

DOOR = JAR



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Door Is A Jar
Issue 30

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Cover Image “Dad’s Sixth Ex-Wife’s Parrot”
by A. Jenson

Table of Contents

p. 9	Parting Words From A 1999 Honda CR-V by Binx River Perino
p. 10	How Long is a Jupiter Day? by Isabella Cruz
p. 11	The Moth Wants in My Boxes by Isabella Cruz
p. 12	Straight-Line Rain by Steve Denehan
p. 13	CHERUBIM by Grace Anne Lowry
p. 15	Repeated Blessing by Ricardo Arredondo
p. 16	Piles of Sand by T. C. Wiggins
p. 17	Friends by Andrea Damic
p. 18	Odd One Out by Andrea Damic
p. 19	release by Andrea Damic
p. 20	into the world by Andrea Damic
p. 21	Street Mood by Andrea Damic
p. 22	Boxes by Ellis Shuman
p. 24	Had by Meredith Anderson
p. 25	The Pot Calls the Kettle Black by Meredith Anderson
p. 26	Second Chance by Patrick Johnson
p. 27	Hospice by Patrick Johnson
p. 28	Cat People by Sarah Carleton
p. 29	NEVER ENOUGH by Claire Scott
p. 30	Bigfoot Shaves Her Hair to Remain Cool in a Fire by Jasmyn Huff
p. 31	Dad's Sixth Ex-Wife's Parrot by A. Jenson
p. 32	Theo by A. Jenson
p. 33	A6065 by Richard Hanus
p. 34	The View at Jeffers' Point by Jason Macey
p. 36	Melting Watches in the DNA Strands by Jason Macey
p. 37	Poem for Hart Crane by Jason Macey
p. 38	A Letter on the Obvious by Marisca Pichette
p. 39	Remember being in the car when you were six by Marisca Pichette

- p. 40 Dismantled by Susan Richardson
- p. 41 Hit the Ground by Susan Richardson
- p. 42 Letting by Sofia Drummond-Moore
- p. 46 We Are Many by Vignette-Noelle Lammott
- p. 47 Later by Vignette-Noelle Lammott
- p. 48 Grit by Vignette-Noelle Lammott
- p. 49 Egg Whites and Burnt Toast by Swetha Amit
- p. 53 Whip-Poor-Will by Erika Seshadri
- p. 54 A Side of Sweetness by Erika Seshadri
- p. 55 Last Winter, This by Erika Seshadri
- p. 56 More time zones by Meghan Kemp-Gee
- p. 58 At the gas station on the edge of town by Meghan Kemp-Gee
- p. 59 Triumph by Jay Morse
- p. 63 False Innocence 2 by Edward Michael Supranowicz
- p. 64 Monks Praying by Edward Michael Supranowicz
- p. 65 Monks Praying 3 by Edward Michael Supranowicz
- p. 66 Night Fugue 2 by Edward Michael Supranowicz
- p. 67 the love for you remains by Linda M. Crate
- p. 68 a forever that never leaves by Linda M. Crate
- p. 70 oceans of time by Linda M. Crate
- p. 71 Baltimore Uprising, 2015 by Michelle M. Tokarczyk
- p. 72 An Open Reading by Michelle M. Tokarczyk
- p. 73 Gaze XIII by Sai Pradhan
- p. 74 Gaze XIV by Sai Pradhan
- p. 75 Gaze XV by Sai Pradhan
- p. 76 The Banyan Tree by Faith Miller
- p. 80 The Lost Poem by Peter Devonald
- p. 82 Yin and Yang by Peter Devonald
- p. 84 with scented dew still moist by Michelle Hartman
- p. 85 What worried me by Michelle Hartman
- p. 86 2,010,580 WON by Kim Ha-ri
- p. 87 Appalachian Sandcastle by Matthew Pritt
- p. 91 The tree was not dying by Jerrod Laber

- p. 93 Resentment by Jerrod Laber
- p. 94 Self-portrait as a father by Jerrod Laber
- p. 95 Riverside Property on the Lethe by Nick Romeo
- p. 96 Once Again by Nick Romeo
- p. 97 Breeze Babe by Ali Gipson
- p. 98 House Finches at the Window Feeder by Ali Gipson
- p. 99 Ferris Wheel by Burcu Seyben
- p. 102 Mt. Everest by Kirsten Smith
- p. 103 Heading Home in Havana by Kirsten Smith
- p. 104 Meditation Time in Taipei by Kirsten Smith
- p. 105 Ireland at the End of the Day by Kirsten Smith
- p. 106 Keeping the Faith in Buenos Aires by Kirsten Smith
- p. 107 Confessions of a Reluctant Maneater by Cheyanne Brabo
- p. 110 A Poem for Us by Krista Puttler
- p. 111 What I'm Trying to Say by Krista Puttler
- p. 112 Date by Krista Puttler
- p. 113 Advice to my Forty-Year-Old-Friend by Krista Puttler
- p. 114 human composting by Donnie Estelle Secreast
- p. 116 Used Mattress by Donnie Estelle Secreast
- p. 117 The list of mistakes I've made by Donnie Estelle Secreast
- p. 118 Before by Darlene Bester
- p. 119 No Sale by Darlene Bester
- p. 120 Goodwill by Peter Kaczmarczyk
- p. 121 Across the Plains by Peter Kaczmarczyk
- p. 122 True Tales by Peter Kaczmarczyk
- p. 123 Meet Adam Deutsch: The Literary Love Child of Jack Gilbert and Elizabeth Bishop by Remi Recchia, PhD

- p. 127 Contributor Bios
- p. 139 Door Is A Jar Staff Bios
- p. 141 Submission Guidelines
- p. 143 Door Is A Jar Newsletter
- p. 144 Subscribe to Door Is A Jar Literary Magazine

Parting Words From A 1999 Honda CR-V

Binx River Perino

Poetry

I carried you, took you where you needed to be.
The grocery store late at night; your six-hour
shift spent in a parking lot. I waited for you
when the sun burnt my back and hail dented
my hood. The worn soles of your black shoes
on my gas pedal as you woke my engine,
spun my wheel. Our friendship marked
with the odometer's tick. You took me
into body shops for the parts that couldn't last.
After the sold books and clothes, the picked-up
shifts, you mended my failing bits. If I knew:
needing to be everywhere and nowhere.
When you take the truck up north,
remember the undone road beneath us.

How Long is a Jupiter Day?

Isabella Cruz

Poetry

How does anyone
Get married
Without
An Elvis?
Cold Jupiter
Only getting
Colder
Is the earth
Rotating faster?
Is anyone paying attention?
Or is it a waste
Of time?
A dog day afternoon
Are you aware
Of your car's limited time
Warranty?
Return to Sender
I want
You, I need
You I can love
A stranger
For a long little while

The Moth Wants in My Boxes

Isabella Cruz

Poetry

I opened
All the boxes
I didn't
Close them
Again, the moth
Really wanted in
Wanted
Elegance
Carrot cake
Missionary
Repetition
An indoor life
I stay in
My boxes
Like
I'm in my
Cups
They're in here
Somewhere, too
In my boxes
Without,
My cups
The moth,
Without
Wants in
My boxes

Straight-Line Rain

Steve Denehan

Poetry

No wind, no breeze
just straight-line rain
falling
as we wake

falling
through the morning
into the afternoon
to now, the early evening

as grey
gives way
to darker grey
and an unseen
unwelcome thing
moves
between us

no wind, no breeze
just straight-line rain
falling through
the funeral day
that marks
the death of summer

CHERUBIM

Grace Anne Lowry

Fiction

My grandmother collects porcelain dolls.

Well, all kinds of dolls: teddy bears, angel statues, ceramic dogs with human-like eyes that follow you around the room. There was a cherub my sister used to hide matches in, the click of its head signaling that it was time for a quick stroll through the woods. We'd find our way past overgrown roots and dead leaves, praying the thunderclouds that seemed to haunt our grandmother's house wouldn't start pouring. We'd sit beneath the lightning zapped oak tree near the creek we'd dammed up as kids, and I'd keep watch while my sister lit up. She said it calmed her nerves.

My sister was always nervous at my grandmother's house, a foot tapping, cold-sweat kind of nervous. It was too quiet for her, out there in the hill country, surrounded on all sides by the twisted branches of pathless woods. The dew drop meadows and daisy fields of my grandmother's garden stopped at the border of those woods, decaying into the ground of that never ending autumn.

Sometimes I went into the woods without my sister, carting around a book of folktales that was just heavy enough that I felt self-important. The woods swallowed me for hours at a time, hiding me away in the hollows of trees and in the pages of the stories I read.

My grandmother never fussed at me when I came back soil stained and grimy, my red rain boots a little less glossy after each journey. She would stand in the kitchen she'd spent decades stuffing full of dolls and trinkets like a graying crow. She would smile and shake her head and stir the bubbling mixture on the stove, the

air thick with the scent of cayenne, onion, and fish stock. And all the while my sister's foot would be tapping, her hand aching for the next moment she could click the head of the statue and steal another match.

There was a time when she had helped my grandmother cook. When she had stood half toothless with me in the garden, plucking peas and sneaking bites of strawberries until juice dripped down our chins. Then she turned thirteen, and starting hanging out with girls I didn't recognize out on the marsh trails. It was the summer she turned thirteen that she first hid matches in that cherub statute, the one with the wings glued back on from where we'd knocked it over playing as children.

My sister still taps her foot.

Still flips her watch to see when she can reach for that next match. I still hide myself in stories. We're not as close as we were as children, we haven't been since that summer. But I know the unmarked path she's walking, and I'll still keep watch for her in the woods.

Repeated Blessing

Ricardo Arredondo

Poetry

I saw a mob chased by a man
and I knew that I had to be mistaken.
Such things are fantasy
until we zoom in on the man.

I zoomed in on that type of man
who terrorized my youth
who smelled of weed and booze
who wallowed in somber mood.

They wallowed in somber mood
when I announced I was quitting law school
to teach the kids before they meet
their breaking fate of incarceration.

Their breaking fate of incarceration
was a constant, bleeding story
growing up in a house full of screams
and fists ready to pommel your dreams.

And those fists that pommel dreams
never scared me enough to forfeit my soul
back then when my thoughts were gold
and I thought my life was for me.

Piles of Sand
T. C. Wiggins
Poetry

Miniscule grains remain
lodged deep between my nailbeds
from this aimless endeavor

Molding the sand,
I've formed humps onto the shore,
while others have built castles

Extravagant, intricate, defined
their kingdoms are,
towering in comparison
to my misshapen playground

Lying in my creation,
bits trickle through my canals,
whispering a shallow distraction
as the tide begins to soak my feet.

Friends
Andrea Damic
Art



Odd One Out
Andrea Damic
Art



release
Andrea Damic
Art



into the world
Andrea Damic
Art



Street Mood
Andrea Damic
Art



Boxes
Ellis Shuman
Fiction

Seven boxes. An entire life packed into seven boxes of cardboard. A diary she kept when she was in grade school, a yearbook from high school. Photos of her as a toddler, as a young girl, as a teenager. Love letters from Harry, her boyfriend, her fiancé, and just a few short months later, her husband. A framed black-and-white photo of the happy couple at their wedding. She sees herself looking up affectionately at Harry with his wide smile.

Travel brochures from their honeymoon, their whirlwind European excursion. A trip she remembers more for the time they spent in hotel bedrooms than for the monuments they visited. Unwritten postcards they had intended to mail. A brown paper bag with unspent coins of foreign currencies. They were young then. Carefree, and so much in love.

More photos. Their first apartment, their first car. Thanksgiving dinners with the in-laws. Her birthday. His. Their dog! She remembers him shedding long hair on their sofa and their armchairs, and peeing on their carpet the night they went out on their anniversary, but she can't recall his name.

Barbara, their firstborn. Pictures of the infant in her hospital crib, the plastic band that had been wrapped around her tiny ankle. A picture of her husband holding the baby, another one of her bathing the girl. A bag of curls from Barb's first haircut.

Photos of Leslie, their second daughter. The two girls in matching dresses, red ribbons in their hair. Colorful cards of first birthdays, second birthdays, and from the many birthdays after that. A photo of the two in their Halloween costumes. Barbara a princess, Leslie a

puppy. A family portrait from some joyous occasion. When was that one taken?

Report cards. Barbara's with straight A's. Leslie's with comments noting, 'She's improving'. A medal marking Barbara's third-place finish in a 100-yard dash. A certificate of honorable mention in an essay contest. Where were mementos marking Leslie's achievements?

A letter acknowledging Barbara's acceptance at a prestigious university. Letters from Leslie on her overseas travels. Her two girls. She is so proud of both of them.

Two weddings. Standing proudly with Harry alongside Barbara and her groom. A photo of Harry walking Leslie down the aisle. Pictures of the entire family at a picnic. What park was that? Photos of Leslie's three girls, of Leslie's boy. Sometimes she mixes up their names.

