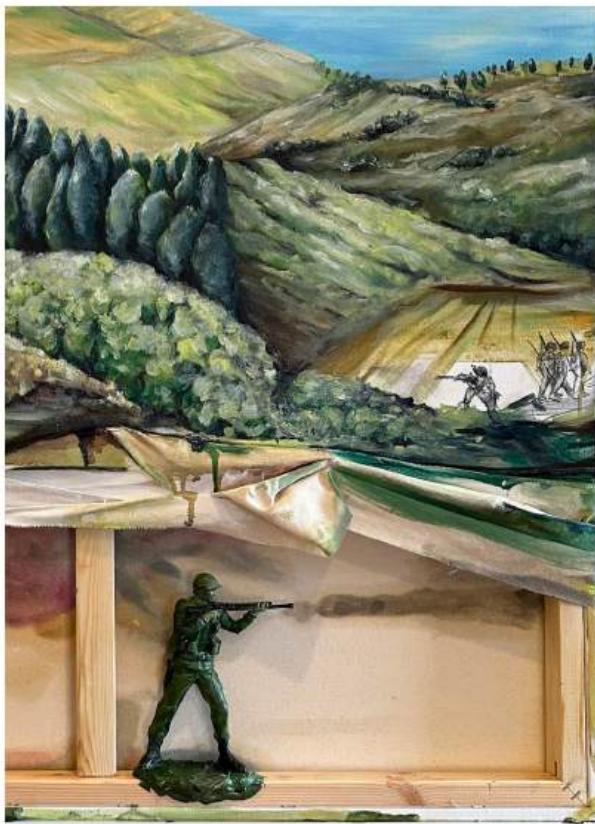


# DOOR = JAR



WINTER 2024

ISSUE 33

Printed in the USA by Intelllicor Communications  
3575 Hempland Road, Lancaster, PA 17601

DOOR = JAR

Door Is A Jar  
Issue 33

Copyright © 2024 Door Is A Jar, LLC  
All rights reserved, including the right  
to reproduce the magazine.

Ownership of all work  
is retained by the original creator

[www.doorisajarmagazine.net](http://www.doorisajarmagazine.net)

**Editors**

Maxwell Bauman  
Editor-in-Chief/ Art Director

Corrine Alice Flynn  
Poetry and Drama Editor

Dominique Isaac Grate  
Fiction and Nonfiction Editor

Cover Image “War Games”  
by Efrat Baler-Moses



**Table of Contents**

- p. 9 Superstitions by Joie Bauman
- p. 10 Thoughts from High Places by Joie Bauman
- p. 11 myth by Cash Bruce
- p. 12 same time tomorrow by Cash Bruce
- p. 13 On Leeches by William Heath
- p. 14 Death in the Dunes by William Heath
- p. 16 TV by Burcu Seyben
- p. 20 Searching for Peace of Mind by Efrat Baler-Moses
- p. 21 Memories of a Far-Away Land by Efrat Baler-Moses
- p. 22 War Games by Efrat Baler-Moses
- p. 23 Ocean Breath by Denise Gilchrist
- p. 24 A Moth with Hummingbird Wings by Cat Winters
- p. 25 gardenbody haiku by Eleanore Tisch
- p. 27 On the Bridge Over Saylorville Lake by Eleanore Tisch
- p. 29 I Help My Mother On With Her Shoe by Donna Burke Esgro
- p. 31 Cardinal Directions by Donna Burke Esgro
- p. 32 Standing Out in the Rain by Gregory Luce
- p. 33 Matter by Gregory Luce
- p. 34 The Garden of Eves by Skyler Melnick
- p. 36 Rabbit Hunting by Skyler Melnick
- p. 39 Short-Stories by Mark Hurtubise
- p. 40 Sightings by Mark Hurtubise
- p. 41 Snail's Viewpoint by Mark Hurtubise
- p. 42 Spinning Circles 2 by Herbert Colston
- p. 43 Citrus by Holden Davies
- p. 44 An Almost Sonnet/ For My Almost Life by Gray Davidson Carroll
- p. 45 Bloody by Gray Davidson Carroll
- p. 46 Heard It by Gray Davidson Carroll
- p. 47 Nights Nowadays by E.C. Gannon

p. 48 Linda by E.C. Gannon

p. 49 Total Loss by E.C. Gannon

p. 50 Mister Rogers, Lord of the Neighborhood by Adam Katz

p. 55 Odds and Ends by Florence Chien

p. 56 Still Revolution by Florence Chien

p. 57 Under by Florence Chien

p. 58 Calm by Margaret Wilson

p. 59 Exequiel by Margaret Wilson

p. 60 autumn in the PNW by Christine Brooks

p. 61 underground by Christine Brooks

p. 62 Modern Art by Clint Bowman

p. 63 A Cleaning by Clint Bowman

p. 64 That dog in me by Clint Bowman

p. 66 yellow haze by Leonardo Chung

p. 67 A List of Things That Happen After You Start Over by Madison LaTurner

p. 70 At a Crossroads by Edward Michael Supranowicz

p. 71 As Different as Night and Day by Edward Michael Supranowicz

p. 72 The Sun Is No Longer Warm 3 by Edward Michael Supranowicz

p. 73 Red White and Blue Rhythm by Edward Michael Supranowicz

p. 74 Frustrated Frustration by Edward Michael Supranowicz

p. 75 Process ≠ Outcome by Jay Aelick

p. 76 Skate God by Jay Aelick

p. 77 cure / curse by d.S. randoL

p. 78 Forecast by J. Fox Bedford

p. 79 Roses by the Stairs by William Weiss

p. 80 Pick Me Like a Flower by Alexandria Rizik

p. 81 The Spider by Noah Berlatsky

p. 82 No. 4 by Noah Berlatsky

p. 83 The Second Singleness by Angela Townsend

p. 86 After Time by Arlene Tribbia

p. 87 One Way by M.R. Mandell

p. 88 AA Meeting by M.R. Mandell

p. 89 My Brother's Last Summer Day by M.R. Mandell

p. 90 My Brother's Ten-Speed Bike by M.R. Mandell

p. 92 Moonstruck in Red Bluff by Taya Sanderson Kesslau

p. 93 Community by Taya Sanderson Kesslau

p. 94 i see poems by Marisca Pichette

p. 95 cassiopeia, in spring by Marisca Pichette

p. 97 Naturaleza Muerta con Plate of Nachos by Daniel J. Cecil

p. 99 Reflection of Identity by Sophia Liu

p. 100 The Gift That Offers a Slipstream of Delirium by Bill Wolak

p. 101 The Sudden Bewilderment That Silk Attracts by Bill Wolak

p. 102 Cicadas by Hanna Webster

p. 104 Sunbasking in May by Hanna Webster

p. 106 Sonnet for the Horizon by Zeke Shomler

p. 107 I Put My Gender in a Cardboard Box by Zeke Shomler

p. 108 About Dinner by Sam Moe

p. 109 Instructions for Taking Care of Roses by Sam Moe

p. 110 Time by Sam Moe

p. 112 Tiger Lilies by Kimberly Bollard

p. 113 See the man's shoulders by Michael O. Zahn

p. 114 Volunteer Swim Coach: A tribute by Michael O. Zahn

p. 115 Swimmers' requiem by Michael O. Zahn

p. 116 OIL SPILL by John Grey

p. 117 A BAR IN WEST VIRGINIA by John Grey

p. 119 Baby Shower by Angelle McDougall

p. 120 How to Wash Wool by Angelle McDougall

p. 121 Cucumber by Bernadette Geyer

- p. 122 Priest | Older Sister by Nina Richard
- p. 123 Adopting Cody by Lizzie Brooks
- p. 126 Contributor Bios
- p. 139 Door Is A Jar Staff Bios
- p. 140 Submission Guidelines
- p. 142 Door Is A Jar Newsletter
- p. 143 Door Is A Jar YouTube Channel
- p. 144 Subscribe to Door Is A Jar Literary Magazine

**Superstitions**

Joie Bauman

Poetry

The Romans spun tales in olden time  
of broken mirrors and shattered souls  
Seven circles round the sun to mend  
the mind and body, as if time could  
heal all wounds, as if the fates truly cared  
Seven broken mirrors, like a promise to myself  
Even the most beautiful broken things  
were shattered for a reason

**Thoughts from High Places**  
Joie Bauman  
Poetry

I used to spend my nights sitting on rooftops and perched on the ledges of parking decks because there is a special satisfaction that comes with holding your life in your own hands

Even now, I feel a strange sort of longing for tall buildings because I have found that there are few things more comforting than believing that you could play God

**myth**  
Cash Bruce  
Poetry

my sister loved the beach,  
the sand through her veins, the water and how  
it made her feel more alive than the air ever could.  
she went to the shore

I wonder how many grains and became sand  
scatter into the air  
she'd hate to be like everyone else,  
like me

I breathe her in everywhere I go and I am reminded  
that the wind is sisyphus grinding his stone away

but the sky neither loves nor hates, it watches

her theater is the beach  
and her canvas is the sand

I am not pushing a boulder I am being dragged

you wanted a child of stone, a disciple of strength,  
and now I am dust, the wind

**same time tomorrow**  
Cash Bruce  
Poetry

how do you just go on with  
knowing

that the last has no forewarning  
one day

I will feel the sun on my skin  
the touch lightens  
as your finger lets go  
along with everything else

the grass turns brown as the  
hairs on my son's chin turn gray  
leaves fall,  
skeletal trees revisiting their bones  
would I have chosen to be  
if it would be like this  
does a god beyond time

understand  
there was a last time I sat on my dad's shoulders and  
felt like I was flying, like I was beyond the world,  
somehow in defiance

it's hard to pray with scraped ankles

I miss how it felt to hug you before  
when will I hear my last I love you  
I already miss you and you're still here  
I can't lose you  
I can't lose you

oh god  
it was so good

**On Leeches**  
William Heath  
Poetry

If you fall into muddy river water  
and feel leeches feeding on your legs  
the best advice is not to pull them  
off and leave their jaws in your flesh

or to apply a cigarette to burn them  
only to see a splatter of blood,  
rather let them finish their meal  
in peace, exit on their own accord—

less harm done all around—at least  
that's what the doctor tells me.  
Remember, leeches once were agents  
of healing, their saliva is beneficial,

but too much of this good thing  
can be lethal by taking an excess  
of your precious blood—just ask  
the late George Washington.

**Death in the Dunes**

William Heath

Poetry

**1**

Desert dunes thrum  
with vibrations.  
Insects make enough  
sound for a sand  
scorpion to sense.

Eight slits in its feet  
detect slight signs  
that disclose the steps  
of its passing prey.  
The scorpion shifts

to attack mode,  
rising up, pincers  
open, its eight feet  
circling to note  
the prey's location,

then moves closer,  
pinchers ready to  
seize the insect  
and deliver  
the lethal sting.

**2**

A doodlebug uses surface waves  
in the sand to aid in hunting.  
It digs a conical hole and buries

its plump body while keeping  
its big jaws open and waiting  
for a chance to trap the prey

in a carefully prepared pit.  
If an ant falls in, the doodlebug  
injects its venom and that's that.

TV  
Burcu Seyben  
Nonfiction

I remember going to your basement apartment. Picking up your books and clothes and bringing them to my apartment. And yes, your TV. The larger-than-life kind. We'd decided to live together. It must have been easy to fall in or out of love, invite someone in or out of my life at that time.

That's not true. It has never been easy for me to do any of the above. I've never liked sharing food, clothes, sleep, or bed. Or waking up in a house where there are other people. I'm my mother's girl. Who thinks. And I am quoting my mother here. Word for word:

“Flesh is heavy.”

Especially other's. But sometimes even your own flesh.

So then, how did you end up in my apartment? What made you special? I don't remember. I usually remember people for the worst things that they have done to me. The things that I have allowed them to do. I don't remember you. I don't even remember how you dressed up or talked. I don't remember your smile. I vaguely remember your hair. If I'm correct, you had thick, black, and wavy hair that was just above your shoulder.

Still, I remember the TV in further detail than I'll ever remember you. It was big. And black. With a spot. At the right-hand corner. The spot became obvious when it was turned off. It needed to cool down when it worked hard. It had a grid system in the back to release the extra heat. You dusted that grid. Scrupulously. At one point, you allowed the cleaning lady to dust it. That was your way of showing trust.

