difficult.

**Ethan Goffman's** first volume of poetry, *Words for Things Left Unsaid*, was published by Kelsay Books in March of 2020. His poems have appeared in *Alien Buddha*, *Ariel Chart*, *BlazeVox*, *Bradlaugh's Finger*, *Burgeon*, *The Loch Raven Review*, *Mad Swirl*, *Madness Muse*, *Ramigo's Blog*, *Setu*, and elsewhere. Ethan is co-founder of It Takes a Community, a Montgomery College initiative bringing poetry to students and local residents. He is also founder and producer of the *Poetry & Planet* podcast on EarthTalk.org.

**Noah Goldzer** is an English teacher, cat lover, bad pun teller and MFA graduate of Emerson College. His short story "Fatbergs in the Pipe" won first place at Emerson's Graduate Student Awards in 2019 and his debut novel "Seek" was published by Martin Sister's Publishing in 2014."

**Mark Hammerschick** writes poetry and fiction. He holds a BA in English from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and a BS and MBA. He is a lifelong resident of the Chicago area and currently lives on the north shore, most of his professional career has been focused on digital strategy and online consulting

as a solution architect and digital transformation strategist. His current work will be published in *The Metaworker*, *Vext Magazine*, *Breadcrumbs Magazine*, *Meat for Tea: The Valley Review*, *Lucky Jefferson*, *The Fictional Café*, *Wingless Dreamer*, *HP 2020 Poetry Challenge*, *Trolley Magazine*, *Blood and Thunder: Musings on the Art of Medicine*, *The Write Launch*, *Scarlet Leaf Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *The Showbear Family Circus*, *Carcinogenic Poetry*, *The Toasted Cheese Literary Journal*, *Change Seven*, *Panoplyzine*, *Borrowed Solace* and *Waxing and Waning*.

**Gloria Heffernan** is the author of the poetry collection, *What the Gratitude List Said to the Bucket List*, (New York Quarterly Books). She has written two chapbooks: *Hail to the Symptom* (Moonstone Press) and *Some of Our Parts*, (Finishing Line Press). Her work has appeared in over fifty journals including *Anchor*, *Chautauqua*, *Magma* (UK), *Southward* (Ireland), *Stone Canoe*, *Columbia Review*, and *The Healing Muse*. She teaches at Le Moyne College and the Syracuse YMCA's Downtown Writers Center.

**Jasmine Khaliq** is a Pakistani Mexican poet born and raised in Northern California. She holds an MFA from UW Seattle, where she also taught. Her recent work is found or forthcoming in *Black Warrior Review*, *The Pinch*, *Phoebe*, *Raleigh Review*, *Passengers Journal*, and elsewhere.

**Danielle Klebes** is a multidisciplinary artist based in Massachusetts. She has exhibited at notable galleries and museums across the United States and in Canada and Croatia. She is spending much of 2019-2021 participating in domestic and international artist residencies. Danielle received her MFA

in Visual Arts from Lesley University College of Art and Design in Cambridge, MA, in 2017.

**Lily Rose Kosmicki** is a librarian at the public library and by night she is a collector of dreams. Her zine *Dream Zine* won a Broken Pencil Zine Award for Best Art Zine 2018. Her work appears in *Interim: A Journal of Poetry and Poetics*, *Seisma Magazine*, and elsewhere.

**John Lambremont, Sr.** is a poet from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he lives with his wife and their little dog. John holds a B.A. in Creative Writing and a J.D. from Louisiana State University. He is the former editor of *Big River Poetry Review*, and has been nominated for The Pushcart Prize. John's poems have been published internationally in many reviews and anthologies, including *Pacific Review*, *Flint Hills Review*, *The Minetta Review*, *Sugar House Review*, and *The Louisiana Review*. John's full-length poetry collections include "Dispelling The Indigo Dream" (Local Gems Poetry Press 2013), "The Moment Of Capture" (Lit Fest Press 2017), "Old Blues, New Blues" (Pski's Porch Publishing 2018), and "The Book Of Acrostics" (Truth Serum Press 2018). His chapbook is "What It Means To Be A Man (And Other Poems Of Life And Death)", published in 2014 by Finishing Line Press. John enjoys music, playing the guitar, fishing, and old movies. He has battled pancreatic cancer since 2018.