Seven boxes of cardboard. She has already thrown so much away, but these memories she is intent on keeping. Memories of her childhood, of her life with Harry until he passed away. They had a happy life with a wonderful family.

"Is this everything, Mom?" Barbara asks, carrying the last of the boxes to her car.

She locks the house door for the last time. She hopes the small apartment in the retirement home will be as comfortable as her daughters promise.

Had
Meredith Anderson
Poetry

I had a boyfriend once
He was made of beer and glass
He scooped working man's handfuls of sand from the
pits
And threw it in my face
Laughing gleefully, eyes sparkling, as a child
"I am the sand monster" he said
and I believed him

He had a daughter when he was fifteen
Underground in a Wyoming mine
He did not call her, save the nights it
Grew unbearable
The language barrier grew too
High, we stacked English-
Spanish dictionaries and winded
Ourselves climbing he hugged his phone
to his chest, sleeping monster
So many used tissues arrayed his bare mattress

The crows used to taunt him, stalking
From tree to tree, He walked to work,
Having lost his license
They laughed and they laughed
They had seen him fall so many times

The Pot Calls the Kettle Black

Meredith Anderson

Poetry

I would love for you to love me less
Love me so little that you can unclasp
Step back and see me

I would love to love you less
When I read your note
I do not want my first impulse to be
To write my own

I can hear you crying in the shower
I can hear you crying while you are smoking
Rocking in that old white chair outside
The bottom is cracked left-of-center
And pinches your cheeks

Avoiding the chafe of the seat
We lean like gnarled madronas
Too close to the cliff face

We love each other so much
We do not repair the chair

We love each other so much
We sob together in great torrents
And do not notice when our roots give way

Second Chance

Patrick Johnson

Poetry

My body is placed in that coffin.
Once buried, I release one long, gray, opaque breath.
The roots of my skin wither,
their taught cling to my flesh recoils,
and my dry onion husk curls and flakes off,
surrounding my bones like a purple halo.

Dissatisfied with my damnation, I dig myself out.

I walk naked through the streets in the rain.
Nobody can see me without my skin.
The clouds eat light.
The people chew dust.
The ground is sticky with gravity,
and my footprints will soon be washed away.

Coming upon a well-lit house,
I see myself in another box.
Now, it is a crib.

I want to adopt me as a baby,
and love me right this time.

Hospice

Patrick Johnson

Poetry

Please don't make me stay—
my bones are already packed.

I'll hold your hand, one last time,
but then you must let me go.

My body is homesick for the Earth.

Cat People
Sarah Carleton
Poetry

We sleep in, snoring against each other's necks,
then rouse one limb at a time, twisting heads

and spines, just short of licking ourselves clean.
When we shake off our dreams,

fine hairs fly into the wedge of sun
that spotlights the carpet.

Our noses are dry, and our tongues live behind
our teeth. We take ourselves for solitary walks

with intuition as a leash.
We don't jump at visitors, but when a warm body

leaves the house, we grieve
and crunch snacks till our bowls sit empty

and we're left eating loneliness, the stale air
making our purrs brittle.

NEVER ENOUGH

Claire Scott

Poetry

My love is a few inches short
I try to stand taller
do I?
or do I shrink down so you can't reach me
with your swallowing desire
your panting eagerness
there are pictures of you on my phone
I kiss them every day
and think of our long love
and how lucky we have been
with four kids, five grandkids
trips to Nepal, Chile and Tanzania
a summer in Provence
I see your deep brown eyes
your wispy white hair
your hungry lips, impatient
easier to embrace the idea of you
the small image in my hand
than the three-dimensional reality
where I am never enough

Bigfoot Shaves Her Hair to Remain Cool in a Fire

Jasmyn Huff

Poetry

Clippers clog often and clean slow—massive hands and thick fingers pull thick tufts no longer useful in overbearing heat—next the razor brand new soon to be dulled removing cream and water and rinsing and repeating—pain and pleasure and goose pimply smooth skin after the epilator picks and plucks the remaining follicle from the papilla and the capillary—she shaves every summer now as heat rises—hiding, human, until the world forgets in winter snows—sweat beads, trickles down her bare skin, frustration growing and fanning the flames of hatred for those demanding she be something else, for those changing the forest, killing trees standing tall for generations, trees who were her friends, now falling like so many tufts of hair on the forest floor swept away by raging fire or summer winds or a barber's broom—she becomes a woman walking among men who think her a man because they cannot imagine a woman looking like her—dying with them, among them, as one of them, because what else can one Bigfoot do?

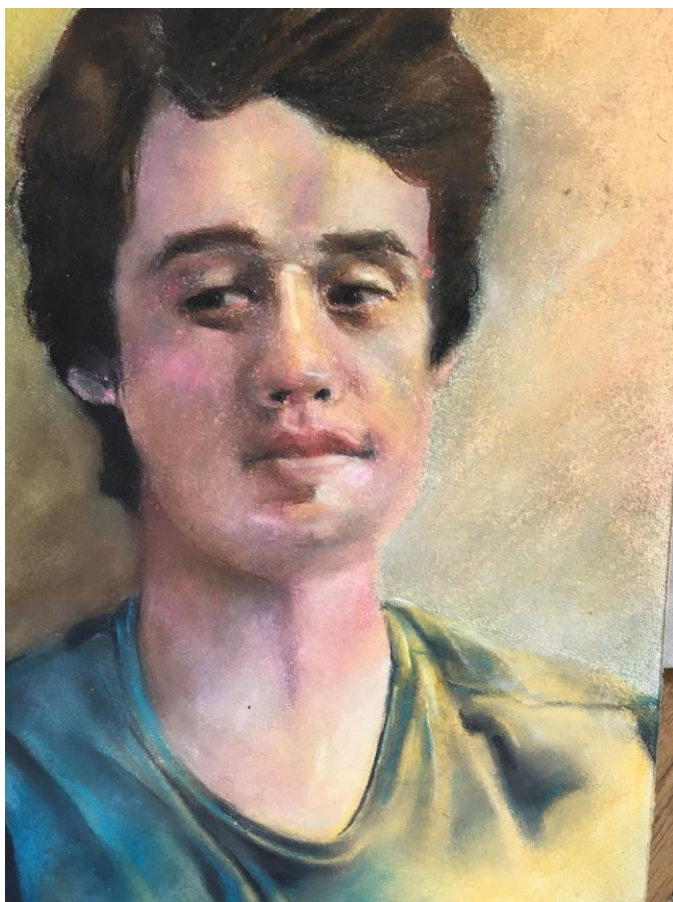
Dad's Sixth Ex-Wife's Parrot

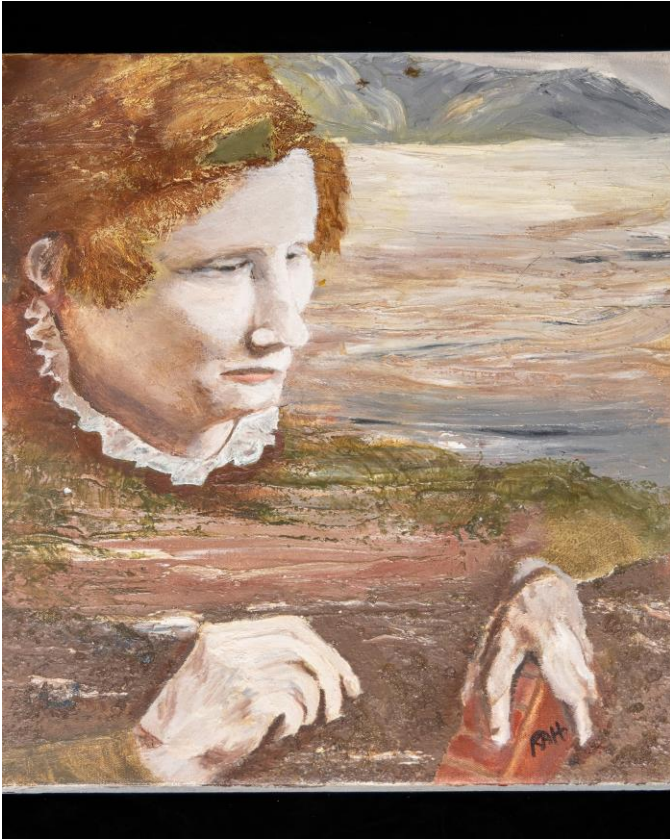
A. Jensen

Art



Theo
A. Jenson
Art





The View at Jeffers' Point

Jason Macey

Poetry

The rocks cut into the spray where you
sat and dreamed of a world without men.
Further down, where the waves
reduced the rock to a coarse sand,
plovers search for a meal before
breaking into flight.

Sunset is coming on slowly, although
there are never enough hours
to watch the waves beat against the shore.

I would almost forgive them
when they forget their twisted mouths for a moment
to love the world within
a memory of lapping tides.

I would almost take from them
the burdens of their wars,
their famines, their newest desires to bend
one another into unstable pirouettes.

You knew you could never still their eyes
upon the vanishing point until
they finally knew peace.

I am still here,
hoping to show them
this view where you at last rest.

These rocks will be worn down one day,
and the plovers may comb the shore
as they do today.

I will never see that, but
I hope they heard you, that they
can show their children the spot
where the birds vanished into infinity.

Melting Watches in the DNA Strands

Jason Macey

Poetry

She's a third-generation violin with
sound holes arching in her back.
He's a messenger whose feet
have not outrun the clocks melting in his blood.
They have recognized each other's
torn pages across succeeding generations of
hand lines fading like pencil marks upon parchment.

Their bodies form a tattoo
no two people see the same way. "A hart,"
says one. "A melting clock," says another.
"A bit of infinity," says a third.
Their bodies move within the frame
faking a memory of flirtation within Central Park,
of resignation atop West Mountain.

He can't explain his possession of
his grandfather's memories of the bearskin blanket
pulled tight to his chin in winter's fury.
He can't explain meeting her in Paris before
there was a city there. She can't explain the urge
to take flight every time their Jeep hits thirty
or whenever she's standing atop their hill.

They stop and stare at the painting.
"This is what memory means," she says.
"The clocks will go on melting forever," he says.
She recognizes a part of him that hunted
where the Louvre would one day stand.
He sees in this particular smile a part of her
that is music about to take flight.

Poem for Hart Crane

Jason Macey

Poetry

Believe in the sun, or
at least the Brooklyn Bridge as
you cross its expanse.

America is something
(a dream of a floating
island) to be

believed in (beyond
buildings). It is a white
building or a holy ghost

that stabs a mountain stream.
It is a passage out of
Shakespeare underlined twice

in an agéd volume. Such
thorns that cut to release
joy may be believed.

A Letter on the Obvious

Marisca Pichette

Poetry

Dear Hannah,

Today I was studying the painting of the ships on the dining room wall. You know which one? It's across from the sunroom door, echoed in the figure of the model ship posed atop the frame. It's always been a dark image, begrimed by years' accumulation of tar & tobacco.

But I know in its past the sky was bright as it is today, cutting across my keyboard through the sunroom windows. The sails were luminous on the little boat in the foreground, the one I always felt, inexplicably, was fleeing. Its sail is branded with a red 4 and clouds cup the sky, a crater reflecting the sea below. Is it a storm, or has time made the clouds grey instead of white?

In the background is a ghost—a muffled onlooker, nearly swallowed in deep, smoke-accented blue. Perhaps that boat is fleeing too, cast away into the waiting shadows.

Our houses both hold memories like this: images we stopped looking at, forgotten in their permanence. Today I looked at that painting.

Today I think I wondered.

Remember being in the car when you were six

Marisca Pichette

Poetry

cantering through the snow in November,
cold breath anticipating
forward then one step back, forward then
again, rocking motion in the lee between
a handful of candles suspended
like so few stars overhead.

A drop on invisible boundaries,
sliding memory of ice

deconstructed, deconstructing,
dirt drifting unmoored

from roof and sky to dew-streaked grass.
moss for a shadow
A trip for depression.

Loose what change you have
scatter it to the hungry sky.
It never fell back before.

don't you know it'll hang
up there, dazzling lights
shaking fists for every footprint
left unfilled?

Dismantled
Susan Richardson
Poetry

For forty years,
she dismantled my father
bone by bone,
stripped the sun from his eyes.

In front of an audience, she twittered,
a catbird showing off tiny wings
rapidly beating out shapes of deceit.

When no one watched,
she became a vulture,
swooping, rapacious,
tearing into the delicate strands of his mind.

She pecked out his tongue
and molded him,
a wind -up budgie propped on branches
barbed with resentment.

he learned it was easier not to fight

When he fell into shadows,
mist filling up the spaces
where memory lives
and dies,
he left me alone with her
to be dismantled
bone by bone,
the sun stripped methodically from my eyes.