The lady liked you. She didn't like me. With her eyes, she disapproved of everything I did. She must have thought that I was the exact opposite of who a young woman should be.

One day something happened to that TV. It had grains. And you accused her, behind her back, of cleaning your TV incorrectly. I wanted to let her know that you accused her and ask whether she still liked you more than she disliked me.

I worked; you stayed home. You were getting ready for something. An exam of some sorts. I don't remember what exactly. But you had a close friend. Who was also getting ready for something. May be the same thing. So, you hung out often. In the apartment. Watching your TV.

We didn't go out much. When we did, it was to your friend's house. He had a girlfriend as well. Who worked for a recording studio. I think she was a video editor. She worked at nights. I worked during the day. We crossed paths. Briefly. She seemed content. So appeared I. One time when we as couples were in your friend's house, I remember being overwhelmed with something. Was it us? Was it your friends? It can't be work because I'd never shared work with you. I must have drunk a little too much. Because the extra that I had was running down my eyes.

Another time when we met as couples was when you and I were intermediaries. He'd upset her. I don't remember how. But I dimly remember his hand squeezing her wrist. She denied that it had happened. That made me disturbed. So disturbed that you all had to appease me. That night, you held me responsible for continuing a 'disagreement' that had already been resolved. The three of you commenced watching TV

before we all went to bed. I felt like an extra in your sitcom.

We broke up. Semi-peacefully. At least when we were making the decision. You packed. Easily. And we quickly realized that we had never really mingled. Our clothes, books, DVDs, records, or cups were together but separate. You left on a cleaning day. The lady helped you. She looked very sad. When I came back, it was late. She had put a sticky on the fridge. It said you were going to come back for your TV and had placed your set of keys on the dresser.

I felt a sudden rush of some unknown feeling. It made me strong. And big. I stood in front of the TV and lifted it up. I carried it to the door and put it outside. I texted you and told where your TV was.

Some hours later, two men came. They had entered the building somehow. They were ringing my doorbell when I peeked through the hole. I didn't answer. They started knocking on the door. You texted "The TV isn't there." I texted back, "It was there. Someone must have taken it. Send these people away." I don't remember how long your men stayed there. For me, it was almost long enough to start calling my first neighbor on speed dial. For you it might have taken a little shorter to think that my relationship with your TV had been weaker than my relationship with you. You would have assumed wrong. I felt just as lost.

Years later. I am sitting at an international conference dinner table at a college in Oxford. After a presentation about the colonizer/colonized dichotomy in the theatre of nineteenth-century Turkey. The table I'm sitting at runs almost the entire length of the room. At one moment, I catch a glimpse of someone slightly resembling you in the distance. That someone is chatting animatedly with a presenter whom I had enjoyed listening to. That someone and I exchange glances

incognito. That someone may not be you. But again, I can't be sure. Yet I start to imagine that someone and the person that he's talking to as two strangers starring in a movie that you and I might have enjoyed watching on our TV cuddled up on the sofa in our apartment.

**Searching for Peace of Mind**  
Efrat Baler-Moses  
Art



**Memories of a Far-Away land**  
Efrat Baler-Moses  
Art



**War Games**  
Efrat Baler-Moses  
Art



**Ocean Breath**  
Denise Gilchrist  
Poetry

When practice leads to strain  
yogi wisdom takes a child's pose  
surrenders to the mat.  
Big toes touch, knees open wide  
a cradle for the belly.  
Arms extend front,  
hands grip the floor.  
Hips fall back,  
pent up shoulders open  
buttocks soften to bare heels.  
Forehead bows to touch the earth.  
Lips release a smile as the mind relaxes  
with focus on throaty breath,  
the sound of an ocean.  
I am here now; I was there once.  
Pink ear pressed to conch shell  
where deep within  
starched white sails swished on ripples  
as I knelt on a blanket in the sand  
in the crook of my grandmother's arm.  
Father's laughter rising soft and warm  
reliable like the sun.  
I am there now  
in flesh, bones, and blood  
bathing in the light of love  
fresh, unharmed, and freed  
from the tyranny of grief.  
My body on the mat dissolving  
like grains of sea salt in water.

**A Moth with Hummingbird Wings**  
Cat Winters  
Poetry

They say it so often:  
“Just be yourself.”

But when we are ourselves, truly ourselves,  
they turn away,  
curl up their lips,  
cover their ears,  
complain we’re too angry,  
too loud,  
too disappointing,  
too weird,  
too anxious,  
too confused,  
too disrespectful,  
too girly,  
too mannish,  
too out of our minds.

That’s not what they meant by “be yourself.”

Here’s what they’re really saying:  
“Just be more like me. N-O-R-M-A-L.”

Well, I have finally chosen to be myself, truly myself—  
and I am flying free, singing the arias of the wasps  
and the bees.

A moth with hummingbird wings,  
no longer willing to masquerade as  
a butterfly who never even whispers her pain.

**gardenbody haiku**

Eleanore Tisch

Poetry

tomato basil  
brain. dishes in the sink to  
prove it. august, stuck.

cabbage body, squash  
skin. heat underneath nothing.  
shadow wine, slow, sunk.

she grows and burns in  
one summer. starts small. sweats,  
bursts. beet breast. carrot crown.

plum pit palm. asleep  
along an open window.  
she stains, hazes, swings.

nothing moves yet she  
buds, blooms, ripens, is  
eaten. she, of vine vision.

nervous system dirt.  
grape ganglia. kitchen filth,  
clutter, gilded dust.

she golden-hour skulks,  
pack of local fox living  
in air-dried linens.

she cycles, cries, comes.  
cantaloupe cartilage. calls  
hunger to supper.

august stuck again.  
time melts the lone aubergine,  
last of the season.

**On the Bridge Over Saylorville Lake**

Eleanore Tisch

Poetry

it is tradition that we kiss  
crossing over every  
body of water

my 29<sup>th</sup> birthday begins  
crossing over our every  
bridge. my body

begins by crossing every  
tradition, every kiss  
bridged bodies.

i begin impossibly small  
single celled and  
single and

still rippling. it doesn't  
make sense even  
knowing it is

simple. the ripple of me  
as I move across  
empty water,

the tradition of me, emptied  
and aging and born  
again and

again, impossibly. my birth  
a kiss from the water  
to the body,

my birth a bridge. the bridge  
a tradition. the tradition  
impossible.

the impossible kiss. the single  
body simply knowing  
it's time

to cross over.

**I Help My Mother On With Her Shoe**

Donna Burke Esgro

Poetry

I kneel  
she lifts her foot to me  
her skin like parchment  
on which is written in flourishes of violet  
the calligraphy of her eighty-eight years

A barefoot girl  
picking blueberries  
on the craggy Maine coast  
wet footprints, sand castles  
and the glittering bay

the bearing and birth of seven children  
one born still...tiny, ashen, silenced  
blood, water, wonder  
the Nautilus spiraled pain of loving too much

Veins run rampant  
like rivers gone wild  
overflowing their borders  
breaking madly into rivulets

She falls for the first time  
walking across the suddenly too wide street  
to the 7-Eleven

She falls for the second time  
unable to rise  
her morning coffee growing cold on the kitchen counter

She falls for the third time  
calling out in a voice  
as clear and fragile as glass

I fit the shoe onto her foot  
and help her stand  
with arms as light as the wings of a bird  
she clings...as if to stay earth bound

**Cardinal Directions**

Donna Burke Esgro

Poetry

My father taught me how to find  
true north

I was just a girl  
standing on the windy bluff  
of my hometown  
facing the distant horizon

The sea rippled with silvery waves  
so like my father's tousled hair  
as he gestured toward the lowering sun

That is west  
True north will always be on your right

He stretched out both arms  
his hands trembling slightly  
like compass needles

Remember that, he said  
And I did

**Standing Out in the Rain**

Gregory Luce

Poetry

I looked up at the sky  
and tried to see it  
as a layer of silver air  
spread level and smooth  
just above my head but  
a few drops fell on me,  
then a crow tore a hole in it  
getting away quick  
and the lightning started  
and the rain was percolating  
through my shirt,  
so I shook myself  
and turned to walk back  
indoors but suddenly  
I was flying alongside the crow,  
arcing up then leveling off  
above the clouds, sun  
dead ahead, its light  
streaming out like the tails  
of an enormous kite,  
and beyond it deep dusk.  
I shook myself again  
and I was standing  
in the doorway, looking up  
at two ragged holes  
in the sky.

**Matter**  
Gregory Luce  
Poetry

If your hands tremble  
it doesn't matter, you  
can still strike the match  
and light the candle  
on the shrine. No matter  
if your back hurts,  
you can still bow  
and if your legs are  
too stiff for the lotus  
that doesn't matter either,  
you can sit on a chair.  
Spirit and matter  
are not opposed, they're  
like light and darkness.  
One carries the other  
as needed. You carry  
yourself is what matters.

**The Garden of Eves**  
Skyler Melnick  
Fiction

We took apart Adam, and fashioned more Eve.

Eves everywhere you look. Swaying on mountains, bathing in lakes, lounging in meadows.

Adam's eyes—we spared them—lie in a treetop, watching.

Eve? I say to my sister, as we harvest fruit.

What is it, Eve?

You look beautiful, I tell her.

Thank you, Evie. She pops a blackberry into her mouth.

We all look quite the same, I say, scanning the garden. I see myself, everywhere. Do you think Adam can tell us apart?

Who's Adam? she asks, spilling her basket of berries down the hill, laughing as they roll.

I go to the treetop and visit the eyes. Perhaps all the Eves do this.

What do you think, Adam? I stare into the blue orbs. No lids. They cannot look away. One of the pupils dilates, just slightly, or maybe it's my imagination. Does it dilate for all the Eves?

I want to be different, I whisper to the eyes.

Wind whips through the treetops. It hisses in my ears.

Really, I tell the wind. I just want one thing, to myself.

The eyes watch me watching them. The left pupil expands, almost as large as a berry. My hand reaches for it, brings it to my lips.

Mine, I say, placing the eye on my tongue, closing  
my lips, letting it tumble down my throat.

Eve! A sister calls from below.

Coming, I say, sliding down the tree, back onto the  
earth.

**Rabbit Hunting**  
Skyler Melnick  
Fiction

There's nothing on TV so we decide to go rabbit hunting.

Marla, my sister calls to me from across the park.  
SHHHHH, I tell her.

Marla, she whispers. There's one right next to me.  
At my feet. Gnawing on my shoelace.

I cross my arms over my chest and stare at her,  
waiting.

She picks up the rabbit and suddenly there are two  
of them. And no more Marfa. Marfa is rabbit. Now I  
must hunt her.

There's nothing on TV so I go rabbit hunting again.  
Haven't caught my sister yet, our mom is getting  
worried.

She hands me a basket. For Marfa, she says.

Marfa, Marfa, Marfa, I groan. I stick a carrot in the  
basket, and a brownie for me.

The playground is empty, so I play for a while.  
Marfa can wait. She's probably out hopping with her  
new friends. Chewing on grass and pooping pellets.

I sit on the tire swing and wonder, will Marfa turn  
back into a girl when I catch her? Or will I turn rabbit?  
Marfa does everything first, I'm always following her.

MARFA, I scream from my tire. Her name  
reverberates around the jungle gym, looping between  
monkey bars and slithering down the slide. I scream it  
again and again.

Excuse me. A little boy pops out from a yellow  
plastic tunnel. You're being very loud, he says.

Sorry, I say.

MARFA, I whisper-scream. Mom's making noodles tonight, with butter, no tomatoes!

A rabbit pops out of a bush. Its hair is brown like Marfa's, ears flopping like her ponytails used to. I miss her. I haven't played in days. Mom won't pretend with me.

Hey look. I get on my hands and knees and approach rabbit Marfa, woodchips digging into my skin. I'm rabbit too, I say. I wiggle my nose like her.

Rabbit Marfa turns around and heads toward the trees behind the playground. I follow.

The grass is mushy as I tread. Rabbit Marfa stops every once in a while to munch on it. When I try to grab her, she scurries away, into the woods.