**Serge Lecomte** was born in Belgium. He came to the States where he spent his teens in South Philly and then Brooklyn. After graduating from Tilden H. S. he worked for New York Life Insurance Company. He joined the Medical Corps in the Air Force and was sent to Selma, Alabama during the Civil Rights

Movement. There he was a crewmember on helicopter rescue. He received a B.A. in Russian Studies from the University of Alabama. Earned an M.A. and Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University in Russian Literature with a minor in French Literature. He worked as a Green Beret language instructor at Fort Bragg, NC from 1975-78. In 1988 he received a B.A. from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in Spanish Literature. He worked as a language teacher at the University of Alaska (1978-1997). He was the poetry editor for Paper Radio for several years. He worked as a house builder, pipefitter, orderly in a hospital, gardener, landscaper, driller for an assaying company, bartender in one of Fairbanks' worst bars, and other jobs. He resided on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska for 15 years and recently moved to Bellingham, WA.

With roots in the Mississippi Delta, **Cynthia Le Monds** lives in the Bay Area of California. She holds a BA in political science and an MPA from St. Mary's University of Texas. She's pursuing an MFA in Fiction Writing at San Francisco State University where she serves as a contributing fiction editor of Fourteen Hills magazine.

**Kaecey McCormick** is a writer and artist in the San Francisco Bay Area. Named the 2018-2020 Poet Laureate for the City of Cupertino, her work appears in the chapbook Pixelated Tears (Prolific Press) and numerous journals and anthologies. When not creating, Kaecey enjoys time with her husband and four daughters.

**Tony Murray** Beauty is not in the eye of the beholder, but in the eye of the imaginative" "Many a teacher told me to: 'Try and stay inside the lines', which today, thankfully, I don't"

**Sylvia Van Nooten** is an asemic artist living in Western Colorado. Asemic art, with its pastiche of ‘language’ and images, allows her to merge texts and painting creating a hybrid form of communication which is open to interpretation. Her work has appeared in The South Florida Poetry Journal, local galleries and at the exhibition Mai Piu in Italy.

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/sylviavannooten](http://www.instagram.com/sylviavannooten)  
[sylviavannooten@gmail.com](mailto:sylviavannooten@gmail.com)

**Rucio Panza** lives in a small town in Iowa along the mighty Mississippi.

**Robert Perchan’s** poetry chapbooks are *Mythic Instinct* (Afternoon (2005 Poetry West Prize) and *Overdressed to Kill* (Backwaters Press, 2005 Weldon Kees Award). His poetry collection *Fluid in Darkness, Frozen in Light* won the 1999 Pearl Poetry Prize and was published by Pearl Editions in 2000. His avant-la-lettre flash novel *Perchan’s Chorea: Eros and Exile* (Watermark Press, Wichita, 1991) was translated into French and published by Quiddam Editeurs (Meudon) in 2002. In 2007 his short short story “The Neoplastic Surgeon” won the on-line Entelechy: Mind and Culture Bio-fiction Prize. He currently resides in Pusan, South Korea. You can see some of his stuff on [robertperchan.com](http://robertperchan.com).

At age 12, **Silas Plum** won the East Coast POG tournament. The prize was 500 POG’s, small collectible cardboard circles, each with an identical red and blue design on the front. From that moment on, he became obsessed with the question of Value. Why were these important? How could anything not necessary for survival be worth more than anything that was? Does artistic sentiment have value? The POG’s are gone, but the questions remain. Through assemblages of defunct currency, discarded



photographs, and long-forgotten illustrations, Silas Plum challenges the idea of objective vs subjective value. He believes strongly in the tired old maxim that the true value of an object is more than the sum of its parts, that the gut is a truth-teller, and that the Aristotelian notion of learning-by-doing is the best teacher around. Judge his worth at [silasplum.com](http://silasplum.com).

**Emily Rankin** was born in Riverside, California and university in Abilene, Texas where she received a BFA in 2011. Her body of work ranges from Graphic Design and Scenic Painting to collaborative performances with Verstehen, an improvisational and interactive series which incorporates live painting, sound, and electronics. She is currently based in New Mexico. [www.eerankinart.com](http://www.eerankinart.com)

**K. Riley** is from Houston, Texas. They studied creative writing and literature at Stephen F. Austin State University. Their works can be found in SFA's literary magazine HUMID, in Beyond Words Literary Magazine, and on Matthew Lippman's website LOVE'S EXECUTIVE ORDER. For more information on their publications, visit their Instagram: [ampersand\\_anyway](https://www.instagram.com/ampersand_anyway)

**Janet Rives'** poems have appeared in such publications as Lyrical Iowa, Ekphrastic Review, Sandcutters, The Avocet, The Blue Guitar, Fine Lines, Heirlock and The Raw Art Review and in several anthologies including Desert Tracks: Poems from the Sonoran Desert (Tucson Poetry Society) and The Very Edge (Flying Ketchup Press). Her chapbook, Into This Sea of Green: Poems from the Prairie, is forthcoming in fall 2020 (Finishing Line Press).