Hit the Ground
Susan Richardson
Poetry

Some days, the palm of his hand
feels too small,
safety becomes a cage,
whispers threaten to grow wings.

I never wanted to sit on a pedestal,
heart encased in glass,
easily broken.
I didn't ask to be sewn back together,
glued into place,
sheltered from the storm.

Some days, I want to hit the ground,
experience the earth against my feet,
spin and spin until the world falls away.
I want to run and stumble,
pick myself up,
feel it hurt.

Letting
Sofia Drummond-Moore
Fiction

When I take their blood, I take their dreams. The one who teaches me does not know this. He knows only

Flegmat,

Sangvin.

Melanc.

Coleric.

He teaches me the oldest ways, yes. That through Letting a person can become a Great Work. We let the blood to balance the body. A balanced body is astral, essential, united.

The blood is the salt of the stars. Blood is the fabric of earth.

Blood pulls the heavens to us, as blood is heavy.

I came to be the bloodletter's apprentice the same way I came to life. A leaving. A finding. *Little foundling*. The town found me as a babe crying by the well, naked as I was born. An angry, spiky girl-ish person. They gave me to the bloodletter, to let grow, to be let. Estrid, he named me. He be nothing like a family but he is mine. He lets me call him his name, Warin, instead of Master.

Warin says people need be all four, *flegmatsangvinmelanccoleric*. Illness comes when the balance is disturbed.

This I know: Those *flegmat* are full of phlegm, quiet, broody, like I be in the morn. Those *sangvin* are bright as their abundance of red blood but bird-y also, prone to flights. *Melanc* people are full of black bile, weighed down by it too, sluggish, passive. The *coleric* are what Warin says I am mostly. Yellow-biled, full of energy. He worries not for me though. For I am all things. I am happy when the wind is good and the food is very hot, when the little rat-catcher purrs in my lap. I am weighed

down on nights when the wind is bad, when I think of the horse I knew who died and rotted in the hollow. When I take the blood and the dreams I get are bad.

Today we let blood from the right hepatic vein of Godfrey Faulkner. He fears some live thing be in his belly. He swears it waxes big, rises up his throat. His dreams are bone-y — dry as sun-bleached wood. Thrashing like a bad-born goat. I do not like Godfrey Faulkner. He, like his dream, reminds me of kicking legs held down hard. I do not smile when Godfrey appears again, striding and waving at Mass.

We take eight ounces of blood from the cephalic vein of Gemma Hayford. Her torment is grief-bred. Weeps much. Heavy head. Husband lost. I use my thumb lancet with it's little tortoise shell case. *Melancholia cum delyrio*, Warin whispers. Delirium. Her dreams are soft green, first like moss and then like rot, a touch could cave her in. I see her days after by the well. She smiles at a new blue bud.

We are called to the house of a girl I know, Sibyl of the long black hair. Sibyl is *sangvin*. Sibyl and I suck on sweet hay in the barn, grow warm together in the dark. *Matrix ascensus*, says Warin. Her womb rises. Bowls and bowls of red. She goes white, shakes. Her dreams taste like her mouth does. I chew rosemary in the morning.

Every day is a new knife.

Warin is full of *sangvin* because he has been summoned to the city. They have just martyred a girl two years older than I, sixteen-years she was. He returns, little dark vial of martyr blood in hand. He hopes to cure what kills Isolda, the fisherman's wife. I have let Isolda, her dreams are raucous metal, heavy, heavy, awful on my tongue. I lie on my palate, think of the Girl-Martyr,

dripping. In the night I steal to the cabinet to hold her vial. I hold it until her blood is my-blood-warmed.

I cannot help it. I sip.

Martyr blood dreams. Colors brighter than imagined. The field an aching green. She stands above me, her dripping blood tastes of honey. She hands me a golden fleam, opens her mouth. Tis filled with bees. They hum until I hum.

I administer Isolda the blood. I keep a little back.

We visit Sibyl once more. I find I am protective of her skin. The cuts we have made in her are red, itching. I will not let. I will not let Warin let her. Warin is very tired. Warin says then I must take her to the field of wheat, strip her naked, walk her through. I must tell him if the caterpillars and worms fall from the stalks.

I do this, hold her fast to me as she stumbles all jumbling warm skin but partway the sun comes from the clouds and she rests her long hair on my shoulder. She laughs, I laugh, we laugh, her skin pimpled and flushed. I wrap her in my cloak and she laughs against me. Her womb-blood has stopped. No more blood she asks. I nod, swing her round and round. I do not get her dreams but feel as though a private sun shines on me all night afterwards.

Warin, unbalanced since his journey, becomes worse when Isolda dies.

I hear the black bile rumbling in his chest.

I will have to let Warin. I give him cowslip, rosemary flowers, mithridate oil of ambers. I let him. His blood is thick, slow. He smells of spring-wheat — heavy with wet, mold, mud.

Warin's dreams are weak, watery. Warin rises not the first day, nor the second.

The Martyr-Girl comes to my dreams again. She is half-unknowable to me, half-Sibyl in body. She bids me burn my hair in the hearth. She bids me let him again.

My hair smells of poison as it burns. I let Warin. By his dreams, warped like a water-wet page, I know he will die today. I find the Martyr-Girl's blood vial only to find it empty. I, greedy, have sipped it clean.

Warin in bowls around me. Warin on my thumb, dripping from my lancet.

I am no longer the bloodletter's apprentice.

I am full of wasted girl-martyr-blood and dreams.

I be the bloodletter now.

We Are Many
Vignette-Noelle Lammott
Art



Later
Vignette-Noelle Lammott
Art



Grit
Vignette-Noelle Lammott
Art



Egg Whites and Burnt Toast

Swetha Amit

Fiction

Ingredients

Eggs - 4 medium sizes, easy to grasp in your palm

Olive oil-To smoothen the rough edges of the pan

Garlic Powder-To retain the flavor

Salt, pepper-To bring back the taste

Mushrooms- To enhance the mood

Cherry tomato-To add color

Cheese-To add a soft touch

Two slices of bread-To add as an accompaniment

Method

1. Crack the egg in your hand over a small bowl. Catch the yolk in your cupped palm while letting the whites drip through your fingers into the bowl. You wonder if you let something slip from your marriage when your husband announced he wanted a divorce last night.

2. Use the first bowl only for the whites. Use a second bowl to reserve the yolks. You stare at the two bowls before you and wonder if they will ever blend again. Your husband began to despise the taste of yolk for the last year. You are still trying to figure out why, especially when he used to relish its taste earlier.

3. Warm olive oil on medium heat in a non-stick pan. Do not overheat the oil. You don't need the burning smell lingering in the kitchen. It leaves a bad taste in the air, like the scent of your heated argument with your husband. Or the stench of alcohol emanating from his breath when he hurled abuses at you.

4. Add the sliced mushrooms, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Cook, and stir until the mushrooms shrink. Your tall demeanor shrunk at his harsh words of you not being good enough for him. Keep cooking the mushrooms until they turn a lovely golden-brown shade. You wonder if it's your dark brown South Indian complexion because of running all those marathons.

5. Remove the mushrooms from the pan and set it aside. You wish to set aside the thoughts in your head weighing with possibilities for this three-year-old marriage having lost its flavor so soon—the inability to fit in with his suave and glamorous ad film world. The time you spent training outdoors for those races or working hours in coding? Your inappropriate fashion sense in his high-profile parties? Perhaps he preferred high stilettos to the sensible flat shoes you wear to prevent injuries?

6. Rub the pan with a piece of paper and quickly clean it. Please take pleasure in the ability to rub something hard. How you used to massage his back before that passionate love-making session, leaving remnants of love bites on his neck.

7. Bring the pan to medium heat. Add olive oil and spread it evenly across the pan. You watch the pan turn warm. Ensure you don't burn your fingers. You don't need any more wounds. Not when your eyes are stinging with the heaviness of those unshed tears. Or your heart continues to burn with the perspective of being a divorced woman and receiving malicious gossip.

8. Beat the egg whites for a few seconds. Take this moment to fulfill the rage of being able to beat something hard. Imagine the faces of those women you are constantly compared with—those fair complexions, blow-

dried hair, and pancake makeup. You realize you are intelligent, a good conversationalist, and give him space. You can balance household chores, your career, and running. Traits that set you apart from the other women he knew and which allured him initially. You wonder what went wrong.

9. Pour the egg whites into the pan. Wait until the sides of the omelette are dry. Then lift the omelette with a spatula. Turn it over to let the uncooked egg whites cook for a few minutes until no more transparent egg white can be seen on the surface. You hope to communicate more transparently today after your husband wakes up. Take steps to resolve the unfinished business of all those miscommunications and expectations over this Saturday morning breakfast. You may not have to take the road to dissolve this marriage or involve families on both sides, especially when you get along with them famously. There may be a time when he will begin to enjoy the whole egg omelette again.

10. Then add the cooked mushrooms to one-half of the omelette. Add some chopped cherry tomatoes and mozzarella cheese. You watch the colors of golden brown, red, and yellow-white on the pan. Like the shades of the dress, you wore on your first date five years ago when you both enjoyed eggs benedict at this fancy restaurant and laughed at the yolk oozing from the toast. When he scooped the yolk with his fork and gorged on it, and gushed at your curly back hair and kohl-rimmed eyes, with a touch of mascara. He loved your simplicity and elegance. And you could converse about anything under the sun- politics, work, music, sports, and food.

11. Fold the omelette to half and cook until the cheese melts. You hope his heart melts enough to see reason. To make him see you like he had on that first date. You hope your bitterness melts away with time. You add extra chili flakes, salt, and pepper, hoping to retain the flavor he likes.

12. Take two slices of whole wheat bread. Spread olive oil evenly on another pan and medium heat it. Place the slice of bread in the pan. Watch the spurts of faint golden brown appear on it. Wait till it turns browner, depending on how crispy you want it. Then turn the slice over. You watch the specs of brown on the other side. Make sure you keep an eye on it. You don't want to burn the bread anymore. You want to keep the taste of something you have worked hard to create. Yet you seek the pleasure of watching the bread turn browner. You marvel at this exotic shade on the slice of white. You wish he would do too.

Whip-Poor-Will

Erika Seshadri

Poetry

Only so many songs can be sung
 in the melody of midnight

 in the memory of moonlight

with a voice no longer resplendent.

still, you sing

above
a thousand calloused hands
 dragging through dirt

a thousand shriveled eyes
 blinded by desire

five hundred hearts
 waiting to stop

when they realize
you are perched
 in paradise

A Side of Sweetness

Erika Seshadri

Poetry

I prefer to consume
the hard truths of life with
a side of sweetness. Not
in the way people sugarcoat
death with words like:
at least she's not suffering anymore.

No. I'm talking about
tiramisu cream, cool
on my tongue when Mom brings up
how to plan Grandma's funeral.
I need to extinguish the dread in my throat—
of mortality, of a drawn-out death, of
finality.

I wish you'd been there when she passed
Mom says.

With ladyfingers soaked
in espresso, I choke down the guilt
of not saying
a proper goodbye.

Last Winter, This
Erika Seshadri
Poetry

last winter, this
hunger burnt out:
 turned
sun-butter yellow
to brown

like daffodils
 escorted
to death with
no apologies
 from
the late freeze

I am a bent
stem, split
open lengthwise,
 hollowed
to the root

yet, this tangled root
runs deep:
 anchored
beneath rich soil
and slate

so
there is still hope

More time zones

Megan Kemp-Gee

Poetry

I like the mornings
best when I work at my desk knowing you

are still sleeping
in pacific standard time. At these times

I can pretend I
am caring for you, like I will dress

your wounds like painted
sunflowers, like a portrait of a still

life. I will cut and
portion and arrange your life. I will make

love into a get-
well vase. I will feed you your meals only

from bowls, and four hours
is not such a very long time to love

someone before they
can wake up to love you back. Love is not

a time zone. Love is
four hours. Four hours is not a self portrait,

like being loved back
is not comparison, like when you are

asleep I am four
hours away and am not loved back, like what

lags is time or love.
Do you lag like love? I do, I do. I

work, I wake up. Things
are passwords, dog bites. Things are not alike.

At the gas station on the edge of town

Megan Kemp-Gee

Poetry

There's a difference between abandonment and another visit from the fox. There's a difference between change and crisis, replenishment and halflife. What about the difference between the weeds in the concrete and the treeline across the street, asks the fox. I know what he means. I know that there's a difference between all these things, but there's also a difference between knowing and seeing. Upon discovering planetary nebula NGC 1514 on November 13, 1790, they saw everything differently. Or so they thought, the fox sneezes. What's the difference between *distance* and *difference*, the weeds remind me. There are people chaining themselves to pipelines and driving nails into fallen trees. There's a difference between love and fingernails and a discovery of strawberries. At the gas station on the edge of town, we are observing, like William Herschel in 1790, *a most singular nebulosity*. We are waiting in line on the concrete telling ourselves stories about the taste of strawberries.