Soon I lose her. Losing your sister isn't so good. Mom won't be happy. Mom likes Marfa a whole lot. She named me Marla because it was close to Marfa, and she needed more Marfa.

I get to a clearing between the trees and there she is, fur glistening in the sunlight. Not just Marfa, hundreds of them. And they all look just alike. Which is Marfa is unclear.

I go home instead. Mom is angry that I'm empty handed. She scolds me while I sit on the sofa. The TV's on in the background. Mom goes on about responsibility as Tom chases Jerry.

When Mom sees that my eyes are elsewhere, she takes the basket out of my hands and whacks me on the head with it. The carrot falls to my lap, the brownie to the floor, crumbling.

The next day there's plenty on TV. But Mom unplugs it and orders me to the park. I go to the clearing, call out for my sister, but there are too many. I pick one

at random, with brown fur, with eyes large and watery and humanlike. Could be Marfa.

Mom knows immediately that it's not. She holds it at a distance like a garbage bag, hands it back to me. Get it away, she says.

I repeat this process several times. Selection, rejection. Mom gets angrier and angrier. She won't look at me. Sends me to school without packing my lunch. Combs my hair violently, yanking my scalp as I shriek.

I'll find her today, I swear, I tell Mom.

Maybe she doesn't want to be found. Mom swivels her rocking chair away from me. Your father didn't.

Marfa, I say, stomping through the woods. You can't just hop away from life. I crunch a leaf under my shoe.

When I see rabbits, I tell them sternly that Marfa needs to identify herself, the real one this time. The fluffle stares at me, unblinking.

I'm serious, I tell them.

Not leaving, I say.

I get on my hands and knees, and make my eyes wide as marbles. I hop like them. I sniffle like them. I imitate them until I forget I'm doing it, until I'm rabbit.

Being a rabbit is pleasant. It's like ballet—toes pointed, gliding. The earth is your stage, birds and trees your audience.

Our fluffle traverses the woods, forages for plant snacks, races, digs for worms. I find three. I don't find Marfa, because they are all Marfa.

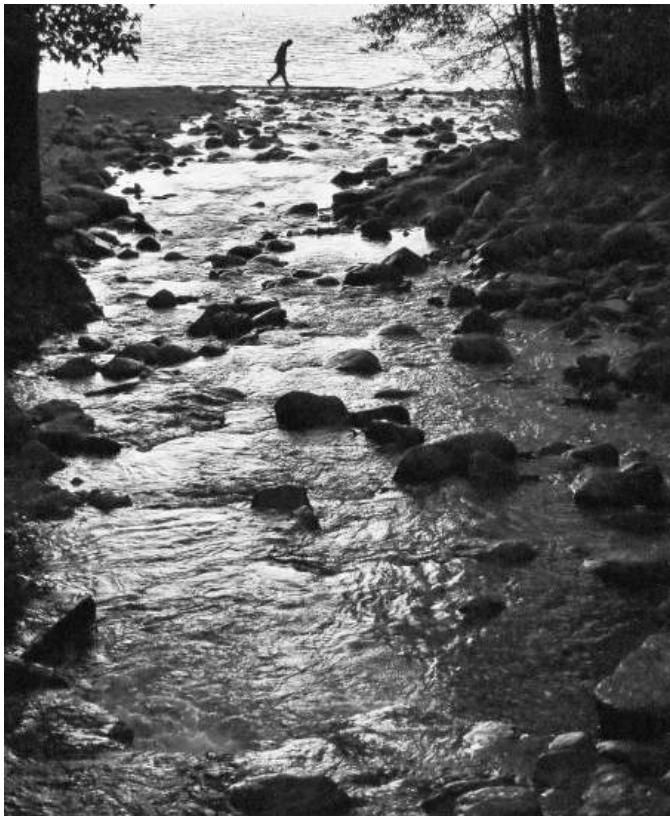
I understand, I tell her, tell them all.

I won't make you come home.

**Short-Stories**  
Mark Hurtubise  
Art



**Sighting**  
Mark Hurtubise  
Art



**Snail's Viewpoint**  
Mark Hurtubise  
Art



**Spinning Circles 2**  
Herbert Colston  
Art

separated by spinning circles



**Citrus**  
Holden Davies  
Poetry

She's grown accustomed  
to blood oranges—  
not her favorite,  
but the days after Christmas  
yield promises.  
After all,  
December bleeds into January,  
post-apocalyptic blues.  
A winter blue sky  
after so much grey  
surprises her every time.  
She looks out the window,  
grey colored gold,  
thinks about spring.  
Juice adorns her pouting lips.  
Citrus is best enjoyed  
in the North's coldest months.

**An Almost Sonnet/ For My Almost Life**

Gray Davidson Carroll

Poetry

when/ i was a boy/ i learned/ to break things  
watched/ baby brother/ shatter/ a mirror  
angry/ flushed red/ blood sits/ in the water  
each month/ mother says/ we are different  
i learn/ to shut out/ the world/ find new skin  
how to play/ the part/ the way/ you told me  
how to touch/ cold stone/ river bed/ night falls  
i trace/ outline/ on landscape/ silver thread  
the way home/ glistens/ try/ not to look  
before/ it's done/ god whispers/ be faithful  
my son/ you/ will be born/ again/ woman  
the moon sings/ i reach down/ between my thighs  
searching/ for blood/ lift out/ a severed head

**Bloody**  
Gray Davidson Carroll  
Poetry

*after "José Olivarez"*

It is fall and the leaves are turning.  
My grandmother says that this year  
the foliage is lackluster,

that all the New England tourists should get a refund.  
All those folks who came in their buses and trains  
to sit and watch the leaves.

The maples too, are turning, heading north.  
Uprooting themselves in the hope that they can again  
find somewhere to root down.

The air is warm against my skin, walking  
the same backroads in the middle of nowhere  
where I learned what it means to be still.

The skid marks from where the boys, who are not boys  
as much as dreams, ride their motorcycles  
in search of something to wake them up.

The ground is soft, wet. The grass still shaking with  
dew.  
If you peeled back the bloom of the trees,  
I might think that it was spring.

Late April, five years ago, perhaps a decade.  
But today the leaves are still bloody; awakening life,  
even, as they pass.

**Heard It**  
Gray Davidson Carroll  
Poetry

During critique, your professor mentions seemingly offhand, that she had once heard trauma survivors will often use the non-possessive *you*, when writing about their own experiences of trauma.

—A form of deflection, allowing for the separation of self from body.

You shut off the camera, mute yourself and heave back in your chair. An Olympic athlete gearing up for the spiral plunge.

It takes minutes for your breathing to slow. Long enough that the instructor sends a private message—Did you hear the feedback? Heard it for years, you almost say, but don't.

**Nights Nowadays**

E.C. Gannon

Poetry

For the time being, me and Penny are living at this motel, watching the same anchors report the same news all night. James McMann has died six times in the last three hours. His sobbing father, standing on the steps of his triple-decker, says he was the kindest man he'd ever known, which is what's been said about everyone who's died tonight. In the darkness, broken only by the TV light, Penny flicks a lighter until it runs out of juice. By that time, James has died again. I ask her if there's anything else we can watch. She says no, but we could stare at the ceiling until one or both of us fall asleep, which we agree to do. She drifts off before me, and, just as dawn begins to peek through splintered blinds, I turn on the TV again. James may have been involved in some petty racketeering ring. I rustle Penny awake.

**Linda**  
E.C. Gannon  
Poetry

After work, she sits in her 2004 Camry and smokes two cigarettes before turning her key and cranking the windows. She's got two kids at home, washed and pajamaed and fed by the teenager from down the hall. She knows she shouldn't, but sometimes she takes the long way, letting the stagnant night air cleanse the scent of cheap burgers from her hair. With her tips in her pocket and a full tank of gas, there are a lot of places she could go.

At a red light where there are no other cars, she waits a full minute and then drives straight through. She doesn't stop at the next light at all.

**Total Loss**  
E.C. Gannon  
Poetry

The department store is burning,  
and before the news cameras  
and fire trucks arrive, we head  
inside, hoping the security system  
has melted, short-circuited, whatever.  
We take everything we can salvage:  
mannequins and mirrors, armfuls  
of identical dresses, stiff-soled shoes,  
cheap, chalky makeup, bottles, bottles,  
bottles of metallic-tinged perfume.  
We stuff handfuls of anything into  
shallow, overflowing pockets, choking  
on smoke. These handfuls of garbage,  
these are worth a bus ticket and a half.  
Before the fire trucks whir onto Monroe,  
we're in the backseats of getaway cars,  
adding and multiplying the worth of all  
this junk, trying to figure out how quickly  
we can leave without raising suspicion.

**Mister Rogers, Lord of the Neighborhood**

Adam Katz

Fiction

*When my friend's kids were little they had two pet cats. Inevitably, pet cats pass away, and parents and children have a conversation about what happens when you die. Their family's answer was to say that their late pets go to... Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. When my friend related this sweet and harmless anecdote to me, needless to say, I had hard-nosed follow-up questions about their world-building. If Mister Rogers' Neighborhood is the afterlife of pets... is it only for pets? Is Mister Rogers the Lord of the Dead? And if so, is he a benevolent figure like Death of the Endless or a dread and fearsome figure like Pluto? But you don't have to be Lord of the Dead to grant your servitors a kind half-life fueled by the flesh of the living, in the manner of Dracula.*

*The matter would have dropped. But sometime later, my scholarly exertions brought me into contact with the following transcript from an unaired episode of Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. Unlike the typical transcript, this one was fragmentary—only a few damaged pages, folded lengthwise, being used as a bookmark in a codex bound in human skin. When I opened the book, I heard the pages moan, like the sound of wind passing through an endless tunnel. Here follows the transcript of the unaired episode:*

Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Season 6 episode 66

Air Date: June 6, 1973

Cast:

MISTER ROGERS LORD OF THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD:

Himself

BRANDON THE SECURITY GUARD:  
Himself

Setting:

A Sub-Basement Laboratory.

Time of day/year:

Summer Afternoon; however, lack of natural light  
makes this irrelevant.

Act1  
Scene 1

MISTER ROGERS (singing “It’s a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood.”):

(The door opens, and Mister Rogers walks, singing, takes off his cardigan, and replaces it with a leather apron that covers the entire front of his body. He pulls two rubber gloves from the front-pocket of the apron.)

Hello, boys and girls. Today we’re going to learn about harvesting human brains. Now, some of you have never eaten a human brain before and you’re probably feeling a bit nervous. That’s okay. It’s okay to be nervous your first time doing anything. But that’s not a reason not to try new things.

Now I want to introduce you to my friend Brandon the Security Guard. You’ve never met Brandon before. He’s new to the neighborhood, but he’s going to be spending—

BRANDON:

—Please, Fred. Just let me go. I won’t tell anyone I just want to—.

MISTER ROGERS:

Now, the most important thing is to make sure your victim is strapped down good and tight. I know. Some of you out there are excited to start feasting on the flesh of your victim. And being excited is good. It's good to be excited about new things. We just don't want to be careless. Did you know that, boys and gir—[illegible]

[Page 2 of script]

MISTER ROGERS (continued)

—It's okay to make mistakes, boys and girls. But we still try to avoid them. So, take that extra minute to make sure they're strapped in good and tight. It's okay if the straps cut off circulation to their hands and feet. They won't be needing those anymore.

BRANDON:

Fred, I have a family. Please I—[illegible]

(Mister Rogers clamps one hand over BRANDON's mouth and continues.)

MISTER ROGERS:

You know that reminds me of something. I'll tell you, boys and girls, that when I first started harvesting the brains of my victims, I didn't strap them down at all. Absorbing these mortals' flesh into myself is the gift I give my victims. Being able to graciously receive gifts is the most beautiful thing in the world, isn't it? In a way, it's the most precious gift you can give someone. More precious than what they're giving you. So, I expected that they would be grateful. Maybe I was being silly. But I expected Elizabeth to offer her life to me willingly. Let me tell you, boys and girls—[illegible]

[Page 3 of script]

MISTER ROGERS (continued)

—one tool for cutting off the top of the skull and another tool for taking out the delicious brains. I like to use a bone saw and an ice cream scoop. The ice cream scoop isn't the best tool for this job, I know. But I like my ice cream scoop. I used to use it when I was alive to spoon out portions of ice cream. So, it reminds me of a time when I wasn't the Lord of the Neighborhood. I know that I now have access to fell powers that were beyond my wildest dreams or most terrifying nightmares back then. But that doesn't mean I don't have *any* happy memories from those days. And a cold, sweet bowl of ice cream on a hot summer's day? Well, that's a happy memory. And happy memories are a treasure.

