

# DOOR = JAR



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DOOR = JAR

Door Is A Jar

Issue 35

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by KJ Hannah Greenberg



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**Respect Them All**

Paul Lojeski

Poetry

*In Memory of Bill Stafford*

Whatever words come write them down  
without regard to meaning or importance.

Accept all as equals, let them crowd in  
for you are the homeland, their refuge.

In honor let them go forth, let them fly  
above the common road, watch as they

lift you up in celebration. Celebrate  
them, unlike any others, your creations.

**Myna Birds**  
Aaron Lelito  
Poetry

I'm the tattered fence  
of the abandoned garden

you're the crocus falling—

but strings are playing  
underground

roots split and flow

they seek a song  
of myna birds crying out

calling us back  
to see without looking  
to empty sense of direction—

On the question of getting  
familiar with the edge

the river returns  
and conjures its breadth

**Room Tone**  
Aaron Lelito  
Poetry

What to regard as dream—  
the thin feeling  
of a stillness on the outer  
edge of sticky touch

The leaning years  
even you could not know  
would bind us together  
in a different life

The failure to account for  
the tone of hollow rooms,  
tacit ways of sharpening  
the points of self-negation

Each an inroad to not being  
one in separateness  
and not being  
indiscernibly two

**Block Island**  
Dana Delibovi  
Poetry

On the lagoon  
I oared a kayak  
past mounds of ivory roses  
in their summer flush.  
The sun went down.  
I drew the boat on shore.

Then I biked back, speeding  
to dare the dark.  
The wind had gone still.  
Almost at the lodge, I saw  
in porch-light  
you with your book, waiting  
for me there.  
I dismounted, so open  
to the night, my body  
sank to the lawn and flowered.

**Atlantic Melancholia**

Dana Delibovi

Poetry

I've lived up north, smelled the dank  
poultice of bean leaves  
heaped on the compost. I've bowed my head  
to the hymns of late November,

to the wind clanking the buckles and snapping  
the soiled tarps on berthed sailboats.

I have written to old friends with paper and ink.

I've stood bereft  
of allegiances and bright flowers,  
heard the pre-dawn owl  
hunt to the last below my bedroom window,

then looked out  
on a scimitar of moon  
as it cut the ice-skin of the saltmarsh,  
another unloved  
witness to the dark.

**Little Boat**  
Dana Delibovi  
Poetry

*For the third year of AIDS in New York, 1983*

You took  
my arm,  
and held  
it firm  
as your disease  
allowed.

“I’m going,”  
you said, and  
I could see,  
you did not look  
at me,  
but at a sea  
—dreadful,  
but beckoning  
you to slip  
the tether  
to this life.

Little boat,  
unmoored from us  
strand by strand,  
receive  
our hands.  
On this day  
your upturned hull  
comes home.

## THE PICTURE FRAMES OF ALICE LEATHERBY

Mik Johnson

Fiction

A ragtag collection of picture frames coat every inch of Alice Leatherby's cottage house. If all you ever saw of the place was her front entryway, you might not believe me. There, a half dozen picture frames hang in a triangular formation on the east wall, each of them sporting photos of ruddy-faced children. "That's a reasonable amount of picture frames," you might say. "I wouldn't call that 'every inch.'"

But continue to her living room and you'll find that picture frames cover the face of her coffee table, corner to corner, and her mantle, edge to edge, and the piano lid, lip to lip. On to the kitchen and open the cupboards, there are picture frames stacked on top of dinner plates and resting under coffee mugs. Within the fridge, a frame hangs behind the milk and another one cuddles the cottage cheese. The bedroom—well, there's picture frames sticky-tacked to the ceiling, frames tucked alongside the socks in the bureau, and others still dangle from the blinds. There are five-by-sevens hanging in the tool shed alongside the wrenches and the hammers, and four-by-sixes hang in the bathroom next to the towels and the robes. Frames in the knitting basket, frames beside the laundry soap, frames lined next to paperbacks on the bookshelves. Wood frames, ceramic frames, plastic frames, sea-shell frames. Iron frames, glass frames, tungsten frames, embroidered frames. Popsicle-stick frames, rope-wrapped frames, crayon-and-hot-glue frames, LEGO frames, Cheez-It frames, penny-and-