Triumph

Jay Morse

Nonfiction

Basilio Nicolas Hage was an aspiring merchant, but he feared for his future. Signs of trouble were all around him. The Ottoman Empire was shrinking so fast its death rattle seemed to shake plaster from buildings right before Nicolas's eyes. His hometown of Tripoli was the western terminus of the famous Silk Road and a port to Europe's markets, but cheaper Chinese silk was making the local version obsolete. European merchants brought money, but American evangelicals built schools and whispered tantalizing tales of land and liberty. If America's political power was not yet dominant, her economy and reputation were. Industrial United States cranked out products bigger, faster, stronger than anyone else. More whimsical. Having the world's tallest building wasn't enough; Americans built a machine one could ride to the top of it. Stairs were yesterday's news. Americans invented refrigerators, straws, screen doors, slot machines, roller coasters, zippers, mousetraps, cotton candy. They invented the phonograph, the telephone, the telegraph. Americans laid cable across the Atlantic, a reversed umbilical cord connecting two continents, allowing the queen of a dying empire to *tap tap tap* her congratulations to the democratically elected president of a rising one. Days of staid, Victorian handwringing surely prefaced composing such a laudatory note to her plebian cousin, but no matter. Her compliments were carried across the ocean fifteen times faster than had it been ferried by boat. The message itself was a white flag, even if the queen didn't yet know it:

The Queen desires to congratulate the President upon the successful completion of this great international work.

Americans didn't *desire* to do anything, thought Nicolas. They just *did*. America was the land of opportunity, jobs, freedom. Her streets, heard Nicolas, were paved with gold.

So Nicolas, like thousands of Syrians before and after him, chose myth over fear. He made his way to Le Havre, France, where he purchased a steerage ticket on the S.S. *le Champagne* to New York City. The ship's doctor examined Nicolas prior to boarding, determining him to be neither an idiot nor insane (*good my brother is not here to disagree*, thought Nicolas), nor a pauper likely to become a public charge. The Second Officer agreed. He also attested that Nicolas was not suffering from a loathsome, dangerous, or contagious disease; had not been convicted of a felony or other crime involving moral turpitude; did not have more than one wife. The inspection took just minutes. Other than Nicolas's confusion when asked his color ("white", decided Second Officer Gaston), for each question Nicolas simply answered "no."

The *le Champagne* left France on May 24, 1899. Ten days later, Nicolas tread his weary feet upon Ellis Island. He watched as an agent checked his name against the ship's manifest, then, satisfied, put him on a ferry to the mainland. *America*.

Tripoli had been a water wheel for international powers since the Phoenicians in 300 BC, but New York City on the cusp of a new century was a different kind of melting pot. It was a volcano. Unbroken strings of tall buildings blocked the sun, skirted policewomen patrolled the streets, people prowled the sidewalks in numbers greater than Nicolas could count in a lifetime. Automobiles shared the roads with trolleys and horse-

drawn carriages. Enough of the latter were still around that Nicolas thought America's roads were paved not with gold, but with horseshit.

Nicolas had never seen anything like it. New York's tenements housed 418,00 people per square mile, the equivalent of six human beings standing inside a box the length and width of one of Nicolas's strides. Many were as new to America as was Nicolas himself – more than a third of the city's 3.4 million people were born outside America's borders. His journey should have better prepared him. The *le Champagne* manifest included people from a country for nearly every letter of the alphabet, but even the suffocating, fetid air below decks paled in comparison to New York's streets. Nicolas missed space, clean air. He missed trees.

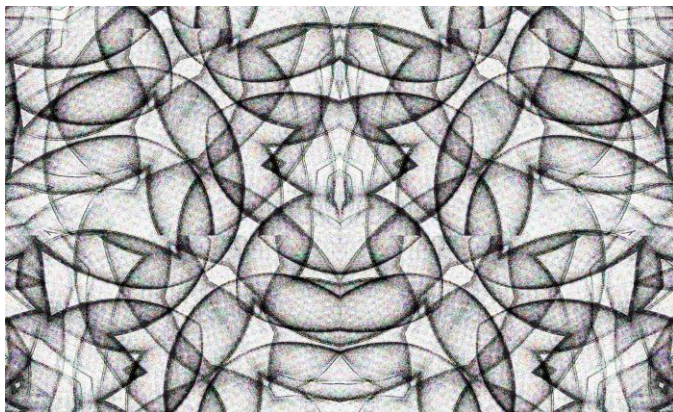
He wasted little time in New York. Nicolas skipped Lower Manhattan's vibrant Little Syria, skipped the growing Arabic import-export business, skipped the street fights with the uncivilized Irish, skipped his opportunity to find a good Syrian Catholic wife. Instead, Nicolas headed west, eventually finding himself not in America but in el Triunfo, Baja California Sur, a silver mining boomtown 3,500 miles from New York and 9,000 from his home.

What drives a man to go to such trouble, such great lengths, passing by so much opportunity and wonder between there and here? What continued to push Nicolas west? Was it flight from, rather than to? Ghosts of repeated failures or lost loves in dogged pursuit? Serial reminders of stabbing epithets, slights, miscommunications? A simple thirst for adventure? It was, perhaps, a collective. Not just one driver but multiple, all of them exposing the potential in the new. Something untamed. Something only people like Nicolas could see in that precious-metal nimbus he watched drop

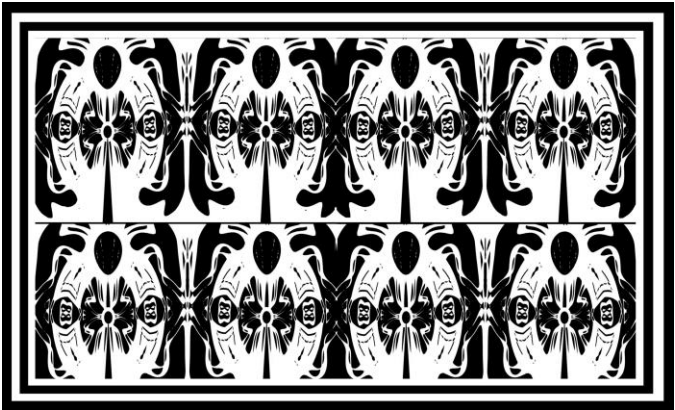
daily behind mountains that seemed to only get bigger as he headed further west. An invisible finger drawing in a man who chose only to follow the sun.

I want my great-grandfather to have found whatever he was looking for. I want to picture Nicolas in el Triunfo with silver in his pockets, a Mexican woman on his arm so achingly beautiful it made his heart clench, dirt under his leather boots now familiar enough to assuage whatever homesickness he had for the cedars of his Mount Lebanon. His face nirvanic when he learned enough Spanish to translate the name of his new hometown, his closed eyes turned upward to the warming sun as the word slipped quietly from his lips: "*Triumph*. Goddam right."

False Innocence 2
Edward Michael Supranowicz
Art



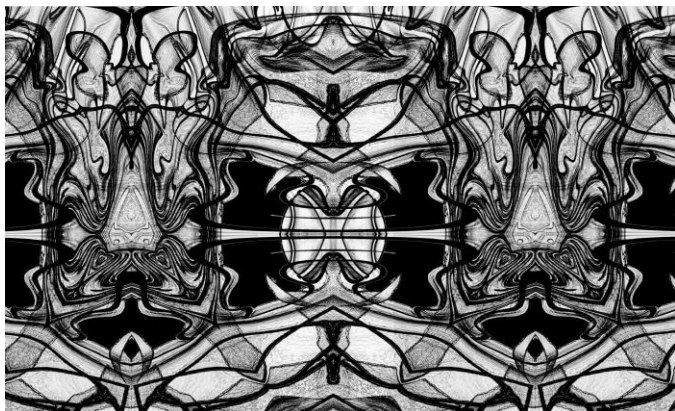
Monks Praying
Edward Michael Supranowicz
Art



Monks Praying 3
Edward Michael Supranowicz
Art



Night Fugue 2
Edward Michael Supranowicz
Art



the love for you remains

Linda M. Crate

Poetry

i didn't know
what to do when i realized
that i fell in love with you,

so i pushed you away;

i regret that i hurt you
but so many moons and oceans
part us now that i doubt you
remember me—

i recognize now that love
comes in many different shades,
shapes, and forms;

each of them is beautiful—

i don't know why i was so convinced
that the creators of the universe
would hate me for being myself

and loving someone of the same gender—

but i spent years praying to be straight,
looking out stained glass windows
and crosses trying to forget you;

but these days there are no longer churches
and the love for you remains.

a forever that never leaves

Linda M. Crate

Poetry

could you be my nova?
explore everything
darkness in me with your light,
and light my embers when
they grow dim?

could you be my dream?
the one that houses my heart.

could you be my lover?
the one who holds my hand
in public,
and gives me orgasms in
the bedroom.

could you be the song my soul needs?
the one who enhances and enchants
my song and makes it a melody
worth listening to.

could you be the one that understands
the mythology of my bones and the
language of my soul?
the one that doesn't shy away from my
depths, my heights, and every part of
my intensity.

could you be the one that listens?
the one that hears me, comforts me,
and sees me as who i truly am
without running away, loving me back
just as unconditionally as i'd love you.

should that be you,
take me into your arms;
kiss me
show me a forever that never leaves.

oceans of time

Linda M. Crate

Poetry

would you cross
oceans of time
just to know me?

if not then i am not interested in
any love you could offer me,

i am looking for someone who can
embrace the intensity of everything
and everyone i am without
fear or running away;

someone who can appreciate me
flaws and scars and all—

someone who doesn't promise me
forever
without delivering on said promise,

roses wilt and the ocean
weathers even the toughest of stones;

i need a rock that is willing to
be vulnerable with me—
whose touch can heal the darkest blows
the world gives me,

and in our love we'll both find a
song we never knew could be ours.

Baltimore Uprising, 2015

Michelle M. Tokarczyk

Poetry

When they crack a spine
so it dangles like a wishbone
granting no wishes,
they crack a life
an egg yolk spilling out
nourishing no one.

When they crack a spine,
so close to severing it,
they sever hope
already dangling by a thread.

When they crack a man's spine
they crack open the anger
bottled up in boarded up
buildings. The anger
that smashes police cars
store windows, sets buildings
alight with the flames of fury.

When they crack a spine
when they kill Freddy Grey
they sever a city
so badly cracked.

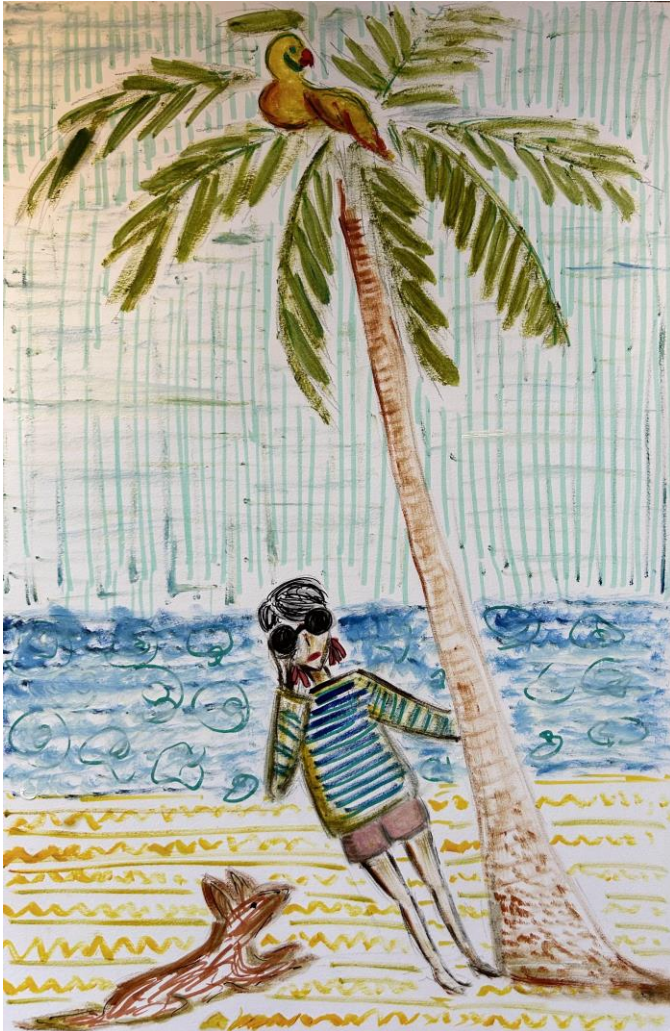
An Open Reading
Michelle M. Tokarczyk
Poetry

is putting a poem in a bottle,
tossing it into waves that seem
to rush toward you,
only to pull away.

Watching the bottle bob.
Hoping it's hardy. Can navigate.
Doesn't get seasick. Submerges,
but surfaces. Keeps floating.
Past the line of your sight.
Past any cry you might make.