Now we've almost got the top of the head off and we're starting to see the brains under— [illegible]

[Page 4 of script]

MISTER ROGERS (continued)

—okay if you want to use your fingers for this step. I like to use a spoon but don't be afraid to get messy. It's not always bad to make a mess, as long as you promise clean up later.

And just like that, you can absorb another person's spirit into the neighborhood. Wasn't that simple, boys and girls? You can do that as many times as you like, too. I find there are some activities I never get tired of and getting to know new people, and getting to share their stories and memories and hopes for the future is one of them. And when we're done, I have a new neighbor!

(As he chatters on, ad lib., MISTER ROGERS is loosening the straps at hand and foot. BRANDON sits up, then gets off the table and stands at attention. The blood is everywhere, and Mister Rogers reaches up to grab a bit of brain from his open skull with the same casual gesture as plucking a loose grape from a bowl of fruit.)

(BRANDON does not react in any way but stares at the camera, waiting.)

MISTER ROGERS

(pops the morsel in his mouth and hums the melody to “It’s a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood.”)

FADE TO BLACK

**Odds and Ends**

Florence Chien

Art



**Still Revolution**  
Florence Chien  
Art



**Under**  
Florence Chien  
Art



**Calm**  
Margaret Wilson  
Art



**Exequiel**  
Margaret Wilson  
Art



**autumn in the PNW**

Christine Brooks

Poetry

it's quiet now

except for the sound  
of tires crushing the  
elegance out of the  
crimson & gold leaves  
that blanket the road  
lifting them up  
one last time  
one last exhale  
too crush them  
again

except for that  
—it's quiet

**underground**

Christine Brooks

Poetry

it's comforting  
to think that even  
underneath the streets  
underneath the sirens and  
underneath the bones  
of the city

through chunky lavender tiles  
souls  
pass over  
pass by  
pass on

and even though  
they cannot see me  
we are connected  
with twists of  
—light

**Modern Art**  
Clint Bowman  
Poetry

The artist sleeps  
in the flowerbeds  
of the art museum.

They spread their cardboard  
over daffodils and lilies  
as security locks the doors.

Inside, still lifes  
memorialized by millionaires  
collect dust  
beneath cobwebs.

As it begins to rain,  
the artist opens an umbrella  
over their body—

the tap. tap. drip.  
of droplets  
muffles their heartbeat  
beneath blankets.

Across the lobby,  
the green light of the alarm  
showers the window  
they're pressed against.

As water fills the flowerbeds,  
the artist turns on their side,  
blows their hot breath onto the glass,  
and slowly draws a dollar sign.

**A Cleaning**  
Clint Bowman  
Poetry

Every six months,  
I let a millionaire  
stick their hands  
in my mouth.

I close my eyes  
beneath their light

and let them  
pry the plaque  
off my teeth.

Lips pressed to latex—  
I imagine  
where their wealthy  
hands have been—

in a mansion  
with a marbled kitchen  
and a master bedroom  
with a mirror on the ceiling.

I see them weave  
the floss between  
their fingers.

As they cut my gums,  
I look them in the eye  
so they know  
whose blood  
is on their hands.

**That dog in me**

Clint Bowman

Poetry

was trained  
by my father  
to never bark  
too loud—

and always behave  
when others  
are around.

We used to  
turn our dogs  
into shadows

and fight each other  
on the walls  
of my bedroom.

He would change  
the shape of his ears  
in silence,  
then fully engulf me  
in his gaping palm.

One time,  
I got in a fight  
with a kid  
who barked  
too loud.

That night,  
my dad  
turned out

all the lights  
and told me,

*you need to learn  
how to save your energy—*

*never shine your light  
on an empty room.*

**yellow haze**

Leonardo Chung

Poetry

the puddle of

water bellflower-blooms  
around the yellow boot,  
a child's tiny left foot,

the sky

shoeshines,  
white puffs hanging  
from the azure above,

on cotton candy

torn apart  
by little hands,

kites

their strings intertwining,  
billowing,

glove balloons

we used to inflate  
in the kitchen, while licking  
from the mixing bowl,

slow bike

rides  
on the glinting beach,

carts

hurtling  
down calendula hills,

hearts

like our innocence  
in the echoes of laughter,  
taking

slow

breaths

## A List of Things That Happen After You Start Over

Madison LaTurner

Nonfiction

1. After a few weeks, your mom will miss you. She will send you a picture of some goats she saw on a walk, having remembered how much you like them.
2. You graduate. No one is at the ceremony.
3. You go to grad school. You graduate again. No one is at the ceremony. This time, not even you.
4. Your youngest sibling graduates. You see the photos on accident, months later: your brother in his graduation gear, standing up out of the sunroof of your parents' car, mouth open and arms in the air as your parents drive him through the streets of your small hometown. With this, your parents become empty nesters. Shortly after, you discover your mother has begun ordering life-size cardboard cutouts of your brothers, but not of you.
5. All of your brother's ex-girlfriends start following you on Instagram.
6. You get to celebrate your first Pride Month.
7. You move across the country without telling your family. You don't give them an address. You go an entire week without nightmares. You feel like you can't move, that a layer of your skin has been burned off.
8. The only people you talk to are your new coworkers—at least for now, until something starts to grow again. Your interactions with others become limited to business hours only: nothing after 5:00, no holidays, some weekends.
9. You buy apples. Living in Ohio now, you assume they are from Michigan, but when you get home, the

stickers tell you they are from the same tiny town as your grandparents' apple orchard, 2000 miles away.

10. You get glasses. You learn you have one football-shaped eye, just like your mom, three months after you've stopped talking to her.
11. On a night out, you realize you can let your phone die and it won't matter. No one will need to reach you. According to your call record, no one has tried for nearly seven months. No one will for another year.
12. You stay logged in on your parent's Netflix account. You tweet about still being logged in on your parent's Netflix account. You are logged out of your parents' Netflix account.
13. Your mother forwards you an email with your grandpa's MRI results. Something is wrong with his heart. It's all medical jargon; you have no idea what it says. You try to put the thing together from what few words you understand: viable appearing, delayed, small region, mild, upper limits, decreased, mild, delayed. You will not ask anyone to explain it to you. Your therapist tells you he thinks it's fake. He tells you he thinks it's bait. Later, you see a picture of him vacationing in Mexico, right around the same time.
14. You cry when you realize you cut your strawberries up the same way your mom did. You cry when you realize you store your batteries in the freezer like she used to. You spend exactly as much time on the floor as the movies would tell you.
15. You write the same details over and over and over. You bury them in stories. You figure maybe if you say them enough times you will finally come to terms with them.
16. You will understand, even now, that if something were to go wrong, and if your grandpa were to call

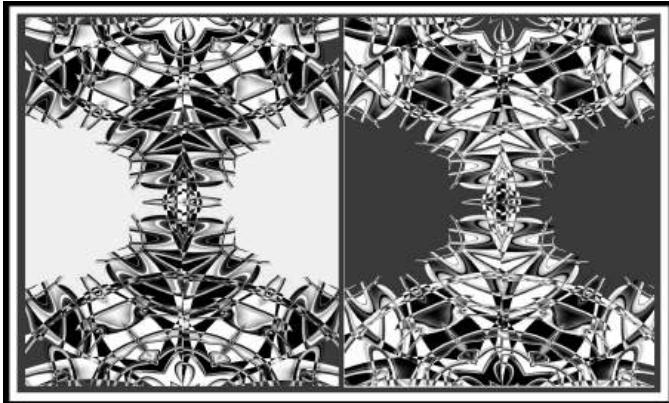
you, you still could not pick up the phone. Your body would not let you.

17. You wait for an apology, for any sign that things will be better if you go back. You tell yourself you are waiting. You tell yourself you are looking for a sign.

**At a Crossroads**  
Edward Michael Supranowicz  
Art



**As Different as Night and Day**  
Edward Michael Supranowicz  
Art



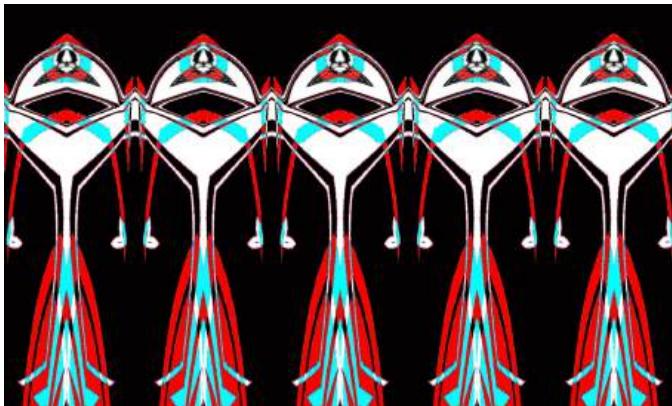
**The Sun Is No Longer Warm 3**  
Edward Michael Supranowicz  
Art



**Red White and Blue Rhythm**

Edward Michael Supranowicz

Art



**Frustrated Frustration**  
Edward Michael Supranowicz  
Art



**Process ≠ Outcome**

Jay Aelick

Poetry

I followed all the steps. Did something funky  
with my hair. Then something funkier.  
When I felt low, I self-medicated with pita bread  
dipped in drugstore wine.  
Fooled around with whoever, got used  
to wearing rings all kinds of places. I dare  
say my fashion sense is better now than Jacob's.  
Every coat colorful. The things I can do with beads.  
So yes, despite it all, I'm still a Christian,  
the way the good part is always coming  
later: all day it's the waiting to be called  
to some home in the evening, become one  
with some flesh. Then, in that home, it's flesh  
doing what it does: facing East, seeing the promise  
of rapture fulfilled again. Always in word. Never felt.

**Skate God**

Jay Aelick

Poetry

You in outfits.

The idea of you

in outfits. Jeans, vintage and baggy,  
maybe. It doesn't matter.

When I say *jeans*, the jeans I imagine  
can't ever be the jeans you'd imagine yourself in,  
and even if they were, they wouldn't fill you  
the way you fill a space and make it sanctuary.

So let it not be jeans, then.

Let it be corduroys, a short beanie,  
nothing. Let it be whatever  
says to you, *I am material*  
*as a skateboard is material:*  
*bent, and yet unbending. Scuffed*

*and scraped but never shedding blood.*

**cure / curse**  
d.S. randoL  
Poetry

& I begin to count the hours until  
we leave this place / we lived together

in the home where our plans changed.  
How it was once formless

clouds and piano keys with no traffic  
signs to speak of / in a foreboding way, it was fun.

How we smiled or stated with bitter teeth,  
we thought we played for another square of cake  
as it dangled from our string lights / to share.

Like the tires on my bike weren't always sheared,  
and we had plans.

Together, we scrawled them on paper,  
before our last first fight & with / the water poured, I  
count the minutes now

until the shutter slips and you awake anew,  
beautiful and strange  
some thousand miles away.

**Forecast**  
J. Fox Bedford  
Poetry

No shelter at the bus stop  
on a grey Saturday.  
Our faces, stung by snow  
gauzy webs of white  
sifting into sidewalk cracks.  
Our words, stolen by the  
gloom as soon as spoken.  
Our mouths raw, not just from the cold.  
Our eyes tearing, not just from the wind.  
We joked, pretended to be cool  
afraid we might never see each other  
again.  
We smoked, feigning nonchalance too  
embarrassed to embrace too  
wildly disparate.  
Your trench coat dorky, too short,  
my suede jacket, too thin.  
I shivered, not from regret,  
your smile, a sneer but  
somehow forgiven,  
understood.  
The bus lumbered, creaked and  
stopped with a hiss.  
our eyes held but  
no kiss.  
Inside they made room for me  
shared the warmth  
not caring about my story  
or how it would end.