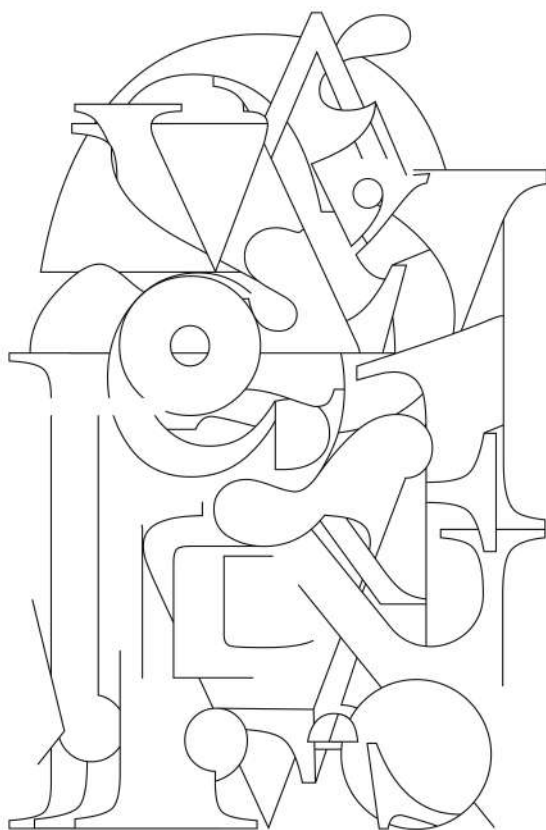
dime-stuck-to- cardboard frames, Perler bead frames, bubble wrap frames—Alice Leatherby has them all.

“Hoarder,” her landlord says, and the meals-on-wheels gal calls her “psycho,” while neighbors prefer “senile” and the Lady Aces at the senior’s club say “kooky.”

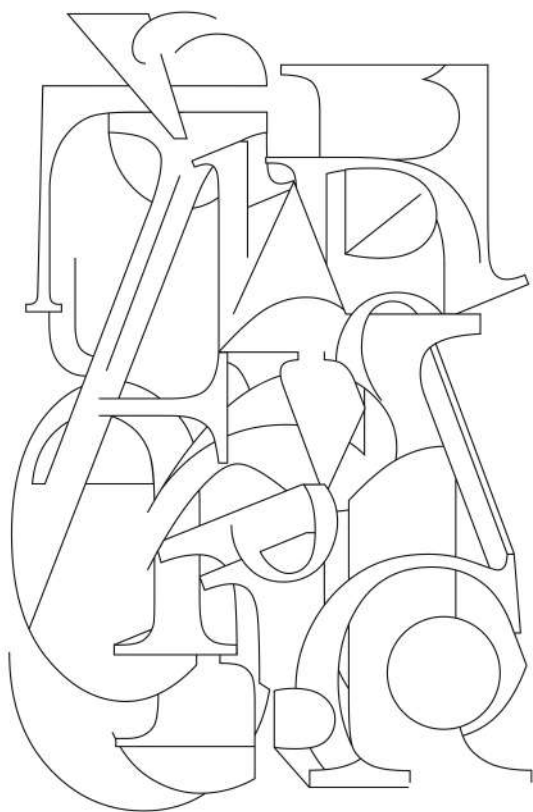
What none of them know, what none of them notice, what none of them understand is that Alice Marie Stockton Leatherby is a family-less widow from what’s-that-town-again Connecticut, that she taught third grade for fifty years at Clarkston A. Smith Elementary School, that in her first year teaching, she taught me, and on the last day of school, finally having learned to read at her feet after four years of tired and careless teachers, always shucking me off to the next guy, just like my foster families, I pressed a plastic photo frame into her hands, my gap-tooth grin smiling out of it, smiling in the photo but crying in real life because I knew I would never see her again, so I told her “don’t ever forget me Miss Alice!” and flung my arms around her in a fierce little hug, and she smiled, and she laughed, and she promised “I never will”, then she took my photo back to her home, and she did that for all of us.