Hoping it reaches a shore that
you can't imagine.

Gaze XIII
Sai Pradhan
Art



Gaze XIV
Sai Pradhan
Art



Gaze XV
Sai Pradhan
Art



The Banyan Tree

Faith Miller

Fiction

I dream now of Lahaina, before it went up in flames, of the old Mission Church, of the shops on Front Street, and of the Banyan Tree. I dream of the world before it went up in flames: before humans fueled the flames of Canadian wildfires and insurrection. I dream.

On an uncomfortable mattress in a city that I no longer claim on my own, most of my dreaming happens when I am awake. When I shut my eyes, I can see myself at Cheeseburger in Paradise, eating the pickles, picking at the burger. I can see John across from me, picking at his peeling sunburn. I would not pick this memory if offered an album of them, but it recurs. Walking down the street, peering into the jewelry stores, wishing for a ring that was never in the offering. Sitting under the Banyan Tree with a bottle of Coke in my hand, I would dream of giving up my life in New York and moving to Maui. "Nothing bad can happen in paradise, can it," I said to John. It really wasn't a question.

"Bad things can happen anywhere Camilla," he said in that stupid, rational, patronizing tone he'd taken to using when he had to address me. The first two years of our relationship had involved more undressing than addressing, but that ship had sailed. This was, we both knew, the last time we'd spend together. We both pretended, or perhaps I was the only one pretending, that it didn't matter.

We stayed in the Mariner's Inn overlooking the harbor. I would have liked to stay forever. John spent most of his time on the telephone or at the beach where his fair skin burned an ugly purple. I spent my time in the town, talking to the transplants in the shops, in the restaurants, in the square. I tried to balance and

rebalance my budget so that I could move to Maui. I would learn to surf. I would grow pineapples or pot. I would wait tables and sell jewelry shaped like turtles. I would volunteer in the historic buildings. I would have friends. I would be happy in paradise.

I was not happy with John. "Why did you cheat?" I said, again, not really a question.

"We've been over this." He sighed heartily. "Could you stop beating a dead horse?"

Was that a real question? Could I? No. "No."

"You really want to go over this again, Cam?" He gave me the kind of pseudo-sad smile the department store Santa gave the kid who had just tugged his beard off. "I don't want to hurt you." Unspoken, again.

Ha! "Tell me." We were on the ground under the Banyan Tree. I was playing with the strap on my purse and John was scratching his sunburn.

He stopped scratching, opened his arms wide, palms up. "The distance. Chicago. New York. And you changed. We changed. She was there..."

"They were there," I corrected.

John's face matched his sunburn. "Okay, they were there. I was weak. What do you want me to say, Camilla? I'm just a man."

I flinched. I did not plan to miss him when we parted ways at the airport on Oahu. We had watched the attack on the capitol together in my apartment on Mott Street. We had sobbed in one another's arms. We had survived the early years of the pandemic: phone sex, skype sex, sexting, long midnight drives to meet at damp dumpy hotels in Ohio for a few hours of damp actual sex. I'd lived in his Winston Towers one-bedroom for two months, working remotely, then not working at all. He had crowded into my studio for a month and a half at

Christmas. I'd thought if we survived all that, the road ahead was good.

It wasn't. John was a professor at Roosevelt University. She was a professor there too. And then there was the conference in Las Vegas. And then there was the bridesmaid at my cousin's wedding. And she wasn't pretty. Or charming. Or young. Or even a stranger.

We went to Hawaii anyhow. The trip, oh, this trip, had been something we'd been planning since the plague-filled, nothing making it through the supply chain, summer of 2020. We had met in Waikiki four years earlier: love at first touch. Lust at first sight. Meatloaf's *Paradise By the Dashboard Lights* playing on the loudspeaker at the hotel bar. Two Singapore Slings later, he'd slung me over his back and carried me off to his suite where we spent the next two days before decamping for Maui.

We brought paradise with us to paradise. I blushed at the sentimentality and looked at him coldly. "Don't blame your gender, John, assholes don't need one." I thought that was such a brilliant fuck-you that I got up and left him sitting there, hiding in the shade, protected by that tree.

The Hawaiians say the Banyan Tree has a spirit which represents strength and resilience. They say the leaves represent life, peace and harmony. When John and I left Maui, I gave the tree a last lingering glance. When I left John, I turned away to avoid ever having to see him again.

Now, I watch the news, crying at the sight of Lahaina reduced to rubble. The shops, the street, the wharf, the people all gone. I sit on the lumpy mattress, box of tissues by my side, holding my laptop and searching for... for... for? That is a question: the buildings are gone, the people evacuated or somehow in

the ocean awaiting rescue, or dead. John was right about bad things happening in Paradise, and, for a moment, I start to call him.

But then I find a new story, an image of the Banyan Tree, severely burned, all those precious leaves gone. But the tree is alive. And that gives me the strength to cry.

The Lost Poem

Peter Devonald

Poetry

Shy poems
they meander and mither
they slither and slide
around my hard drive
evading capture.

The really clever ones
the sly and sneaky ones
aren't even on my hard drive...
They're still unfound
waiting in our heads.

A perfect phrase so delicate and dynamic
exquisite, elegant and elaborate
we think we will hold it forever
but if it's not written in that instant
will wriggle and writhe away

And will never be caught at all!
The unforgettable and renowned
vanishes
like missing the one day
the passion flower blooms.

The magic of words
is that they are ephemeral:
a blazing sunset across the gorgeous orange sky
a daffodil flowering in all its brilliant beauty
a moment of magic and then — piff! Gone.

I knew it all along.
Spellbound, splendid and sorcery

the enchantment of the unknown
the next words you write
the allure of the lost poem.

Yin And Yang

Peter Devonald

Poetry

Welcome to the empty space
devoid of meaning and personality
minimalist and decluttered towards

an inch of silence. A show home, full of possibility
anyone could live here, tomorrow
does anyone live here today?

A blank zen, calm breathing softly, softly
turning minimalism into an art form
trip the light fantastic to the end of time.

Children love to scream and echo sound
an empty cave filled with their delights
no chance to break anything or worry

all the potential in the world
white walls with space for white minds
wiped clean with antiseptic desire.

Who lives here?
The strange weary whimpers and whines
friends children visit once a month

strange to have a place waiting for personality
harmony and room, but no balance
no identity, just bare gaps.

But looking at my flat now all I see is noise
trinkets and ornaments, a lifetime of memories
stored in knickknacks and sparkling baubles

to remember places, presents and purchases
to see those friends and family again
long since passed into memory.

But the mess and noise, competing history and past
I wish there was some balance between this
and the silence that always lasts.

with scented dew still moist

Michelle Hartman

Poetry

do not bring me flowers
no fragile bloom fascinates

give me a leaf —
aubergine, marigold, or pumpkin

brilliantly showing
bravery of taking flight

lacking in deceptive scent
no promises given or received

shaped to fit
between journal pages

where I find it
mud brown
brittle and crumbling

much as
your desire

What worried me

Michelle Hartman

Poetry

Starting the tour
old State Hospital
participants began
to sweat, giggle nervously
make tasteless jokes. Yet
I know ghosts

ghosts there were
which cannot
hurt you being
corporally challenged.

What
worried me
was the lingering
protective materialization
of the entangled protons
crafted and guided by
their insanity.

2,010,580 WON

Kim Ha-ri

Fiction

I got a job at a university after three years of idleness. I was paid the minimum wage and my monthly salary totaled 2,010,580 won, in dollars, that is \$1,540.60. My job was to clean the building that housed the Faculty of Social Sciences. There was a professor who was the only one who said hello to me and gave me an ionized drink as I mopped the concrete floor. It was Professor Park from the Sociology Department.

He came to work at 9:00 in the morning and said hello to me.

Professor Park sometimes greeted me on weekends.

He also said hello to me at 7pm.

Professor Park greeted me even when it was snowing.

With his arms crossed with a young, shining woman, Professor Park greeted me, as expected. It rained heavily that day.

On Friday, two months after I started working as a cleaner, Professor Park approached me at 7 p.m. with another greeting. he said so.

“If the police come and ask you if you saw me with a woman on that day of heavy rain, will you tell them you didn't?”

He handed me an envelope with cash in it. The envelope contained exactly 2,010,580 won, my monthly minimum wage. The next day, the police summoned me. I remembered the stiff bills in the envelope.

THE END

Appalachian Sandcastle

Matthew Pritt

Fiction

It took about four hours of steady downpour for Bronson Creek to reach the road. Ten minutes later, Jim Adkins' truck plowed through water as high as the wheel wells, miraculously keeping traction long enough to find my driveway and pull itself out of the churn.

"You should've come sooner," I told Jim as he slid out from the driver's seat. "Another five minutes, and it would've been too late."

Jim gave me an apologetic half-smile. "Clara wouldn't leave without her stuffed tiger."

Clara jumped down from the passenger seat, the lights on the bottom of her sneakers blinking as she splashed down in a puddle. Six years old, same as my son Connor. Her stuffed tiger was almost as big as she was. I ushered them inside.

"What's his name?" I asked.

"*Her* name is Talia Tiger."

"Sorry. She looks fierce."

Clara side-eyed me like I'd said something unforgivably stupid, which I probably had. Connor was almost exclusively interested in sports, particularly Cubs baseball, so I didn't keep up with the latest trends in children's entertainment.

Once Jim and Clara were out of their shoes and jackets, we settled down in the living room. Connor had been watching baseball—the Cubs had a day game—and we all stared at the TV, longing for the sun shining down at Wrigley.

"Can we watch something else?" Clara asked. "I brought my Talia's Castle DVDs."

“Honey, we’re guests here,” Jim said. “We can’t make demands.”

“It’s okay,” I said. “We can change it.”

Connor whipped around and gave me a glare that could kill a snake. His T-ball team was the Cubs and he thought himself a member of the organization already, two years away from getting called up. He knew more about the players than he did his own friends. But this game was a laugh already—Cubs led 9-1 and it was still only the 5th inning—so he’d get over it.

Soon, a twinkly xylophone melody blasted from the speakers and a poorly animated tiger in a tiara danced around on the TV screen. Connor was both horrified and transfixed as Talia and her friends tried to solve the castle’s mouse problem.

Seeing the undulating stream of mice flowing across the screen, I wondered if Jim and Clara were thinking about the murky water flowing through their house again. The last Great Flood—described as a “once in a generation” event—was three years ago. Clara and Jim stayed with us then, too.

The rain had let up, but Bronson Creek would continue to swell as the water found its way down the hills.

“I don’t think I can do this again,” Jim said. He wasn’t looking at me, so I wasn’t sure if I was supposed to answer.

When he didn’t elaborate, I said, “You all can stay here as long as you need to.”

“I just finished painting Clara’s room last month.”

“I’m sorry, Jim.”

I could already tell what was going to happen. Jim, my closest friend, was going to move out of the valley. Who could blame him?

"I'm glad at least one of us has a house up on the ridge," Jim said without a hint of envy in his voice. He meant it.

Here we were, safe from rising waters, and yet I found myself wishing it had been my house in the valley instead. I knew it was wrong, that I should have been thankful for where I lived. Jim and Clara were losing everything again. But. They were going to get out this time. And my house on the ridge, protected from the floods, would continue to be a castle while Bronson Creek became a moat, drowning the town around us. Restaurants closing. Connor's friends leaving. Would his Cubs team even field a full nine next week?

Three hours later, the rain had stopped, and Bronson Creek was finally receding. The grass on the hillside was neatly divided between green and brown at the high-water mark. Sand, gravel, and plastic trash littered the ground. I couldn't take any more of that stupid tiger's antics, so I went outside to clean some of it up. Jim and Clara followed me, and a few seconds later, Connor stepped out, not wanting to be left alone.

"You all don't have to help," I said.

"It's the least we can do," Jim said.

"This is the worst vacation ever," Clara said, setting Talia on my porch furniture. "You said we could go to the beach."

"The beach came to us, honey." Jim grabbed a crushed beer can and threw it up toward the house. "Pretend we're building Talia a new castle."

Connor found a paper plate and folded it into a diamond shape. He set it beside the beer can. "Can her castle have a baseball field?" he asked Clara.

She thought for a moment, then nodded. Connor jumped up with excitement and ran to grab more materials.

For the rest of the evening, we picked out the perfect pieces of trash and set them in place, Clara serving as our foreman, directing the placement of each object. When we were finished, we gazed upon the most hideous building any of us had seen.

“Is Talia happy with it?” I asked Clara.

She looked at Talia, then back at the castle.

“No.” She ran forward and kicked as hard as she could. Small as she was, she hardly disrupted the pile, but the impact was enough to knock over the more precariously placed towers.

Jim grabbed Clara by the wrist and admonished her.