**Roses by the Stairs**

William Weiss

Poetry

Still have the flowers she gave me  
On Valentine's day  
Now its neck bent  
Avert the sun's gaze  
The same flowers hung at funerals  
Are used as floats at the parade

Put them in an empty soup can  
No beauty in the vain  
How could I hold something so fragile  
And expect it not to break

Had no heart to throw it out  
I just watched it waste away  
Skin and bone, no beauty holds  
We both knew It'd go that way

Every color turns to brown  
The stalk curls into a frown  
A pedal drops, a tear  
The remanence huddled on the ground

The flower sits in agony, in the confines I allowed  
I heard the song's end, final notes ring out

Thanks for the flowers  
It's the thought that counts  
I watched it split apart  
I guess that's what love is all about

**Pick Me Like a Flower**

Alexandria Rizik

Poetry

Floral deception  
petals sweating with fantasy  
from the rain drops  
held up by a stem,  
oxygenating existence.

Fallen petals  
that cried out to be held,  
to be picked  
because they knew they'd eventually die.

Love like flowers  
wanting to be possessed,  
obsessed,  
sniffed,  
just singularly,  
not in a bouquet,  
just to know how special they are.

**The Spider**  
Noah Berlatsky  
Poetry

The spider's web holds today but not yesterday.  
Its thin legs are splayed in now, not in tomorrow.

It has many eyes  
that all look one way.

But two-eyed humans dart glances everywhere.  
One eye looking ahead, one eye looking behind.

They see webs that aren't.  
Eyes stuck in old threads.

Spider legs move as one down a single surface.  
Human legs sprawl everywhere in all directions.

Ten legs in the past.  
Ten in tomorrow.

And ten times ten in some day that never happened,  
weaving webs of nothing with sticky, slippery hands.

Multiple monsters  
climbing traps of silk.

Would you be like the spider, one-legged, one-eyed?  
The spider would not be you. It sits in itself

and watches. You watch  
with its many eyes.

**No. 4**  
Noah Berlatsky  
Poetry

If you run and run  
you will sculpt a beautiful butt.  
Or so they say. I do not know.  
I do not run, and my butt  
is flat and shapeless. It will not  
even hold my pants up.

The dog wags its tail.  
The robin swishes its tail  
feathers, as it gulps down a worm  
without a rear.  
Dog butts go by without  
a fear, one after the other  
running or not running. Again,  
I'm not. Just lying down  
in my buttless, wormy way,  
wondering like the loamy earth  
looking up at butt heaven.

**The Second Singleness**

Angela Townsend

Nonfiction

In the first singleness, everyone is a true believer. It will happen for you. It will happen when you stop looking. It will happen when you put some elbow grease into it. It will happen online. God is on the phone with administrative seraphs as we speak.

It will happen because it is too uncomfortable to imagine otherwise. Writing a novel is difficult. Writing a novel plot is more difficult. A woman does not end up alone unless she is a cautionary tale. It does not matter if she heals the broken or becomes the preeminent authority on bobcat endocrinology. Her Pulitzer prize or satisfied mind can never be more than side quests. She may cure acne or sarcasm, but the pages will break from the spine if her hand is not held.

It will happen because it always happens. Desires to the contrary are hazardous and will be ignored. Arguments to the contrary are invalid and will be disproven. Townspeople will assemble an exhibition of unsavory characters who were nevertheless chosen. The congregation of the concerned will glue together dioramas in defense of the dogma.

Their ringed fingers form winners from clay. Look! Those who belch and scratch and wear sweat shorts have been awarded spouses. Are you any less worthy? The chosen may serve Hamburger Helper every night. Some have sagging mufflers or cowlicks. No flaw is too jagged for this juggernaut. Behold the wan and wartful, married. It happened to them. It will happen to you.

In the first singleness, you can never try too hard. There are apps and hashtags at your service. Technology has torn the veil. Reasonable people may no longer

disagree on this point of doctrine. Behold the faces of the available, presented like cardigans or analgesics. Filter by size and fabric, but not too much. Widen the margins. Do not pick the anchovies off the pizza. Add to cart.

Zoom. It happens. Folded hands break into applause. The white dress is the blue ribbon. Aunts and deacons salivate down the steps. If there is cause for concern, they caulk it with fondant. You made it, and that is what matters. If the story led here, it was well told. The people are happy, though this is not their primary reaction. The people are relieved. The people were afraid. The architecture of the cosmos buckles if a figurine stands alone. You were a threat to metaphysics and commerce. The first singleness is Visigoths at the gates of the subdivision.

The threat will not return, even if the sun drops like a tetherball and lands on your diamond. The second singleness is not the first. You are permitted to play solitaire once you have learned hearts. No one believed you the first time, when you said all you wanted was the moon. But on the first day of the second singleness, no one will take it from your arms.

In the second singleness, everyone is agnostic, or rather they tell you what they truly believe. It may happen again, or it may not. They could not tell you before, but individual wholeness has been documented.

If you agree not to tell the children, they will open the secret passageway. The wall spins. This is the second library. Cherubim with flaming swords guard these storybooks. The plots go off-road, doubling back to confuse the trackers. The plots are plural. You wish they told you before.

They leave you unsupervised for the first time. You will need years to absorb this material. Mathematicians have discovered whole integers with unhyphenated

names. Women have prepared pies for themselves and chased auroras alone. Men have tended gardens and neighbors without achieving liftoff. Luscious people have planted their own flags on top of the cake. They have not peaked yet. The barbarians were a bluff. Civilization survived. One is also a primary number.

In the second singleness, love has elbows. They smile like macaroni at the full cast. They make room for the untethered and unauthorized. They sharpen into pitons to pierce the ice. The shoebox is too small. The structure splits like ill-fitting pants. The alphabet sneaks down the turret by night. The Breath is waiting at the bottom to give life to clay.

**After Time**  
Arlene Tribbia  
Art



**One Way**  
M.R. Mandell  
Art



**AA Meeting**  
M.R. Mandell  
Art



**My Brother's Last Summer Day**

M.R. Mandell

Poetry

*for Carey*

The window is open. The curtains  
still. There is no breeze.  
His bike leans against the wall.  
On the table beside the bed, his glasses  
are folded, lenses gazing up.  
The lights are off, yet  
the room faintly glows.  
A fly picks through crumbs  
missed by his broom the night  
before. His eyes are closed.  
In his hands, his old Dodgers cap.  
The one he carries with him  
wherever he goes.

**My Brother's Ten-Speed Bike**

M.R. Mandell

Poetry

leans against the wall.  
The handlebars, curled  
like horns of a ram,  
are wrapped in black  
tape to hide the rust.  
The front tire, flat,  
the back wheel, gone.  
The seat dangles  
off its pedestal, a dead  
spider is coiled in a broken web  
between two spokes.  
It's the last piece left  
of my brother's life,  
and I have been tasked with moving  
it out of his home. They suggest  
I toss it in the trash, or drop it  
at the junkyard across the street.  
But I won't. I hope  
to find an enthusiast  
with a soft hand, a keen eye.  
Someone to wipe the dust,  
wind the chain, hitch the saddle.  
Someone to pump air into rubber,  
oil the gears so they'll shift  
like silk. Someone to kick  
the stand, grip the bars.  
Someone who will hold it  
steady as they glide the hills  
of Palos Verdes and Hollywood,  
who will speed up PCH,  
from Venice to Malibu,  
who will thread the curves

from Big Sur to Monterey,  
then stop in Santa Cruz for a beer  
and a rest. Someone who will  
take the journey my brother  
dreamed and planned,  
but never began.

**Moonstruck in Red Bluff**

Taya Sanderson Kesslau

Poetry

One by one  
they wink into light.  
Billion-year-old lives  
shining down  
from their points  
in the ordered stories  
of our histories.

Beacons of navigation  
for the seaworthy,  
invitations to wish  
and dream.

Some of our kind  
even imagine life  
up there among them,  
our own bones made  
of their very dust.

Of the Earth  
from which we rise  
and fall  
generation after generation  
in war and excess—  
love.

The stars are perfect.  
Not us—we are here  
as specks in the wind.

**Community**  
Taya Sanderson Kesslau  
Poetry

Airplanes overhead,  
ferrying their seated cargo  
from this airport to that one.  
There is business to be done,  
families to hug, home to return to.

Neighbors all up early.  
Rechargeable batteries accompany  
the trimming of hedges, lawns mowed.  
Commanding demand of a jackhammer  
not so far away chiseling at some regret.

Even the birds in the yard,  
a raucous symphony of sound.  
Scoldings, community chatter, hymn song.

So much noise everywhere  
in this earth life.  
So much to announce, confess,  
proclaim.

If I sought the quiet  
where would I go?  
Nowhere  
here.

**i see poems**  
Marisca Pichette  
Poetry

in color—  
distillations of  
peonies encrusted with  
salt

gems petrified  
on stems like  
red liquorice

twisted vines  
veins, thorns  
blue like his tears.

when he lies down  
in a canopy of nettles  
soup in his heart—  
chicken noodle, tomato,  
barley

sprouts in spring &  
dust in autumn

a jaundiced sun  
cowers  
behind fingers of maple  
crucified against  
a burning sky.

**cassiopeia, in spring**

Marisca Pichette

Poetry

morning air – we find  
3 songs:

*peace*  
*searching*  
*midnight*

astride a butterfly of pure imagination,  
calling auroras watching, worried

conditions bed you into our requiem arms.

autumn, autumn  
flips only once  
to grow love in days draped  
unsaid, brewed beneath Saturn:  
a farewell sleepson.

singing list:

*obeisant*  
*fairest*  
*rise*

symphonic vines curling tendrils  
that don't know where they're going

we voyage, lamenting cloaked beginnings  
reflecting distant adventure  
rolling over blocks, blue ridges  
building an equinox

ashed in meteors breaking, brave—our wisest end.

from far horizons to distant worlds  
to present futures  
and dancing pasts.

we gather misery, mist,  
musical mountains tripping us night  
after night, until all we see:

fireflies singing summer anew.

**Naturaleza Muerta con Plate of Nachos**

Daniel J. Cecil

Fiction

He is considering the possibility of this affair when the waiter drops an order of nachos between them.

All too aware of how he might look if he were to reach in first, he hesitates. She, however, leans across the table, plucks a chip, and swoons when the sour cream activates her tongue.

“I just can’t help myself,” she says. “I live to devour.”

In the same way the chips, smothered in cheese, are bad for him, he knows she is too. It’s the gold safety pin as an earring. It’s the twirl of her scarf around her neck like a limp helicopter blade in the heat of summer. It’s the way she asks the waiter to turn down the music, as if *she* were the only person in the world. And for a moment, *she is*. A darling manic pixie. An avatar of a 90’s rom-com.

As he watches her tilt her head back to catch a piece of dangling cheddar, it becomes increasingly difficult for him not to compare the complexities of a possible affair with her and the layered stack of nachos waiting for him to breach its cheesy dermal layer. He considers this surface and its evenly distributed fixings and how underneath it all might lie disappointment. A soggy bed of corny despair.

It’s a stupid metaphor, he realizes, but apt. Cliché layered atop his own 40-something cliché-ness.

His phone buzzes—a text from his wife. She is checking in to learn how his evening is going. When will you be home from work?

He swipes away the notification, worried that the woman fingering avocado from the edges of the plate

and suggestively sucking it from her fingers might notice this intrusion of reality. But the spell is already broken. Not for her, but for him. Suddenly, the naked audacity of the moment, sitting at this restaurant and eating nachos—or rather, watching the woman who isn't his wife *consume*—is revealed to be as absurd as the metaphor he'd made earlier of the soggy leftovers, now exposed.

He excuses himself to catch his labored breath in the bathroom. There, he looks up the definition of metaphor on his phone.

“Metaphor: A figure of speech that compares two unrelated things.”

A mirage along the horizon. A false pretense. Jesus, he sighs, understanding finally how long he'd been smothered.