A resident of New York City, **Kerfe Roig** enjoys transforming words and images into something new. Her poetry and art have

been featured online by [Right Hand Pointing](#), [Silver Birch Press](#), [Yellow Chair Review](#), [The song is....](#), [Pure Haiku](#), [Visual Verse](#), [The Light Ekphrastic](#), [Scribe Base](#), and [The Wild Word](#), and published in [Ella@100](#), [Incandescent Mind](#), [Pea River Journal](#), [Fiction International: Fool](#), [Noctua Review](#), [The Raw Art Review](#), and several [Nature Inspired](#) anthologies. Follow her explorations on her blogs, <https://methodwomadness.wordpress.com/> (which she does with her friend Nina), and <https://kblog.blog/>, and see more of her work on her website <http://kerferoig.com/>

**John D Robinson** is a UK poet: hundreds of his poems have appeared in small press zines and online literary journals including : Rusty Truck: Outlaw Poetry: North Of Oxford: Tuck Magazine: Misfits Magazine: The Sunflower Collective: Winamop: Bear Creek Haiku: Chicago Record: The Legendary: Paper and Ink Zine: Algebra Of Owls: Full Of Crow: The Beatnik Cowboy: The Clockwise Cat: The Scum Gentry: Message In A Bottle: Horror Sleaze ,Trash: Your One Phone Call: In Between Hangovers: Rasputin: Revolution John: Vox Poetica: Hand Job Zine: 48<sup>th</sup> Street Press: Poems-For-All: Philosophical Idiot: The Peeking Cat: Midnight Lane Boutique: Underground Books: Dead Snakes: Yellow Mama: Bareback Lit: Eunoia Review: Hobo Camp Review

Since retiring from daily journalism in 2013, **Robert Eugene Rubino** has published poetry and prose in various online and print literary journals, including Hippocampus, The Esthetic Apostle, The Write Launch, Haunted Waters Press, Forbidden Peak Press, Cagibi, Cathexis Northwest, High Shelf Press, Raw Art Review, MacQueen's Quinterly and Gravitas, and in the anthologies Poetic Bond IX, Earth Hymn, Poets' Choice and Poems from the Lockdown. Before the coronavirus, on most

Wednesday evenings he would be found at Sacred Grounds Cafe in San Francisco, participating in the West Coast's longest-running poetry open mic. Now each week he participates online. He lives in Palo Alto, California.

**Rob Schackne** born in New York, lived in many countries until Australia finally took him in. He was a Foreign Expert EFL teacher in China for many years. There were some extreme sports once; now he plays (mostly) respectable chess and pool. He listens to the Grateful Dead. He claims he can read Shakespeare in the original. Some days he thinks there is nothing easy about the Tao.

**Dale Shank's** assignment photography includes performance art, wildlife, environmental documentation, professional pool players and indigenous culture events. His fiction and poetry have been published in: *Exquisite Corpse*, *The Healing Muse*, *The Raw Art Review*, *Akros Review*, *Before the Sun*, *Croton Review*, *Joint Endeavor*, *Powder*, and *University of Portland Review*

**Kim Sosin's** art photographs have appeared in such publications as Landscape Photography Magazine, Fine Lines, Daily Haiga, The Raw Art Review, Wanderlust Journal, The Ekphrastic Review, Sandhill Cranes of Nebraska, Ten Years of Sandhill Crane Migration, and The Heron's Nest. Her photographs were chosen for the cover of several books, including *Voices from the Prairies* (in which she also has poems), and *2019 Sandhill Crane Migration*. She also has poems in publications such as *Sandcutters*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Failed Haiku*, *Fine Lines*, and forthcoming in *Verses from the Plains*.