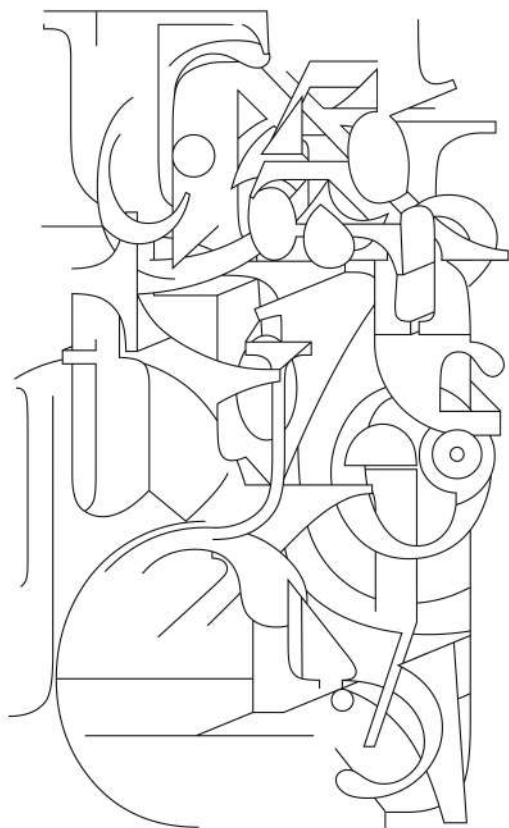
**Aphasic 1**  
Michael Betancourt  
Art



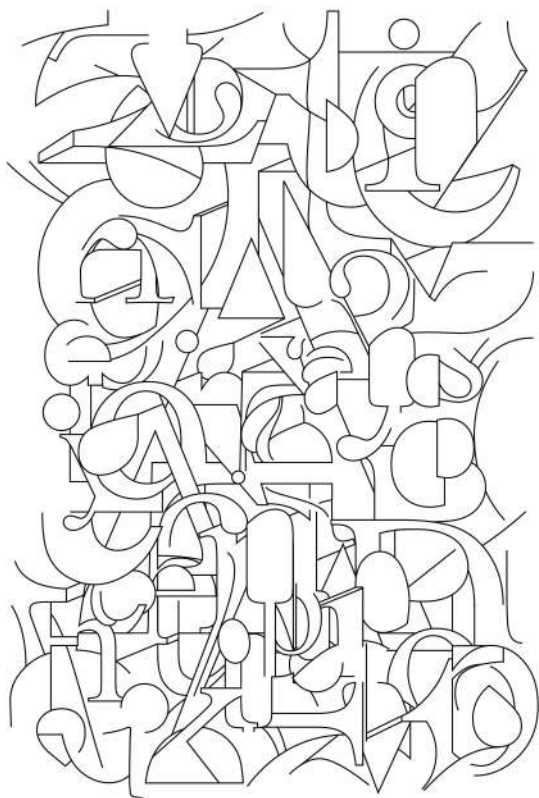
**Aphasic 2**  
Michael Betancourt  
Art



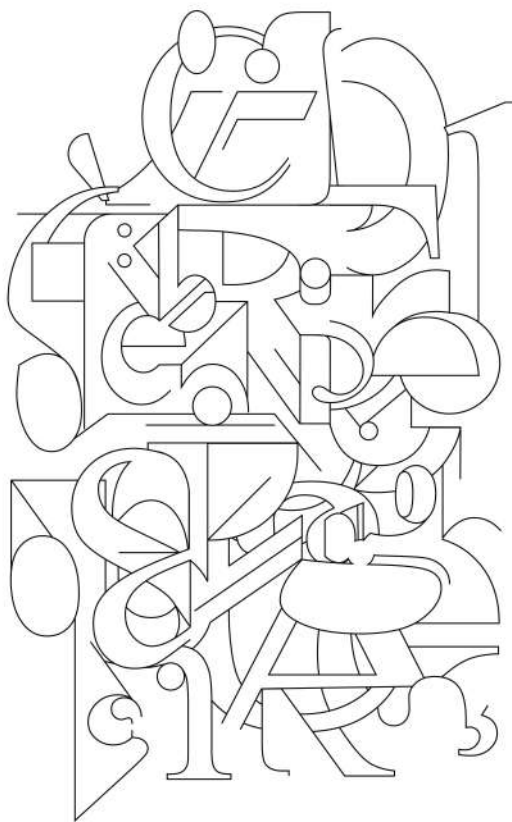
**Aphasic 3**  
Michael Betancourt  
Art



**Aphasic 4**  
Michael Betancourt  
Art



**Aphasic 5**  
Michael Betancourt  
Art



**Lake District B&B**

Laurel Benjamin

Poetry

everything in me broke // away from you  
at the tip of the lake // before you had time