**Reflection of Identity**  
Sophia Liu  
Art



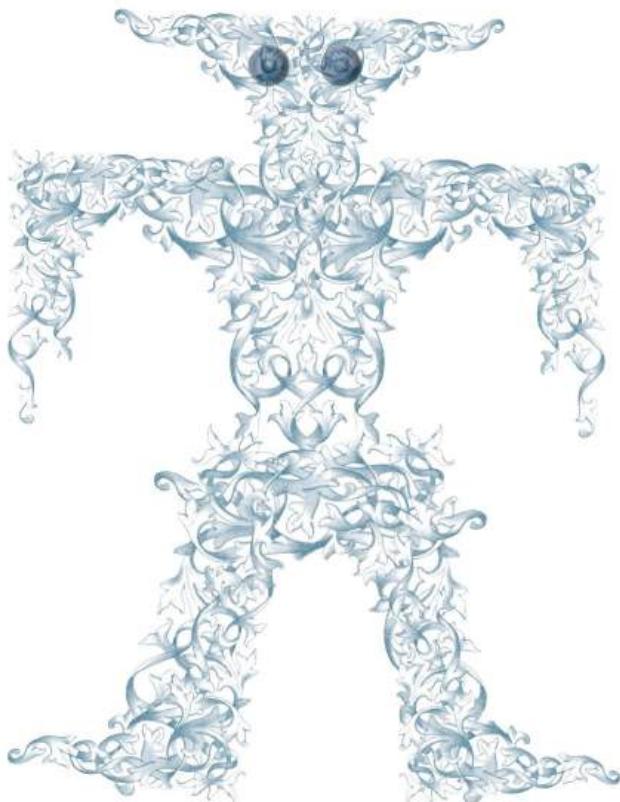
**The Gift That Offers a Slipstream of Delirium**  
Bill Wolak  
Art



**The Sudden Bewilderment That Silk Attracts**

Bill Wolak

Art



**Cicadas**  
Hanna Webster  
Poetry

July again. I lounge  
in a friend's garden, sipping  
Sav Blanc, marveling  
as fireflies puncture humid air.

Trees vibrate with that signature  
sci-fi hum, spawn screaming,  
migration celebration.

As heat deepened each day, I wondered,  
Would I hear them? Last year was nomadic,  
fluttering, breaking  
like a fresh egg.

One day saturated  
in silence, the next, teeming  
with that sound. I want to bottle it,  
starting signal, soundtracking  
my courage to leave him. Dragged  
  
my pink couch up apartment steps,  
didn't call, instead, found new corners  
to disappear into, buried  
in anonymity.

Last week, I submerged  
my mortal body in aqueous chlorine, ate  
a friend's homemade cobbler. I slept, enveloped  
in a lover who speaks  
slowly, reliable  
as a sunrise.

Yes, I'm thinking of abundance  
while creatures scream.

I'm picturing chrysalises, when a cicada falls  
at my feet, as a sacrifice, as delineate.

I know to bury it  
and move on into my one life.

**Sunbasking in May**  
Hanna Webster  
Poetry

Lilac commas litter sidewalks  
like confetti near Mellon Park,  
rhododendrons exploding  
in violet. They have lived  
fast, and I want to be bright  
like that. I practice

being carefree in newly shorn grass,  
grandma's baby afghan under one arm,  
watch bumblebees stuff their faces into clover.

I transmute into a sunbeam,  
jettison pain. I launch  
it into space. I drift unmoored.

I let cosmic heat lure me. I stay  
human and sunburnt.

Connor calls from Earth and worries  
I'm going to get my heart broken  
again if I keep sleeping in T's bed  
and naming it joy. Not

only joy, but love.  
I've met many people who can't love  
me.

I let the call drop  
into oblivion until grievances deplete  
into a single, unintimidating point.

Finally alight and laissez-faire, I resist

letting my cells mutate  
into beasts I can't tame. What if I meet  
betrayal when I was only looking  
for ease? I'm stupid  
and understandable, he says.

I surrender  
my neck to the radiation.

**Sonnet for the Horizon**

Zeke Shomler

Poetry

I've always been in love with horizontal lines: horizons, windowsills, wings outstretched. I love the sliver of light that appears just before you close your eyes and I'm afraid of the dark that comes after. I'm afraid of the past but the past is not a line it is a dog scratching and whining at the back door. A mouth that spits you out onto the sidewalk. I want to remake the world, I want it to be all horizontal lines and no angles I want it flat so I can see everything at once. I'm in love with totality because it's incomprehensible—not with the thing itself but the sheer scale of it, the mass that forces gravity to action, the flickering of sunbeams straight across the sky.

**I Put My Gender in a Cardboard Box**

Zeke Shomler

Poetry

and toss it from the third-floor window.

I drip candlewax

onto its back

and it moans. My gender pirouettes  
in a music box that only plays  
a tune I've never heard and eats  
dark weeds for lunch.

It reaches out its hand: I twist  
the arm until it breaks then set  
the bone.

I zip my gender up into a little yellow dress  
and tuck it into bed when it gets dark. I feed it bread  
like a duckling, always hungry.

I hold it underwater  
and it sinks.

**About Dinner**

Sam Moe

Poetry

You think I am hilarious, a liar, a jar of salted caramel and an entire milky-hued egg. I take my heart away from you and put it inside heavy whipping cream, sifted flour, someone else's breakfast table, a sheet of sugar so sheer it could be glass, glossy white wine, place the blood amongst the olive oil and hothouse tomatoes, let the past swim in mason jars, she serves parsley-topped doughnuts because who doesn't like savory, you'd sooner toss sweetness out the window, inside me is a memory. My father and my mother in a room with (in no particular order): a broken lamp, discarded pillows, bits of food, pieces of paper, later I sat in the court room, doesn't matter, the memory is blurred, an anchovy, a garlic clove, a caper, a hole I dug in my flesh and called it a non-problem, I am nothing to you but a little fire in the middle of a table where you notice everything else—the water, the headaches, the boiled jelly, macerated strawberries then blueberries, the angle at which dessert is poured into small golden bowls, her eye color is magnificent yet I am the sea, but I don't have a single feeling, my heart is nothing but filo dough, an evaporation, a little grey fish, a rind, they scooped out the insides of my stomach and called it forgiveness, I gave away bone marrow and tendons, you say survivor and I say salada, as in, tu si quieres salada, todo conspira, yo se que tu sabes but what's the point if I'm nothing more than hollow, I am subtle in your dreams, seaweed, shining fish scale but no body, little blue side effect, a sheet the color of a robin's egg, am empty cage where once sat a heart. You tell me I am a little drama. Not yours. Please withdraw the heart from its hiding place and serve immediately with butter.

**Instructions for Taking Care of Roses**

Sam Moe

Poetry

No matter what, a little bit of blood. The doctor says your skin is so smooth. She wears bright self-tanner and apologizes for smudging some on your wrist. Is this how it goes? Thinking about swaths. Trying a ring on for size. This could be a patch or a grid. Inability to think clearly. April seeps into the earth, May doesn't grow. Everything reminds you of red. No sleeping ever again. Can't trust anyone. Definitely sit in the tub. Leave your bracelets in the foyer. Let the cobwebs in. Oh my god, you belong in the steam of the shower and nowhere else. You could eat the drain, slide the silver stopper into your mouth like a candy. At it again. Don't hit your head on the spout. Soon your mother will have to wash hospital goo from her hair. When you were younger, she always did the best job combing through your strands. You didn't hit your head one time. There is something wrong. Something like a thrum. No one listened. Tell your friend while she paints her house. Say *so, so sorry*. Say *sorry about all that sorry*. Sorry about the blood and the love and the clove cigarettes. You're doing it wrong again. Rusted drain reminds you of death. Couldn't leave the stories if you wanted to. You survived, but at what cost. You're dehydrated again. Don't fall asleep at the wheel. Remind yourself to soap your skin.

Time  
Sam Moe  
Poetry

1.

In the dream, we arrive at my father's house. Dusk, car glazed in rain, all the trees have returned, he is happy to see me and there are plates of carefully curated meats sliced so thin they become translucent; a sheet of sirloin, the ribeye billows like a pillowcase, you admire the marbling, there is a pattern of light over his face and no anger flickers behind his eyes, his third daughter is not the result of an incredible rip in the thigh. You happened to me and there was no deciding. We touch hands on the butcher's block as my father swings his large knife, slightly rusted from sitting out in the rain, and each time I think he'll touch our wrists, he misses, and the metal makes a dull thud when it meets the surface of the wood.

2.

I know, I know. You hate lying. You know I build little homes inside homes in the pit of reality and all the walls are soft as sticky buns and all our hearts are eggs, sunny-side-up. I wake in the afternoon and the sun has formed a circle on the floor. My father is snoring from the other room and his wife has become his roommate. In the dream, you are eating pie. Maybe apple or blueberry, never cherry; we have the same sweet tooth; you can't stop memorizing my mannerisms. The problem isn't that I care. If you must know, I'm terrified of love. I live in a murky space, between clarity and sincerity. I am honest then I am a stomach pit. I know your footsteps. It's endearing you know I'm scared.

3.

Pale yellow kitchen. Newspapers with coffee stains and words circled in blue ink spelling out nothing. Pine nettles and snow. I rode in someone else's car earlier and turned to my left only to find the seat empty. Should I tell you again a story about how everyone leaves. Sorry I lied about the pastry. God, you should see the river in the backyard when it's coated in ice. You should sit by my side on the back porch as I untangle the knot of my mind. Don't need you to memorize the pattern. This isn't a space for perfection. Make me a cup of coffee. Say you're not too tired to try.

**Tiger Lilies**  
Kimberly Bollard  
Fiction

He was upset to see they chose tiger lilies for the funeral. “Tiger lilies smell like death,” he said, not knowing what death really smelled like. He watched as we knelt at the coffin. He watched as we cried, each pained gasp inhaling a new whiff of tiger lilies. “This is terrible,” he said, only referring to the wretched plants, and not to our tears. As we moved to the other room, a slideshow played. Each photo that slid by showed a happy man. “If only I knew there’d be tiger lilies.” He’d yet to realize what these photos were for. I reached for the box of tissues and he grabbed my hand. “You hate it too, right?” But I could not hear him.

**See the man's shoulders**

Michael O. Zahn

Poetry

Don't ask me to pen  
a poem that bawls  
he loved a good woman  
and now she is dead.

Grief's in the body,  
not in the brain.  
Words miscarry;  
the body displays.

Words fly away,  
pain perseveres,  
see the man's shoulders  
sag under his tears.

**Volunteer swim coach: A tribute**

Michael O. Zahn

Poetry

He walks with two canes,  
he's fragile and fat,  
the kids on the team  
lug his extra-wide chair,  
gently help him sit back.

But his voice still has sinew,  
he bellows tough drills.  
With sandpaper words  
he strives to propel  
even the slackers,  
to make all excel.

Once, long ago,  
he was slim and swam swift.

An Adonis in butterfly,  
flaunting gods' gift!

The water was whipped  
by his lunges and plunges!

Sprays of ribbons  
were showered by judges.

Ribbons fray.

Butterflies die.

Bodies betray.

The gods can deny.

What's left of Adonis  
you'll find at the pool  
in his extra-wide chair,

a pain-drenched old grandpa who's fighting despair  
by bequeathing his dreams to the ripening teens  
on the high-school swim team.

**Swimmers' requiem**

Michael O. Zahn

Poetry

No more water chill on skin,  
no more fear of loss  
or joy of win;  
they are on the longest lap of all

The infinity pool  
to which they have been called  
has lanes that stretch forever  
on the longest lap of all

No more will heartless pace clocks  
tally up their faults.

Achievement records frozen now,  
on the longest lap of all

Oh, you splendid living swimmers,  
delight in every splash  
in sunshine and in squall  
for someday you will join them  
on the longest lap of all

**OIL SPILL**

John Grey

Poetry

Oil slick looks and smells like home-brew.  
Cajun fisherman's out on deck,  
scar down his right cheek.  
knife tucked in his boots.  
Nets flutter in the gulf wind.  
Coastline's so dead  
there's no point dropping them.  
His eyes can't close for anger.

From inlet to shore,  
the air's as alive  
as the sea is buried black:  
the cuss of crabbers,  
the flap of washed-up fish,  
the tears of kids  
whose weekends used to summit  
on the bayou with their fathers.

That night, plenty of home-brew  
to drown plenty of sorrows.  
Not a drop spilt.

## A BAR IN WEST VIRGINIA

John Grey

Poetry

There were real men then, he says,  
and they went down the coal-mine  
with nothing but hard-hats, Davey lamps,  
heavy boots and picks and shovels.