**Henry Stanton's** fiction, poetry and paintings appear in *2River*, *The A3 Review*, *Alien Buddha Press*, *Avatar*, *The Baltimore City Paper*, *The Baltimore Sun Magazine*, *High Shelf Press*, *Kestrel*, *North of Oxford*, *Outlaw Poetry*, *The Paragon Press*, *PCC Inscape*, *Pindeldyboz*, *Rusty Truck*, *Salt & Syntax*, *SmokeLong Quarterly*, *The William and Mary Review*, *Word Riot*, *The Write Launch* and *Yellow Mama*, among other publications. His poetry was selected for the *A3 Review Poetry Prize* and was shortlisted for the *Eyewear 9th Fortnight Prize for Poetry*. His fiction received an Honorable Mention acceptance for the *Salt & Syntax Fiction Contest* and was selected as a finalist for the *Pen 2 Paper Annual Writing Contest*. A selection of Henry Stanton's paintings, fiction and poetry can be located [www.brightportfal.com](http://www.brightportfal.com).

**Belinda Subraman** been published in 100s of magazines, printed and online, academic and small presses. She has a Master of Arts from California State University. Her archives are housed at University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. Her latest book is *Left Hand Dharma* from Unlikely Books, 2018: [https://www.amazon.com/dp/0998892572/?fbclid=IwAR1qTJ6tB6qippVEgYtjZNzc\\_N5e6E5l8lujDDV0sEe2DJ9Sp2qVQmovDYc](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0998892572/?fbclid=IwAR1qTJ6tB6qippVEgYtjZNzc_N5e6E5l8lujDDV0sEe2DJ9Sp2qVQmovDYc) In 2020 Belinda began an online show called GAS: Poetry, Art & Music which features interviews, readings, performances and art show in a video format available free at <http://youtube.com/BelindaSubraman>

Belinda is also a mixed media artist. Her art has been featured in *Unlikely Stories*, *Eclectica*, *North of Oxford*, *El Paso news* and *Red Fez*. She sells prints of her work in her *Mystical House* Etsy shop. <https://www.etsy.com/shop/MysticalHouse?ref=seller->

**Pamela Sumners** is the author of "Ragpicking Exekiel's Bones" (UnCollected Press, 2020) and "Finding Helen," winner of the

Rane Arroyo Chapbook Prize (Seven Kitchens Press) (forthcoming). A 2018 Pushcart nominee, she was also selected for the 64 Best anthologies in both 2018 and 2019 and nominated for 50 Best in 2019. Her work appears in several anthologies and she has received several awards in poetry competitions. She has been published or recognized by about 40 journals in the US and abroad from 2018-20.

**Melissa Taylor** is an occupational therapist and mother of two from New Jersey.

**Jocelyn Ulevicus** is an artist and writer with work forthcoming or published in magazines such as the Free State Review, The Petigru Review, Blue Mesa Review, and Humana Obscura. Working from a female speculative perspective, themes of nature and the unseen; and exit and entry are dominantly present in her work. She resides in Amsterdam and is currently working on her first book of poems. To see her artwork and her cute cat, Pilar, visit her on IG @beautystills.

Surrounded by an Asian garden filled with his sculptural creations, **Ted Zahrfeld** resides in Michigan. His first novel, *she sparrow*, was published in December 2017. A collection of poetry, *kissed by a dove named Lincoln*, is forthcoming.

**Mallory Zondag** is a Mixed Media Fiber Artist located in the Lehigh Valley. She graduated from Pratt Institute with honors and degree and in Fashion design. While at Pratt she focused on creating handmade textiles through felting, weaving and printmaking for her collections. Since graduating, she has pursued a career as an independent artist and arts educator. Her work ranges from felting and weaving to sculpture, printmaking and painting, sometimes combining two or more of these

mediums to form a single unique piece. The natural world informs her creations of dimensional textures and sculptural pieces, evoking images of mossy forest floors and patches of growth spreading across decaying structures. Each piece explores the ideas and themes of the natural world, entropy, balance and humanity's place within it. Mallory shares her passion for handmade one of a kind textiles through a variety of educational programs in addition to selling her custom made pieces. She teaches fiber art programs for a variety of schools and organizations in mediums ranging from felting to mixed media painting. Many of these programs involve a collaborative element where the entire school works together on a single project. These programs bring an exciting and hands on artistic experience to the students as well as emphasizing community and collaboration through art. Mallory has exhibited in galleries and participated in artist festivals and collective shows in New York and Pennsylvania and has participated in artist in residence programs in New York and Pennsylvania.



**A Wild Hair**  
*by Henry G. Stanton*