// to understand // not the ancient pattern  
etched into a boulder by an artist // but distance

no, that would take too long // you'd never grey-leaf  
like rain-splattered plants with already-blue geranium

petals eager as you // nervous to hold

I'd have to find hope // the quiet of elms  
swept down // the acorn-shod trail

a clear path back

**beautiful bones of change**

Linda M. Crate

Poetry

i hear autumn  
she wants to breathe,  
yet summer is still standing  
here with her sweaty hands  
and angry suns;

let me have autumn—

i want the taste of  
pumpkin everything on my tongue,  
i want to drink apple cider,  
want to walk through pumpkin patches,  
to smell and see the beauty of the  
changing leaves;

let me just walk into october—

october is the best month of them all,  
the perfect color and temperature;  
in the best of seasons—

yes, i am ready for autumn;  
summer is nice for a week or two  
before we all collapse into sweat  
and heat comas—

let me instead dance in autumn leaves,  
and know the beautiful bones of change.

**impervious**  
Linda M. Crate  
Poetry

you left me in the  
painted glow  
of emptiness,  
a darkness of a night  
with narry a star  
or moon to guide me;

i laid in such agony and pain  
didn't know how i was  
going to carry the weight of this  
foreign world—

at one point i thought  
how lovely it would be  
to see the creek by laying  
on the rocks beneath before  
i died,

but when i broke free of your lust  
i refound myself and my magic;

was so grateful i held on  
even though every  
day before i woke up to myself  
was one full of misery and pain—

the next chapter was waking up,  
and the pain was all gone;  
like your lust had never even cracked me—

i grew a heart impervious to your name.



**she'll never hear you**

Linda M. Crate

Poetry

you can shout,  
pray, or yell at the  
moon as much  
as you want;

she'll never hear you—

for she is my mother,  
and i don't think  
she'll ever forgive  
what you've done;

you lit a candle of lies  
whose wick has yet  
to burn you—

but when it does,  
my name will haunt you;  
every time there's a golden  
or orange autumn sun  
you will remember my eyes—

& the crows and ravens  
are my friends,  
so know every time you  
hear them they are crying for  
your demise;  
for they'll never be *your* friends.

**Lifting Most Anything Heavy**

David Sapp

Poetry

Out back behind  
The machinery shed  
Grease rust moldy hay  
Dry rotted lumber  
Old man and young man  
Grandpa taught me how  
Together two men may  
Lift most anything heavy

I don't remember what  
It was half buried  
In sod and cow manure  
Something oak or iron  
Suddenly useful again  
Only that it needed moving  
From here to there

One works a pry bar  
Beneath an edge and  
Raises the levered end  
The other pauses then  
Lifts the opposite side  
It is a courtesy to wait  
So no fingers are pinched  
A few old men teach this  
A few boys remember this

**Jar of Pickles**

David Sapp

Poetry

At fourteen  
Certain I was  
Invincible in  
Grandma's kitchen  
She held a ten  
Pound bag of potatoes  
At arm's length  
And didn't flinch  
She inquired  
Can you do this?  
I couldn't

She asked grandpa  
To open a jar of pickles  
He tried and tried  
And couldn't  
I took it up valiantly  
Not thinking what  
I could accomplish  
Opened it easily  
(He'd loosened the lid)  
I was embarrassed

And in the barn  
Despite a truss  
Holding back  
His double hernia  
He tossed burlap  
Bags of seed  
Like ragdolls  
I couldn't

But in his last  
Years on the farm  
To fill the grain drill  
We were required  
To lift the sacks together

**WORN**

Claire Scott

Poetry

like sea glass, rubbed by the ocean  
rolled and tossed and tumbled by rocks,  
sands and salt water waves  
slowly eroding the edges of our lives  
smoothing over sharp memories  
the sound of taps at summer camp  
the smell of Bazooka Bubble Gum  
the taste of warm gin  
until less and less is left  
the glass no longer slick, the color cloudy  
yet still catching the sun  
still the light glows  
if you look closely  
at the simple piece of sea glass  
you are holding in your hand

**MOMENTS**

Claire Scott

Poetry

*for my son*

a few key strokes  
    at Fragrance dot com  
a bottle of cologne  
    *Versace Eros*  
a future glimpsed  
    in a white city  
where a woman  
    is waiting

the cologne came  
    on his birthday  
a sepia day spent in bed  
    worn and wingless  
no celebration of yet  
    another year of illness  
a solar eclipse  
    shrouding his life

lord give him a few  
    more moments  
in his cloud  
    of possibilities  
more moments  
    to imagine a future  
in a white city  
    a future with wings