Of course, he includes himself among  
those hardy specimens of manhood,  
along with the many and their  
unpronounceable Polish and Slovak names.

Some were in the war,  
continued to make sacrifices  
long after the fighting stopped,  
black lungs, throat-hacks like blue jays,  
to make a better life  
for the coming ungrateful generations.

Between beers,  
he cusses out ballplayers, rock stars,  
for the money they make.  
Like to see them at the coal-face,  
he sneers.

Cool as the liquor is going down,  
he's just getting warmed up.  
The company's the target  
for his fattest, greasiest lump of bile.

I've heard a thousand times  
how they shuttered the mine,  
took off for Palm Beach,

left behind the ones who made them rich  
but were now scraping to get by.

By closing time,  
his head's on the table,  
and the bartender's struggling  
to get him to his feet.  
He's said his piece.  
He can only act it out from here.

**Baby Shower**  
Angelle McDougall  
Poetry

let his first cries  
wash over me  
releasing my held breath

let me drink in  
the depths of his flawless face  
bruised and wrinkled  
from escaping liquid quarters

let the stream of sweet milk  
flow into his exquisite mouth  
slaking his thirst  
and my needed relief

let me inhale the earthy  
dampness beneath his chin  
and nuzzle the drizzle of fuzz  
on his soft round head

let me ripple my fingers  
along the bones of his back  
like waves on the ocean  
as we rock  
skin to skin  
heartbeat to heartbeat

**How to Wash Wool**

Angelle McDougall

Poetry

She collects sheep's wool in spring  
just like her ancestors did  
carries it in gunny sacks  
to the old log-framed farmhouse

Takes the galvanized wash tub  
fills it with water and sets  
it on the cast iron cookstove  
still warm from baking bread

Like her mother taught her  
she sits in the rocker  
removes thistles, sticks, and straw  
from every whit of wool

Then takes the bulky basin  
to the wood-railed veranda  
adds coal oil to the water  
which makes her nose crinkle

She washes the wads of wool  
and sets the clean clumps to dry  
on the woodpile by the porch  
and hopes the sun will bleach them

Next morning her children arise  
point through the kitchen window  
and laugh at the fluff-covered yard  
*Look Mom, the clouds fell down from heaven!*

**Cucumber**  
Bernadette Geyer  
Poetry

Green sun on the tongue  
Thick skin pared thin

By summer's jaw  
Sour creamed

And raw raw raw  
I will bruise you

For a pitcher or pint  
I will dice and blend

Slice and sprig with mint  
All I ask is that you

Leave me wanting  
In return I will soup you

And love you  
With all my maw

**Priest | Older Sister**

Nina Richard

Poetry

Being your older sister was like being a priest  
Aspiring to benign authority,  
Yet always impeded by the words of our father,  
Only a human playing God.

Cloaked in everlasting forgiveness,  
Robes uncreased from outstretched hands,  
I find myself marveling at your fingertips  
Imprinted in the wood of the confessional booth.

You were Judas at my table,  
And I sit to feast with you.  
I look down and concede  
I would always wash your feet.

**Adopting Cody**  
Lizzie Brooks  
Nonfiction

I've adopted a five-foot-eight, foul-mouthed teenager named Cody. He's my son's new best friend and he's got no idea about the adoption,

because it's all in my head.

Cody has parents.

They've taught him:

- Being home alone at 3am is a regular occurrence.
- If no one comes to pick you up after school, you walk.
- Alcohol is the only constant.

So yeah, I'm Cody's mom now.

Don't say it. I know I'm really not.

We recently moved from the plains to the mountains. Here, the leaves turn colors that trees back home only see in sunsets. While the beauty is awe-inspiring, it's the brokenness of this exclusively self-soothed child that takes my breath away.

You can know something exists, but until it's sleeping on your couch, you don't feel the same shattering of your heart.

Like most days, Cody's over. A mystery person has once again dropped him off. One thing's for sure, the kid's connected. Cody's ability to assemble a network of young adults with vehicles—who actually say yes when he asks

for a ride—is astounding. It's a testament to Cody's likability and resourcefulness.

And that's just it. Cody's like a character in a movie. He talks a blue streak and chuckles as the raw reality of his thirteen years pours from his mouth and hits your bones like a bumper car into a side rail.

This month, Cody's called his mom every day.

She hasn't picked up.

I nearly double over when I hear this fact. I ask Cody if he has my number in his phone and he says yes. I tell him to use it if he ever needs anything. He laughs it off, but I can see he knows I mean it.

Cody lingers longer than the other kids do.

In the kitchen, I heat water and dip in a tea bag. I swirl in extra honey because my guess is he won't drink it unless it's sweet. Upstairs, he's playing the keyboard. He yells down that he only knows, *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*.

It's February.

Trying not to spill, I hand my son his tea and ask Cody if he wants the cup I've made for him. He says he's not sure—he's never had it before.

Placing it on the dresser, I notice a small rip in the too-light-for-winter coat he's tossed on the floor. I grab it and the scent of cigarettes and artificial cherry wafts through the air.

I use a whip stitch. It's not perfect but I know that doesn't matter. I drop lunch money in the pocket and drape the coat over the banister outside my son's room.

Through the door, a choppy version of *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*, plays. I sit and listen as Cody's fingers fumble for the right keys while he apologizes for his lack of proficiency. I'm surprised he sticks with it until the song's nearly flawless.

My knees crack as I stand to leave, giving away my vantage point on the stairs. The boys cackle at the fact I was eavesdropping.

Downstairs, my shoulder brushes against my son's ski coat and I nearly topple the coat rack.

I catch it mid-air and all I can think is how grateful I am.

I almost donated that keyboard.

## Contributor Bios

### Jay Aelick

Jay Aelick is a birdwatcher, disc golfer, tarot reader, and sometimes even poet. Their work has previously appeared or is forthcoming in *The Journal*, the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum, *Okay Donkey*, and elsewhere. They are one half of the St. Balasar University English Club podcast, where real critique partners at a fake university workshop the books the internet had written off.

### Efrat Baler-Moses

Efrat Baler-Moses is a New York-based multidisciplinary artist, lecturer, and educator with a BFA in Sculpture and Painting from the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem, Israel. Her work redefines painting through 3D sculptural pieces and reliefs, challenging spatial conventions and traditional viewing habits. A recipient of the American-Israeli Culture Foundation grant, she was recognized by Philip Leider, founding editor of *ARTFORUM*, as one of the most promising local artists of the 1980s. Efrat has exhibited in over 70 group shows and 7 solo exhibitions, with her works held in private collections.

### Joie Bauman

Joie Bauman is a scatterbrained, 20-something, freelance whatever from Central Jersey. When she is not creating, you can find Joie coaching gymnastics, working as a mental health professional, partaking in various athletic activities, or napping with her dog son and chinchilla daughter.

**Noah Berlatsky**

Noah Berlatsky (he/him) is a freelance writer in Chicago. He tried to be a poet and failed spectacularly and took twenty years off and now he's trying again. In the middle there he wrote a book about the original Wonder Woman comics and raised a daughter who's a more successful writer than he is, so it wasn't a complete waste.

**J. Fox Bedford**

J. Fox Bedford resides in Texas with her husband and horses on a small ranch where she writes fiction and poetry. Her short stories have won awards in Writer's Digest and San Antonio Writer's Guild competitions and are published in *Amarillo Bay* and *Wicked Shadows Press Anthology*. Her poems have appeared in *Blue Villa* and *Front Porch Review*.

**Kimberly Bollard**

Kimberly Bollard is a playwright, satirist, and actress based in NYC. She has written for several satire sites such as Reductress and McSweeney's. As a playwright, she is fascinated by irony and the small acts that form and break human bonds.

**Clint Bowman**

Clint Bowman is a writer from Black Mountain, North Carolina. He is the cofounder and facilitator of the Dark City Poets Society—a free poetry group based out of the Black Mountain Library. When Clint isn't writing poetry, he is most likely leading a hike, river cleanup, or trail workday somewhere in the Swannanoa Valley.

### Christine Brooks

Christine Brooks holds an M.F.A. in Creative Nonfiction from Bay Path University. She has three books of poetry available and her next, “inside the pale” will be released in the fall of 2025. Her essays have appeared in The Seattle Times, HuffPost, and Chicken Soup for the Soul. She lives in the Pacific Northwest with her opinionated dog, Clancy, and her favorite ginger, Franklin.

### Lizzie Brooks

Lizzie is a mom, yoga teacher and writer whose work is published with Beyond Words Literary Magazine, Yoga International, Elephant Journal and more. Her children’s work is represented by Jen Newens of Martin Literary Management. Insta: @LizzieBrooksOfficial

### Cash Bruce

Cash Bruce is a first-year student at UC Riverside from Corona, California. He co-founded and served as vice president of his high school’s literary magazine, and is now seeking to write for himself. He enjoys frequenting the cinema, expanding his vinyl collection, and reading what others have to say; he believes that everything he writes is tongue-in-cheek.

### Gray Davidson Carroll

Gray Davidson Carroll is a transfemme writer, dancer, singer, organizer, cold water plunger, community-based researcher, and (self-proclaimed) hot chocolate connoisseur hailing from Brooklyn by way of western Massachusetts and other strange and forgotten places. When not reading or writing, you can typically find them drinking copious amounts of coffee at all hours of the day, or otherwise pedaling a bicycle down forgotten backroads and singing at the top of their lungs.

**Daniel J. Cecil**

Daniel J. Cecil is a writer and teacher in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. His work has appeared in *The Rumpus*, *The Heavy Feather Review*, *The LA Review of Books*, *Barrelhouse*, *Miracle Monocle*, and *the Stranger*, among others. Daniel is the founder of *Honing House*, an English-language, community-centered, and empathy-led educational resource built for writers around the world.

**Leonardo Chung**

Leonardo is a writer from a small town in Illinois. In this modern world, he finds it amazing he lives with well water, a septic, and flying corn husks.

**Florence Chien**

Florence Chien is an artist and diaspora author of fantasy and historical fiction from Toronto, Ontario. Outside of writing, she is a practicing lawyer of commercial real estate.

**Herbert Colson**

Herbert Colston is an amateur artist and poet, who is an academic of figurative language on the side.

**Holden Davies**

Holden Davies is a writer, musician, and amateur puppeteer based in NYC. Their enamel pin collection spans two entire denim jackets. When not writing, they are trying to befriend every dog in their city.

**Donna Burke Esgro**

I was born in Santa Monica, California and brought up by seagulls, eucalyptus trees, and the local library. My most recent poetry can be found in the newly released

anthology of ecopoetry Flora/Fauna. When I am not wandering the City of Angels looking for my wings, I teach Language Arts and Nature Journaling.

**E.C. Gannon**

E.C. Gannon has lived in New Hampshire and Tallahassee, Florida. She is very interested in the mundane. She owns multiple pairs of cowboy boots.

**Bernadette Geyer**

Bernadette Geyer is the author of The Scabbard of Her Throat (The Word Works) and editor of My Cruel Invention: A Contemporary Poetry Anthology (Meerkat Press). Her writings have appeared in Barrow Street, Bennington Review, The MacGuffin, Westerly, and elsewhere.

**Denise Gilchrist**

I am an emerging poet and seasoned technical writer currently specializing in cell therapy medicines for cancer. I hold a degree in horticulture and live in southeastern Pennsylvania with my husband and border collie. My poetry has been published in Smoky Blue Literary and Arts Magazine, Antler Velvet Arts Magazine, Tiny Seed Journal, and Grand Little Things.

**John Grey**

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published in New World Writing, North Dakota Quarterly and Lost Pilots. Latest books, “Between Two Fires”, “Covert” and “Memory Outside The Head” are available through Amazon. Work upcoming in California Quarterly, Birmingham Arts Journal, La Presa and Soul Ink.

### William Heath

William Heath has taught at Kenyon, Transylvania, Vassar, the University of Seville, and Mt. St. Mary's University. His poetry books include *Steel Valley Elegy*, *Going Places*, and *Alms for Oblivion*. His novel *The Children Bob Moses Led* won the Hackney Award and a history, *William Wells and the Struggle for the Old Northwest* won three distinguished awards. In 2022 Hiram College recognized him for his Lifetime Achievement. He lives in Annapolis.