But what was there to get so angry about? Our castles were crumbling anyway. If a six-year old’s imagination wasn’t enough to save us, nothing was. Whether tigers could play baseball, or hunt mice, or survive the next worst flood, we were hopeless if we couldn’t take whatever bricks washed up and build something, *anything* beautiful, even if the next flood, reliable as the tides, washed it all away.

The tree was not dying

Jerrod Laber

Poetry

She asked me to take her
for a walk
she knew it would be her last

We walked slowly
arm in arm under

a fading evening
the rising lilac of night

the same color of flower
that once grew from the tips
of her hair

We walked until morning
the soles nearly bottomed out
of my shoes

when we arrived by first light
at an open field

an open field with a wood casket
alone at the center

the wood was from the tree
in her front yard, she said
it was cut down the week before

I watched it come down
I assumed she wanted it cut

because it was dying

my mistake was fundamental

It was not dying

the tree was very much alive

Resentment

Jarrod Laber

Poetry

My childhood baseball glove.
It lay hidden beneath piles
of lawn equipment in the shed.

The laces that bind the fingers
are stretched and frayed.

It retains only traces
of its original dark brown hue.
Dyed by the sun's hot touch
and my sour memories.

Tossing a ball with father.
His inevitable abandonment
after one errant throw.

"If I can't catch it at my chest
then I'm going back inside."

Left to throw the ball to myself.
As if he who wielded this glove
was destined to do so alone.

God willing, my own son
will be uninterested in baseball,
my resentment forever immured
by my own rotting heart.

Self-portrait as a father

Jarrod Laber

Poetry

I cannot write what I cannot see.
My imagination has withered:
my mental ink, it runs dry.
Emptiness, as round as my eyes—
eyes whose color I have not shared—
I open the doors of my home,
aware that I return only to you.
The walls are bare.

Riverside Property on the Lethe

Nick Romeo

Poetry

How far would your home be from the shoreline?
How many rooms would your home have?
Would it have a guest room for the mom-in-law,
and a *doghouse* for me when I stop by?
Would you have that white picket fence,
or do you prefer the natural look—a wall of hedges?
What would you do to pass the time?
Maybe swim, fish, jet ski, skip rocks,
or write poetry and prose?

Much literature was written near a river.
What would be your story?
Does it have an end?
Would it likely say: 'To be continued'
extending to the next volume and the next?
In a short time, it will fill a bookshelf, then a room.
Eventually, it will engulf a neighborhood,
city, country, and you will run out of room.
You can pile the books up in a makeshift mound,
as it expands, extending into space.
Finally, climb your mountain of words
until you reach heaven and meet God.
There you can ask all the questions that perplexed you.

Once Again

Nick Romeo

Poetry

I want the house filled with music
Haiku painting by the gallon
Nuclear strong forces on the floor
Explosive harmony on couches
Newly baptized in dopamine
Quenched in yields of laughter
No sleep in between scenes
Interpretive dance our dreams
Bounding past our roofline
As we slide thru the galaxies
Drenching the stars
Reforming constellations

Breeze Babe

Ali Gipson

Poetry

Her steps are fortified by the wind,
her head is full of the air—
secrets and snippets of conversations
float on the backs of breezes,
enter her ears and frolic
around her brain. When words
have dissipated, the wind instead
sends a sweet symphony
of grass sighs and birdsong;
if nature is quiet (which
it rarely is)—the wind wraps
around her like a jacket made
just for her and no one else;
to be with her and no one else.

House Finches at the Window Feeder

Ali Gipson

Poetry

A male on the
left. A female on the right.
The feeder is full,
sunflowers, safflowers,
and peanuts dividing
them while they dine.
The male flies away—
diving, extending
his wings, and even
flashing his red rump.
The female remains,
continuing her meal.
She was here first.

Ferris Wheel

Burcu Seyben

Nonfiction

Buse and Ömer sat on a bench watching two mothers enjoying the ballerina ride with their young children. The ballerina's skirts were slicing up Buse's well-prepared speech about why she wanted to meet with Ömer. The night before she had patched their relationship's memorable moments into a speech. She had thought that if she reminded him and herself of the moments before her departure to the college, they could both discard the unpleasant communications over the phone in the last four years and start afresh. That's why she had brought him there. To the Ferris Wheel. Because on a Ferris Wheel, one could always return to where one had been. Buse was trying to get them back to their happy place.

The last time Buse and Ömer were on this specific Ferris Wheel, Ömer had thrown up on her. They were almost sixteen when that had happened. Ömer's parents were going through a divorce. Although Buse and Ömer hadn't seen each other much after they had gone to different high schools, Ömer had called her up to invite her to this amusement park. Buse had run downhill to the park and met with Ömer who was embarrassedly holding two cotton candies at the entrance of the park. A moment later, they started poking the cotton candies. They rushed from one attraction to another stuffing their stomachs with more candies and drinks until they got on the Ferris Wheel. On the Ferris Wheel, Ömer had turned yellow before he emptied the amusement park treats onto Buse. Buse had taken him back to her house, washed herself, cleaned him, took him to her bed, and put him to sleep.

Ömer was remembering other things though. The things that Buse was trying to forget.

"You left me."

"You did," Buse whispered.

"I thought you would never want to see me again."

"I didn't want to."

"So you took your revenge."

"I did."

"You slept with my best friend."

"I wanted to live up to your bad words."

"I hate you."

"I do, too."

"Why did you invite me here?"

"I have no one else."

"I have someone."

"I'm not saying that I don't have a boyfriend. I literally have no friends here anymore."

"OK. But I have a girlfriend."

That statement cut into Buse's heart more deeply than she had ever thought it would. She had never thought that Ömer would emphasize the word, girlfriend, to keep Buse away from him. They knew that they would have girlfriends or boyfriends. But on the day of their first ride on this Ferris Wheel, they had made a promise to each other. Ömer had woken up with a fever that night after he has thrown up on her. Buse had been trying to bring his fever down with wet towels. He had pulled her to the bed and started kissing her. They had wanted each other for so long. They had never known the timing of it. That's why they had created false excuses to stay away from each other. But the day of the puke, their young hearts had touched their budding souls. They had become one. It had been so unusual and beautiful for both that they had thought no other future experience would match theirs. That night they had promised that no matter who would enter their lives in

the future, they would always love each other. They made that promise because they knew from their parents that love didn't last. They made that promise because they wanted theirs be infinite.

"Do you want to go on the Ferris Wheel?"

"No. There's a bar close by."

"OK."

They sat at a corner in the bar. They talked for hours. Ömer told Buse everything that she didn't need to know about Ömer's present girlfriend. Buse didn't tell Ömer anything personal.

Buse didn't want to get in touch with her high school friends on her return because her return to Turkey meant a failure. And Buse had hoped that Ömer would always be there for her.

After the bar, Buse and Ömer headed to his mother's nursery. Ömer had quit studying economics as his father had wanted him to do and started studying music. He was teaching music to five-year-olds during day at his mother's nursery. In return, he was able to practice as much as he liked at nights there. Ömer gave Buse a tour de force of his renderings of the performances belonging to his favorite jazz drummers: Jeff Ballard, Brian Blade, Joe Morello, and Art Blakey. Ömer had to make sure that Buse desired him more than he desired her. They had started reliving each other's bodies much before Ömer had put his drumsticks down. As the rhythm of their clashing flesh resonated within the walls of the nursery, their hearts bid farewell. They would no longer be lovers. They could no longer be friends.

Mt. Everest
Kirsten Smith
Art



Heading Home in Havana

Kirsten Smith

Art



Meditation Time in Taipei

Kirsten Smith

Art



Ireland at the End of the Day
Kirsten Smith
Art



Keeping the Faith in Buenos Aires

Kirsten Smith

Art



Confessions of a Reluctant Maneater

Cheyanne Brabo

Fiction

Everyone is afraid of me. Even the newest settlers fear my presence in their town. All our lives are lesser because I haven't the courage to leave. My cowardice will kill me soon, though perhaps that's for the best, perhaps death will be easier than living with myself.

My matted black fur flows like charred prairie grass and my eyes shine like the fires of their hearths and even the thought of me is horrifying to them. The townspeople misunderstand me, and I cannot hold their fear against them — my own bloodlust offends me, the stench of my unwashed fur and mud caked paws disgust me. What reason would they have to treat me kindly after the violence I've committed against them?

Years ago, when I was a simple creature of the forest, I found one of their she-children wounded in the copper quarry outside of the newly built human town. I'd never smelt the sweetness of human bone-marrow, and I followed the heavenly scent of her shattered body for seven miles.

The young creature wore a white dress, its hem and sleeves embossed with tiny threaded flowers made by the nimble hands of a loving elder. Even as my mouth watered, and blood flowed from her split-open leg, I marveled at the artistry of her braided hair, the healthy plumpness of her rosy cheeks.

I wrapped my mouth around her throat so that she wouldn't have to scream any longer, so that her pain came to an end. What I experienced next was the most delicious flesh I'd ever tasted follow by the crushing weight of the most horrible guilt I'd ever felt. Believe me or not, I had never encountered another being with a

soul so similar as my own. After I ate my fill of her sumptuous meat, I vowed never to eat another creature with a soul like that of a wolf. I would've stayed true to my word had the humans not grown their town so quickly.

Tantalized by the babbled words of the lumberjacks who roamed the forests I called home, I followed the men in their squared-patterned clothes everywhere I could, interested mostly in the novel kindness of their species as I learned all I could about humanity.

When a man was crushed beneath a fallen tree, I became what I am today — the monster in the nightmares of every towns person, an evil being destined for destruction.

I hardly remember bounding across the open timber-plain to take the injured man in my mouth, though the taste of hot blood spurting across my tongue will forever follow me. As I thrashed the man's crushed body, ripping limbs from his torso and devouring his flesh in vile eagerness, I believed again that I paid the man a mercy. His fellow lumberjacks were not of the same mind. With weapons and shouts, they chased me into the drainpipe beneath their lumber mill, into the tunnel-like place I've since dwelled within.

For many weeks, I've stayed beneath their factory, trapped under their world. In the time I've spent hidden, I've learned much about the most important part of human society, the great difference between their species and wolf-kind. The human community treats its dead with reverence and mourning. In devouring the bodies of their loved ones, I became a monster of the vilest kind.

I have a nature I cannot help but submit to. Human beings have a culture they will defend without sympathy. I have never known peace, the likes of which every human child is born into, and I have been stupid to

try being other than I am — a beast sentenced to life in the darkness because of circumstances I can't control.

Yesterday, I was woken from my midday slumber by the sound of commotion in the building above my den, by the screams of an accident on the lumber cutting floor overhead. The scent of fresh blood roused me like a hound from hell and sent me into a fury of hunger and instinct. Into their work building I regretfully went, where I gorged upon the injured man and as many of his coworkers I could catch, savoring the flesh I'd refused myself for weeks.

Soon, the men of the town will come after me. Hundreds of humans will invade my dwelling place with their superior numbers and imaginative minds. Justice will be served to me as only men are capable of.

I cannot say that I didn't mean to hurt them, that the pleasure I took in drinking their blood and shattering their bones was not my choice. I will never be able to convince them that I would like to pull all the teeth from my mouth, bite my tongue until I forget the taste of flesh — that I am envious of them and the life I will never live.

Will they kill me for who I am — if they do, will I deserve it? I, a hungry monster, a lonely wolf forever trapped inside herself, unable to be other than exactly what she is?

THE END

A Poem for Us

Krista Puttler

Poetry

You rage, fist held high
Bare faced, laughing

There is clearly a right side
And a wrong
But most times, it muddles along

Minutes turn in their familiar rhythm
Breathing, chirping, light sneaking

My child's wailing
ended, exhausted, weaning forgotten,
I trace the only line
Marking her palm, but before I finish
She grasps my finger, never letting go

And all I know
Is that I must always remember

What I'm Trying to Say

Krista Puttler

Poetry

I am ashamed
Sitting on my porch
I assumed a word meant something
Different. I read the entire story wrong
A story freely published for all to read:

Ante means before,
Not after or back, like it sounds like it should mean
And bellum
Well,
Bellum means war.

But these two Latin words
One a preposition, if in Latin they were called thus
And one a noun, or more correctly
an environment of verbs
When smashed together
Hangs,
Sickly sweet with meaning.

And everyone should know this
Meaning. And everyone should be outraged.