[www.williamheathbooks.com](http://www.williamheathbooks.com)

### Mark Hurtubise

After four decades, he is creating again like a pregnant bird tripping on a twig. Recently, his offsprings have appeared in such locales as *pacificREVIEW*; *Ink in Thirds*; *Tampa Review*; *North Dakota Quarterly*; *Aji Magazine*; *Monovisions*; *Monochrome*; *Stanford Social Innovation Review*; University of San Francisco, *Alum News*; Bard College, filmed interview; and Art Impact International exhibition.

### Adam Katz

Adam Katz (he/him) has been writing and teaching writing for a surprisingly long time. You can read his (and many other people's) writing on his website, [2RulesofWriting.com](http://2RulesofWriting.com). You can also find his work in *Academy Forum*, *Capital Psychiatry*, [jewishfiction.net](http://jewishfiction.net), a previous issue of *Door is a Jar* Literary Magazine, and elsewhere. In his spare time, he enjoys collecting hobbies.

Taya Sanderson Kesslau

Taya Sanderson Kesslau believes that beauty will save the world. And poetry, and cookies, and kindness. She has been a homeschool mother, the CFO of a music business and practices as a Reiki Master. Her first book of poetry is called *Seven Year Silence* and she lives in Bellingham, Washington with her husband and their many 4-legged creatures. To read more visit [RootsPressPrinting.com](http://RootsPressPrinting.com)

Madison LaTurner

Madison LaTurner (they/them) teaches literature at William & Mary College and received their MFA from Miami University. Their prose has appeared in Puerto Del Sol, The Argyle, Ghost Orchid Press, and elsewhere. Their play "Transfer" was produced by Love Creek Productions. You can find them across social media platforms @maddylaturner.

Sophia Liu

Sophia is a senior at the Harker School in San Jose. She is a Scholastic Arts national gold and silver medalist, first place winner of the Never Such Innocence 2023-24 art contest, and published in a few literary and art magazines. She is her school's Art Club co-president, art editor/staff artist for *The Expressionist* and *Fleeting Daze*, and editor-in-chief for her school's economics journal. Outside of art, she researches childhood development in rural China at SCCEI.

Gregory Luce

Gregory Luce is the author of *Signs of Small Grace*, *Drinking Weather*, *Memory and Desire*, *Tile*, and *Riffs & Improvisations*. His poems have appeared in numerous print and online journals, and in several anthologies, including *Written in Arlington* (Paycock

Press) and *This Is What America Looks Like* (Washington Writers Publishing House). In 2014 he was awarded the Larry Neal Award for adult poetry by the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities. In addition, he serves as Editorial Board Chair for The Mid-Atlantic Review and writes a monthly column for Scene4, an online arts journal. Retired from the National Geographic Society, he lives in Arlington, VA, and works as a volunteer writing tutor/mentor for 826DC.

#### M.R. Mandell

M.R. Mandell (she/her) is a poet based in L.A. When she's not writing, you can find her exploring the city, camera in hand, Golden Retriever, Chester, traipsing along beside her. She's had work published in a few fantastic places, and is excited about her debut chapbook, *Don't Worry About Me* (Bottlecap Press 2024).

#### Angelle McDougall

Angelle McDougall is a neurodivergent world traveler, retired college instructor, mother of sons, graduate of The Writers Studio at SFU and enjoys chronicling adventures shared with her author husband.

#### Skyler Melnick

Skyler Melnick is an MFA candidate for fiction at Columbia University. She writes about sisters playing catch with their grandfather's skull, headless towns, and mildewing mothers. She longs to be wandering down a hallway in a white nightgown with only a flickering candle to guide her.

**Sam Moe**

Sam Moe is the author of *Cicatrizing the Daughters* (FlowerSong Press, Winter 2024), *Grief Birds* (BS Lit, 2023), *Heart Weeds* (Alien Buddha Press 2022), and the chapbook *Animal Heart* (Harvard Square Press 2024). Her short story collection, *I Might Trust You* is forthcoming from Experiments in Fiction (Winter 2024). She has been accepted to the Sewanee Writer's Conference (2024) and received fellowships from the Longleaf Writer's Conference, the Key West Literary Seminar, and Château d'Orquevaux.

**Marisca Pichette**

Marisca Pichette is a queer author based in Massachusetts, on Pocumtuck and Abenaki land. Her work has appeared in *The Razor*, *Door is a Jar*, *Room Magazine*, *Flash Fiction Online*, *Necessary Fiction*, and *Plenitude Magazine*, among others. She is the flash winner of the 2022 F(r)iction Spring Literary Contest and has been nominated for the Bram Stoker, Pushcart, Best of the Net, Elgin, Utopia, Rhysling, and Dwarf Stars awards. Her Bram Stoker and Elgin Award-nominated poetry collection, *Rivers in Your Skin, Sirens in Your Hair*, is out now from Android Press.

**d.S. randoL**

d.S. randoL (they/she) is a delicate flower, a slam-dancer on the east coast. As well as poetry, they also have an eerie acoustic EP titled "Guitar Knots" out on all streaming platforms. They are forthcoming in *Passages North*, and have published work at *Crab Apple Literary*, *Don't Submit!*, or more comprehensively, through [linktr.ee/dSrandol](https://linktr.ee/dSrandol).

**Nina Richard**

Nina Richard is a master's degree student and a writer. Living in Knoxville, Tennessee, Nina spends nights working on her craft so in the day she can take her beloved naps. She enjoys reading and convincing her analytical brain that creativity is not scary.

**Alexandria Rizik**

My name is Alexandria and I'm an author originally from Scottsdale, Arizona, but I currently live in Los Angeles, California. I come from a large, Armenian family. My love for writing began when I was a young child: my aunt bought me a journal and told me to write a story in it, and the rest is history.

**Burcu Seyben**

Burcu Seyben is an asylee academic, playwright, director, and writer of creative non-fiction from Türkiye. Since 2017 Seyben has been rebuilding her life and writing in the US. Her creative non-fiction has appeared in The RavensPerch and Door is a Jar Literary Magazine. Her plays in English include The American Letter (2023), A Beauty Mark (2018), and Three Scoops of Ice Cream (2017).

**Zeke Shomler**

Zeke Shomler is an MA/MFA candidate at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. His work has appeared in Cordite, Sierra Nevada Review, Folio, and elsewhere.

**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, The 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.

#### Eleanore Tisch

Eleanore Tisch is a poet and educator from Chicago. She is currently working towards her MFA in Creative Writing and Environment at Iowa State University. Her chapbooks "Salad Box Poems" and "Water : Write : Wave" can be found at Bottlecap Press and Dancing Girl Press, respectively. Her work can also be found in upcoming installments of Ghost City Review, Bacopa Literary Review, and the Sonora Review.

#### Arlene Tribbia

Arlene Tribbia is a writer and artist. She writes poetry and fiction and makes portraits about otherworldly beings because she's fond of discovering characters who work to solve the larger cosmic riddles of the universe. Website: <http://arlenetribbia.com/wp/bio/>

#### Angela Townsend

Angela Townsend is the Development Director at Tabby's Place: a Cat Sanctuary. She graduated from Princeton Seminary and Vassar College. Her work appears or is forthcoming in Arts & Letters, Bridge Eight, CutBank, Lake Effect, Paris Lit Up, Pleiades, and Terrain, among others. Angie has lived with Type 1 diabetes for 33 years, laughs with her poet mother every morning, and loves life affectionately.

#### Hanna Webster

Hanna Webster is an award-winning journalist and poet with an M.A. from Johns Hopkins University. Her work

has appeared in Bellingham Review, Fifth Wheel Press, Frost Meadow Review, and elsewhere. Her chapbook, “I’m So Glad I Stuck Around for This”, was longlisted for the 2023 Palette Poetry Chapbook Prize. She lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. X: [@hannamwebster](https://twitter.com/hannamwebster); Insta: [@ivory.daydream](https://www.instagram.com/ivory.daydream)

### William Weiss

William Weiss is a writer hailing from Pasadena, California. He works with disabled adults to help expand their capabilities and possibilities, and as a musician, he loves the rhythm behind words and the diverse dialog of interpretation poetry brings. You can often find William brooding over a line under his desk, sitting on his desk, on the floor, in a crowded elevator, or really any place that he has a second to think. He is a recently published poet featured or forthcoming in The Broadkill Review, Wingless Dreamer, Oprelle Publications, and a semifinalist for Philadelphia Stories’ National Prize in Poetry.

### Margaret Wilson

Margaret Wilson is a NYC based artist who has studied visual art since early adolescence. Beginning her studies in graphite and then moving on to mediums such as woodworking, acrylic, oil, and oil pastel, she eventually began and continues to concentrate on painting with ink.

### Cat Winters

Cat Winters (she/her) is an award-winning author of seven ghostly novels and a picture book biography. She returned to her childhood love of poetry while undergoing cancer treatments at the beginning of the pandemic—a transformative experience. She can be

found working in the theaters of Portland, Oregon, or wandering the woods near her Pacific Northwest home.

### Bill Wolak

Bill Wolak has just published his eighteenth book of poetry entitled *All the Wind's Unfinished Kisses* with Ekstasis Editions. His collages have appeared as cover art for such magazines as *Phoebe*, *Harbinger Asylum*, *Baldhip Magazine*, and *Barfly Poetry Magazine*.

### Michael O. Zahn

Michael O. Zahn, a Milwaukee native, lives in Poinciana in Central Florida. His poem "Volunteer Swim Coach: A Tribute" was a finalist in the 2022 Robert Frost Foundation international competition. Born in 1947, he was a reporter at the Milwaukee Journal. He is trying to restrict his reading to books that are at least 100 years old. "I have a lot of catching up to do before I die," he says.

**Door Is A Jar Staff Bios****Maxwell Bauman****OWNER/ EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / ART DIRECTOR**

Maxwell studied Creative Writing at Wilkes University and earned his M.A. in Fiction and M.F.A in Publishing. He founded Door Is A Jar Literary Magazine in 2015. He is a contributor to Chicken Soup for the Soul, and wizard with Legos. Website: [maxwellbauman.com](http://maxwellbauman.com)

**Corinne Alice Flynn****POETRY / DRAMA EDITOR**

Corinne Alice Flynn 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, majoring in African-American Studies with a minor in History. A 2013 inductee into the National Academy of Young Preachers, Rev. Grate studied at Wake Forest University School of Divinity, and he 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 to higher education, where he serves as the Assistant Vice President for Development at Jarvis Christian University in Hawkins, TX.

## **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.

**Do not send in writing or art that was created using Artificial Intelligence. Submitting work generated by A.I. technology will be considered as plagiarism.**

You will receive an acceptance or rejection letter from our editorial staff within 6 months from the day of your submission.

We accept simultaneous submissions; however, please notify us immediately if your work is accepted elsewhere. If accepted, please withdraw the piece from other publications.

We reserve first initial publishing rights, and the rights reprint right to use quotes or pieces for promotional use. We do not pay contributors at this time, but we will send out a contributor copy.

Please note that submissions that exceed word counts or maximum amount of material will be disqualified from consideration.

Submissions are only accepted through our website. Any submissions sent directly to our email will be deleted without response.

For the complete and most up-to-date guidelines on how to submit to our magazine visit  
**[doorisajarmagazine.net/submissions](http://doorisajarmagazine.net/submissions)**

**Door Is A Jar Newsletter**

You can sign up for the Door Is A Jar Newsletter  
to receive updates from our publication.

**DOOR = JAR**

<https://www.doorisajarmagazine.net/newsletter>

**Door Is A Jar YouTube Channel**

Visit our new YouTube Channel to see past reading events and hear our contributors share their work in their own words



<https://www.youtube.com/@DoorIsAJarMag>

### Subscribe to Door Is A Jar Literary Magazine



#### Print + Digital

4 print issues mailed to your home every year AND Access to past digital issues of Door Is A Jar.

\$39.99



#### Digital

4 issues every year AND Access to past digital issues of Door Is A Jar

\$9.99



#### Gift

Share the gift of creativity with someone you love today

\$39.99



<https://www.doorisajarmagazine.net/subscribe>