Date
Krista Puttler
Poetry

To create a thought
Takes many hours
Of wide-eyed wondering blankly
To stand

To drink beer, instead of eating
A meal with Turkey and Gravy
To procreate
A thought

To date
A page

Advice to my Forty-Year-Old Friend

Krista Puttler

Poetry

marriage
just jump right in
that is what you do
like a seed germinating
between two rotted porch boards and an inch
of spilled over soil
from an above ground, mail order, wooden planter
who orders things by catalogue anymore?
phone number and page number and item number
who can predict the next ten years? a lifetime?
no one. you hope and guess and lie and cajole
and you build yourself a nice little life
one leaf at a time

human composting

Donnie Secreast

Poetry

put me in the ground
straight when i die.
no box or tears or ceremony.
i want to get right
back to where i came
from. the dirt the silt
the little particles of sharp
rock to slough off
the skin of my back.
to have my cell walls crumble
to give in, finally, to lay
down into the earth, let

the soil's microbes rise up
to catch me as i ooze
out of myself. all that
movement. all the busyness
of the worms and roots
reaching into me—
effervescent.
and i'm carried away.
but the plastics, you say,
the compounds i collect
in my guts might choke
those mycelial strands

cat's cradling with the trees.
they might get sick and
lay with me a while.
but only a short while.
there's mushrooms that will eat
those synthetics leaching out.

fungus that will feed on me.
high on forever chemicals
they'll find every foothold
to emerge fruiting from the darkness
as above ground bodies,
as fleeting cemeteries, as morning

monuments to those below

Used Mattress
Donnie Secreast
Poetry

Sweet sleeps, anxiety awakes—
you've seen it all.
I'm sorry I broke you
sometime earlier,
I don't remember when.
Like how the dentist
asks me about my
dead tooth, but I
don't know when
that happened either.
There's no good story
I can tell about
bodies colliding
a smile smashing skull
knees spread apart
hands in the creases
in darkness and in light.

The list of mistakes I've made

Donnie Secreast

Poetry

doesn't help me sleep at night,
but it begins with me running
through the backyard,
the lawn level like a first snow,
the fresh cut grass soft,
its horse hair bristles
getting crushed under each bare foot
flexed & pressing into the ground.

My hands cupped, holding your
ring, shiny green & gold—
Peridot, for your August birthday,
& mine, momentarily
& gone too soon. Just a flash
of inattention, really. Then there's
that time at 7/11 after swim practice,
when someone bought me

junior mints & lime flavored
fizzy water. Bikes in the parking lot,
soft tar giving in the heat & sunshine,
creosote sealing the telephone poles,
smelling like any first sweet high,
& love, like rainbows of gasoline, lost
in just a second of inattention again.
My palms are flat & empty, but

I'm certain I can find it in the grass.

Before
Darlene Bester
Poetry

You always ruin
the surprise-
with your
premonition.

Misty fog
tints the
car window.
Street lights
cry for
the moments
before the
vision.

Before the
sidewalks
became a
canvas-
for solitary
artists to
paint with
raindrops.

Before the
smearing of
it all, on my
windshield.

Before the
couple shared
a blind umbrella.

No Sale

Darlene Bester

Poetry

The cat slept
in the store window.
Her warm hair shed,
like leather peeling
off old book covers.
My laced boots
stand on cracks
in the sidewalk-
the ins and outs
between two
square stones.

I stare into the window,
ignoring the dusty
shelves, with pastel
bindings fading,
over-used titles,
and words buried
in brassy pages.
I see only fur
with white spots,
pushed against hot
glass- moving only
with each breath-
otherwise as still
as the old books.
My leather boots-
as still as the old books.

Goodwill

Peter Kaczmarczyk

Poetry

He shopped at Goodwill
Where his imagination could run free
As others cast off memories
Fulfilled his fantasies
An old wooden box
Became a chest for all his treasure
A chipped wine glass
A chalice to raise a toast
To friends both present and nearly forgotten

And many a day he would spy
The Romani woman with dress flowing
Her shining eyes distant as she
Searched the shelves the same as he
Her home was a trailer by the pond
Surely, he thought, she must be
His lady of the lake

Sometimes he'd be brave
Cast a smile her way
Before impure thoughts brought a blush
And he'd scurry off behind the furniture
But his indiscretion never dampened his dreams
He knew they each were
The last piece of treasure
The other was meant to find

Across the Plains
Peter Kaczmarczyk
Poetry

He drove
Across the plains
Desolate
Depressing
Crumbling barns
Ranch houses
Never any shade

Beleaguered families
Broods of children
Identical pasts
No futures
Crops failing
Addiction run wild

Held prisoner
No escape
Still pushing
Towards tomorrow

True Tales

Peter Kaczmarczyk

Poetry

It doesn't matter if we are friends or lovers
My only desire is to hear your tales
The stories that tell me
Not what you do
Or what you like
But that reveal you heart
And bare your soul

I wish for you
To want to tell me
Be able to trust me
With the full depths
Of who you are
And I in turn
With love and with soul
Will share my tales with you

**Meet Adam Deutsch: The Literary Love Child of
Jack Gilbert and Elizabeth Bishop**

Remi Recchia, PhD

Book Review

Every Transmission by Adam Deutsch

Fernwood Press, 2023

74 pages

USD \$16.00

To read Adam Deutsch is to hold the literary love child of Jack Gilbert and Elizabeth Bishop in your scabby, aching palm. His insistence on tenderness—a fierce campaign continuing its work established in his chapbook, *Carry On: Elegies* (Glovebox Poems, 2018)—and engagement with the natural world propel the speaker’s *raison d’être*. In Adam’s debut full-length collection of poems, *Every Transmission* (Fernwood Press, 2023), we have a speaker cupping bugs on the wall “because we don’t want anything to die” (58), a speaker who insists on cleaning up their own waste (54), a speaker who keeps the dead in the living room (48)—a speaker, in short, who cares.

Consider, for instance, “Yes”:

I want to hold
your five-day-old goat.
Last week I was alone,
and this week
is a small animal
in my bare arms,

.....

If you have nothing
to say, I too can be quiet. (68)

In the passage above, the speaker steps away from the hectic world. The poem gives us a surprising meditation on solitude and self-control. This sanctuary, however, is broken upon the intrusion of flashing media at the end of the poem as follows:

Then a camera crew gathers
to catch some explosive spontaneity
that isn't happening
because it already happened
and keeps happening. (68)

The speaker, it would seem, is frustrated with the commodification of sentimentality and manipulation of nature. This frustration is apparent throughout *Every Transmission*, be it in the witnessing of a “creamed” monarch butterfly on a radiator (13) or a retelling of a Christmas Eve oil spill (40).

But what I'm interested in more than the book's keen environmentalism and raging against the (literal) machine is its jeweled nest of love poems to both lover and father. Adam establishes his propensity to tenderness in “The Longest Pier,” culminating in,

A potential storm. We're adrift on the way
home, trading decisions at every sign and light,
on exactly which way to go. We're dancing.
We steer in free spaces.

We have been together forever.
We're dancing. (3)

The truncated nature of these lines—and I’m looking especially here at “A potential storm” and the repetition of “We’re dancing”—rather than keeping the reader at a distance, draws the reader in close, pressed against the beating heart of the collection. We want to dance with the speaker and their lover. We want to make spotlight decisions with them.

Equally moving is the set of poems about the speaker’s father and father-in-law. “We’ll Make It to Iowa by Tonight,” a prose poem detailing a road trip shared between father and adult child, is one of my very favorites in *Every Transmission*. It’s a sly, humorous poem in which the speaker and their father disagree on how long it will take to reach their destination. (I’m sure I don’t have to say there’s a metaphor in there somewhere. I’ll say it just in case.) The justified margins denoting it as a prose poem reflect the pair’s journey together: the two characters are compact but not trapped; they are aligned with each other. Their alignment is further cemented in the poem’s last three lines: “...but the only way either of us / can remember the name of that place is to say, in our heads, / Holy, first” (53).

And isn’t that, when the pollution and waste and wreckage are stripped away, the best word to describe Adam’s book? “Holy”? Holiness is present in the lyrical engagement with family and spouse and the icy ire at ecological disaster. *Every Transmission* asks, sometimes explicitly and sometimes under the cloak of the secular, if the speaker is “praying to a God” (16). Maybe not always. Maybe not then. But the poems in *Every Transmission* unmistakably reach across humanity straight to the divine, clamoring, We care about the

insects. We care about pollution. We care about the
dead. We care about you.

Contributor Bios

Swetha Amit

Swetha is an Indian author based in California and a recent MFA graduate from the University of San Francisco. She has published works across genres in 60-plus journals, including Atticus Review, Maudlin House, Flash Fiction Magazine, Masters Review, and others (<https://swethaamit.com>). She has received Pushcart and Best of the Net nominations and is an alumnus of Tin House and Kenyon Review Writers' Workshop, 2022 and 2023.

Meredith Anderson

My dog is a big fan of me. She is a fourteen-year-old dachshund, chihuahua, terrier mix. You can only imagine the pedestal she arrays herself upon. She lies next to me with her blanket, just so. I bake her chicken breast and rice from scratch. She's unaware of how painfully introverted I am. All she knows is that I am home reading most of the time, listening to her snores and unfortunately smelling her farts. I care about everybody and everything too much.

Ricardo Arredondo

Ricardo Arredondo is an English teacher at Clovis High School in New Mexico where he enjoys writing, reading, playing guitar, and painting. In his written work, his favorite subject matter tends to be family and the realities of life, yet enjoys inventing fictional worlds as well. He shares his life with his family: Shannon, Bugsy, and Hunny.

Darlene Bester

Darlene Bester is a writer, cat lover, and fashion enthusiast from Minnesota. She draws most of her inspiration from nature and the change of seasons. She has been featured in Bella Grace magazine.

Cheyenne Brabo

Cheyenne Brabo (she/her) is a fiction writer and proud Californian. Her writing is slated for publication in Scissor Sisters Sapphic Villain's Anthology and Moth Eaten Mag, was a finalist in Crystal Lake Entertainment's Flash Contest, and has appeared in Warning Lines Lit." When she's not writing, she enjoys taking her cat for leash walks. Find her on twitter @cheysectoplasm.

Sarah Carleton

Sarah Carleton writes poetry, edits fiction, and plays the banjo in Tampa, Florida. She used to sew hats and sell them at craft shows, but now she's obsessed with knitting scarves, which is a pretty silly hobby for a Floridian. Sarah recently spent a whole day searching grocery stores for a decent sauerkraut.

Linda M. Crate

Linda M. Crate (she/her) is a Pennsylvanian writer whose poetry, short stories, articles, and reviews have been published in a myriad of magazines both online and in print. She has twelve published chapbooks the latest being: Searching Stained Glass Windows For An Answer (Alien Buddha Publishing, December 2022). She is also the author of the novella Mates (Alien Buddha Publishing, March 2022). Her debut book of photography Songs of the Creek (Alien Buddha Publishing, April 2023) was recently published.

Isabella Cruz

Isabella Cruz is a writer and educator. She currently works as a writing tutor and is currently pursuing her MFA. Her works have appeared in Wigleaf, The Woven Tale Press, and Necessary Fiction.

Andrea Damic

Andrea Damic, born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, lives and works in Sydney, Australia. She's an amateur photographer and author of fiction and poetry. She writes at night when everyone is asleep; when she lacks words to express herself, she uses photography to speak for her. You can find Andrea's work at <https://damicandrea.wordpress.com/>, Twitter @DamicAndrea, Instagram @damicandrea, and Facebook @AndreaDamic.

Steve Denehan

Steve Denehan lives in Kildare, Ireland with his wife Eimear and daughter Robin. He is the author of two chapbooks and four poetry collections. Winner of the Anthony Cronin Poetry Award and twice winner of Irish Times' New Irish Writing, his numerous publication credits include Poetry Ireland Review and Westerly.

Peter Devonald

Peter Devonald is winner of two Heart Of Heatons awards, Waltham Forest Poetry award and joint winner of FofHCS. Forward Prize and two Best Of Net nominations, shortlisted Saveas and Allingham Poetry Competitions 2023. Poet in residence Haus-a-rest. Published extensively. Screenwriter winner of 50+ film awards, former senior judge/ mentor Peter Ustinov Awards (iemmys) and Children's Bafta nominated. www.scriptfirst.com ,

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Sofia Drummond-Moore

Sofia Drummond-Moore (she/her) is an emerging writer born in Santa Fe, New Mexico to park ranger parents and grew up in National Parks around the U.S. Her work constantly revisits the strangeness and sacredness of the wilderness, you can usually find her in a graveyard reading about historical lesbians. Her work has appeared in X-R-A-Y Lit, Waxwing and Pithead Chapel.

Ali Gipson

Ali's poetry primarily focuses on magnifying the beauty in ordinary moments, reflecting on her relationship with the natural world, and exploring her mental health, identity, and sexuality. A native Pittsburgher, she enjoys rooting for the Penguins and visiting the city's indie bookstores. Her interests include birdwatching, puzzles, and modern rock/alternative music.

Kim Ha-ri

Kim Ha-ri (She/Her) is a factory worker living in South Korea. Her cat's name is Lola.
[twitter/instagram@crazykslim](https://twitter.com/crazykslim)

Richard Hanus

Had four kids but now just three. Zen and Love.

Michelle Hartman

I don't think you're rich unless you have a big library, with secret bookcase entry. I think Teddy Bears hold the secret to World Peace. I want to have an affair with Neil DeGrasse Tyson.

Jasmyn Huff

Jasmyn Huff (she/her) is the leading proponent of the theory she is a trans woman. She believes punctuation is a tool invented by the straights. Her family likes to come to her with computer issues. She dreams of one day watching waves from her porch and never touching the sand while rain clouds gather on the horizon. At night she will cast spells and run naked with her demon friends.

A. Jenson

A. Jenson ("Jenson") is a trans/non-binary writer, artist, and farmer currently working on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington state. They're busy—always—with the important tasks of illustrating plums, writing about irrigation, and harvesting little poems as they sprout from the dirt.

Patrick Johnson

Patrick Johnson is an emerging poet from Queens, New York. He teaches science and advocates for teachers with his labor union. In his free time, he runs a poetry workshop to support other poets.

Peter Kaczmarczyk

Swetha is an Indian author based in California and a recent MFA graduate from the University of San Francisco. She has published works across genres in 60-plus journals, including *Atticus Review*, *Maudlin House*, *Flash Fiction Magazine*, *Masters Review*, and others (<https://swethaamit.com>). She has received Pushcart and Best of the Net nominations and is an alumnus of Tin House and Kenyon Review Writers' Workshop, 2022 and 2023.

Meghan Kemp-Gee

Meghan Kemp-Gee is a scriptwriter, teacher, and author of *The Animal in the Room* (Coach House Books, 2023). She also co-created *Contested Strip*, the world's best comic about ultimate frisbee, and now a graphic novel, *One More Year*.

Jerrod Laber

Jerrod Laber is an Appalachian poet and writer. His work has been published in *The Westchester Review*, *Olney Magazine*, and the *Oxford Review of Books*, among other places. He lives in Virginia with his wife and their dog.

Vignette-Noelle Lammott

Vignette-Noelle Lammott is a disciple of beauty, heavily inspired by the natural world and the early Transcendentalists. Poet, photographer and scholar of antiquarian works, she lives a quiet life in southern New Jersey.

Grace Anne Lowry

Grace Anne Lowry is a Chicago-based writer. Lowry spends most of her time exploring book stores in the city, getting stuck on the train at rush hour, and drowning in caffeine. She was the recipient of the Playwriting Initiative Fellowship for the 2022-2023 season at Interrobang Theatre Project.

Jason Macey

Jason Macey is a teacher, writer, and runner who lives in Northeast Pennsylvania. In his free time, he enjoys photographing waterfalls, as he believes TLC was rather harsh regarding the subject.

Faith Miller

Faith Miller has been published in a number of literary magazines including *Hanging Loose*, *Chicago Quarterly*, *Prism International*, and most recently in *Libretto*, Africa's leading literary magazine. Faith lives in New Jersey and is a member of writing groups affiliated with the New York Society Library and the Boston Athenaeum. She is an MAW candidate at the Naslund-Mann Graduate School at Spalding University where she is a reader for their literary magazine, *Good River Review*.

Jay Morse

Jay writes (mostly) nonfiction, and is currently working on a book about his experience as a US Army prosecutor in Afghanistan. He has an MFA from Antioch University-Los Angeles, and has been published in *The Forge Literary Magazine* and *Tahoma Literary Review*.

Binx River Perino

Binx River Perino is a queer poet from Texas. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Emerson College and is the author of his debut chapbook, *"Pure Light"* (Bottlecap Press, 2023). A nominee for the 2023 Mass Poetry Community Award, his work has been anthologized and published in *Beyond Queer Words*, *new words {press}*, *Variant Literature*, *Mixed Mag*, and elsewhere. He lives and works in Chicago with his dog, Maya.

Marisca Pichette

Marisca Pichette is a queer author based in Western Massachusetts, on Pocumtuck and Abenaki land. Her work has appeared in *Strange Horizons*, *Fireside Magazine*, *Room Magazine*, *Flash Fiction Online*,

Necessary Fiction, and Plenitude Magazine, among others. She is the winner of the 2022 F(r)iction Spring Literary Contest and has been nominated for the Pushcart, Utopia, and Dwarf Stars Awards. Their debut poetry collection, *Rivers in Your Skin, Sirens in Your Hair*, is out now from Android Press. Find them on Twitter as @MariscaPichette and Instagram as @marisca_write.

Sai Pradhan

Sai Pradhan is an Indian American writer and artist who lives in Hong Kong. Sai used to write opinions for the Hong Kong Free Press, and restaurant reviews for a now defunct Los Angeles publication. She has recently published pieces of fiction in *Ligeia* magazine, *Litro* magazine, and *Calamari Archives'* *Sleepingfish*. She has a personal essay forthcoming in *The Iowa Review*. Her art will be featured in an upcoming issue of *Sublunary Review*, as cover art for the journal *Pithead Chapel*, and has been part of the Hong Kong Arts Collective's Summer Exhibition in Hong Kong in 2023. Twitter: @saisays Instagram and Threads: sai_pradhan_art Website: www.saipradhanart.com

Matthew Pritt

Matthew Pritt (he/him) is a writer of Appalachian fiction of all genres. He has five cats, which he shares pictures of constantly on his Twitter @MatthewTPritt. His dream job would be the guy who pulls up hyper-specific historical baseball statistics during games.

Krista Puttler

Krista has a hard time calling herself a writer, let alone calling herself a poet (but she will have to try, especially if these first poems get published). She works hard not to use too many common phrases but cliches sometimes

get away with her. And according to her in-laws, she makes the best Friday night pizza.

Remi Recchia, PhD

Remi Recchia, PhD, is a trans poet, essayist, and editor from Kalamazoo, Michigan. A five-time Pushcart Prize nominee, Remi's work has appeared in *World Literature Today*, *Best New Poets 2021*, and *Bayou Magazine*, among others. Works include *Quicksand/Stargazing* (Cooper Dillon Books, 2021); *Sober* (Red Bird Chapbooks, 2022); *From Gold, Ghosts: Alchemy Erasures* (Gasher Press, 2023); *Transmasculine Poetics: Filling the Gap in Literature & the Silences Around Us* (Sundress Publications, forthcoming); and *Little Lenny Gets His Horns* (Querencia Press, 2023). He holds an MFA in poetry from Bowling Green State University.

Susan Richardson

I am a California native who moved across an ocean for love and tranquility. I now live, write and play in Ireland with my husband, my two pugs and my two cats.

Nick Romeo

When Nick Romeo is not at his nine-to-five occupation which is strongly situated in the STEM fields, he utilizes technology to create his art - whether it is generated in a digital form on the computer or when he is assembling recycled “spent” technology into a sculpture. His main forms of expression are 3D digital renderings, electronic music, writing, fractal generations, sewing, and photography.

Claire Scott

Claire Scott is an award-winning poet who has received multiple Pushcart Prize nominations. Her work has appeared in the *Atlanta Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *New Ohio Review* and *Healing Muse* among others. Claire is the author of *Waiting to be Called and Until I Couldn't*.

Donnie Estelle Secreast

Donnie Estelle Secreast lives life aware of her status as a withering invasive species. Transplanted from Western North Carolina, Donnie and her cat try to carry on their bohemian lifestyle under big Texas skies. They sorely miss the Appalachian Mountains.

Erika Seshadri

Erika Seshadri lives on an animal rescue ranch in Florida with her family. When not caring for tame critters or feral children, she can be found writing. Her work has appeared with *Stonecrop Magazine*, *Funicular*, *Nine Cloud Journal*, *Quibble Lit*, *Hare's Paw Literary Journal*, *Dreamer's Magazine*, and others.

Burcu Seyben

Burcu Seyben is a theatre theorist, writer, actress, and author of *Struggle and Survival under Authoritarianism in Turkey: Theatre under Threat* (Lexington Books, 2020) and *Theatre and Multimedia* (Habitus, 2016). She specializes in contemporary European, American, and Turkish performances, and directors as well as theatre and politics.

Ellis Shuman

Ellis Shuman is an American-born Israeli author, travel writer, and book reviewer. His writing has appeared in *The Jerusalem Post*, *The Times of Israel*, and *The*

Huffington Post. He is the author of *The Virtual Kibbutz*, *Valley of Thracians*, and *The Burgas Affair*. His short fiction has appeared in *Isele Magazine*, *Vagabond*, *The Write Launch*, *Esoterica*, *Ariel Chart*, *Jewish Literary Journal*, and other literary publications. Ellis lives with his wife, children, and grandchildren on Moshav Neve Ilan, outside Jerusalem. You can find him at <https://ellisshuman.blogspot.com/> Twitter: @ellisshuman

Kirsten Smith

Kirsten Smith is a photographer, writer, and travel addict who lives and works in San Francisco. Her photos have appeared in *Cosmic Daffodil*, *Anti-Heroine Chic*, and *Vagabond City Lit*. Her stories have appeared (or will soon appear) in *Esoterica Magazine*, *JAKE the Magazine*, and *SPANK the CARP*. Follow her on Instagram @kirsten.wanders.

Edward Michael Supranowicz

Edward Michael Supranowicz is the grandson of Irish and Russian/Ukrainian immigrants. He grew up on a small farm in Appalachia. He has a grad background in painting and printmaking. Some of his artwork has recently or will soon appear in *Fish Food*, *Streetlight*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, *Door Is A Jar*, *The Phoenix*, and *The Harvard Advocate*. Edward is also a published poet who has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize multiple times.

Michelle Tokarczyk

I attended Herbert Lehman College for my undergraduate work. Not caring about making lots of money but caring about putting food on the table, I decided to major in sociology and get a master's in social

work. One day I was walking up the steps of the library at Lehman and I had an epiphany. I knew I wanted to be an English professor. Now retired, I'm dedicating myself to writing poetry and essays, studying Spanish, riding my bicycle, learning to tread water (literally) and generally enjoying New York City.

T. C. Wiggins

T. C. Wiggins is an African American poet residing in Cincinnati, Ohio who has engaged in such writings since August of 2022. He has been previously published by Red Noise Collective, Every Writer, Small World's City, Big Windows Review, and his favorite writers and inspirations are Linda Gregg, Richard Siken, and Ada Limón. His Instagram handle is [scaringthemuse](#).

Door Is A Jar Staff Bios

Maxwell Bauman

OWNER/ EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / ART DIRECTOR

Maxwell is an M.A./M.F.A. graduate from Wilkes University. He is a contributor to Chicken Soup for the Soul. He is wizard with Legos. He plays guitar and banjo. Maxwell has never had a strawberry. You can learn more about him on his website.

maxwellbauman.com

Corinne Alice Nulton

POETRY / DRAMA EDITOR

Corinne Alice Nulton is the Writing Center Coordinator at the University of Scranton. Aside from being the Poetry and Drama Editor for Door Is A Jar, she's written for each of the Night Bazaar anthologies published by Northampton House Press. She had her play "14 Symptoms" produced at the Brick Theater's Game Play Festival back in 2014. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Composition and Applied Linguistics at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Dominique Isaac Grate**FICTION / NONFICTION EDITOR**

Dominique Isaac Grate obtained his B.A. from the University of South Carolina, where he studied under the world-renowned Dr. Stephanie Mitchem, majoring in African-American Studies with a minor in History. In 2008, Pastor Grate received his call to serve in the ordained ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. A 2013 inductee into the National Academy of Young Preachers, Rev. Grate studied at Wake Forest University School of Divinity, where he was an Ed & Jean Christman Fellow, graduating in May 2015. Rev. Grate has pastored three congregations; Historic Trinity AME Church in Manning, SC, New Mt. Zion AME Church in Lexington, SC, and Calvary AME Church in Batesburg-Leesville. In 2023, Rev. Grate transitioned from his full-time pulpit ministry to higher education, where he serves as the Assistance Vice President for Development at Jarvis Christian University in Hawkins, TX.

Annaliese Ballowe**INTERN**

Annaliese is a graduate from Oregon State University and currently lives in Northern California. Aside from spending time reading and writing, she's a big fan of wandering around San Francisco, surfing, and anything that has to do with Bob Dylan.

Submission Guidelines

Door Is A Jar Literary Magazine is looking to publish well-crafted poetry, fiction, nonfiction, drama, artwork, and book reviews.

Please read over our submission guidelines carefully.

Our publication steers away from academic writing and publishes short, conversational works that use familiar language. Each new issue features artists and writers and works that are accessible for all readers.

Submit all work in Times New Roman font size 11

We only accept new, unpublished work. If you have posted something to your website or social media, this counts as being published.

For book reviews, please include the title, publisher, year published, and ISBN.

Please provide your name as you would like published, email, mailing address, and a fun 3-sentence bio. (We're not as interested in how many degrees you have, or how widely you've been published. Instead, we want to hear about the real you. We want to know about the little things that spur you along.) Contributors can submit to multiple categories; however, only submit once to each category until you have received our decision about your piece.

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