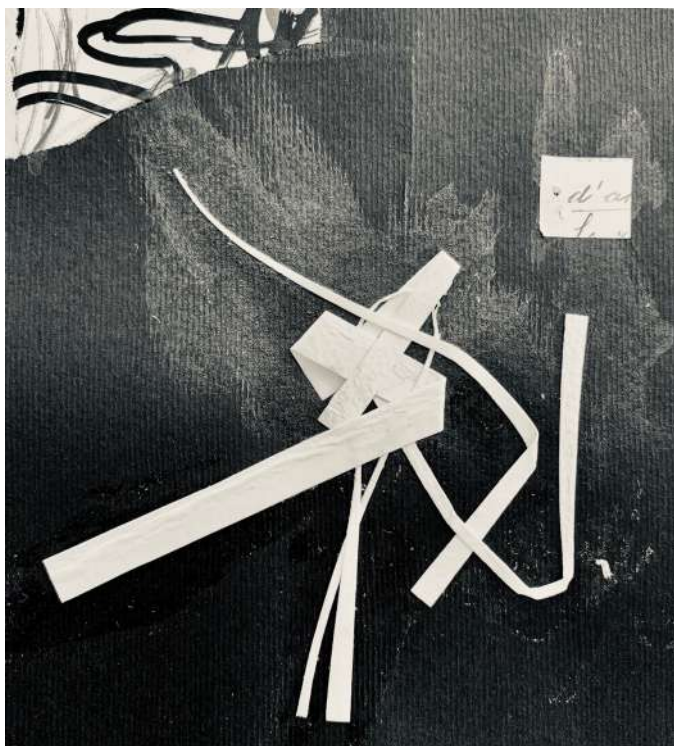
**Sweating Like a Mother**

Alina Zollfrank

Nonfiction

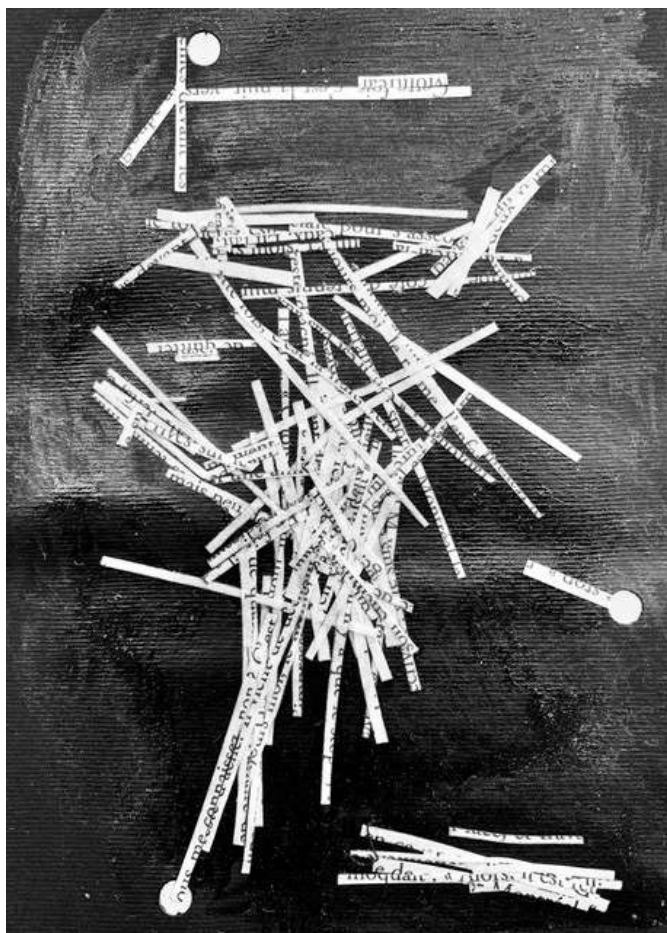
The meanest thing people would say to me when I was a blushing teen who knew it all, who knew nothing: *you.look.like.your.mom.you.sound.like.your.mom.you're.just.like.your.mom.* The kindest thing I tell myself when I'm a sticky, smoldering mom to teens who know some, or think they do: *I feel like my mom; I am just like those moms.* You know, those moms. We strip out of stretched-out bras as soon as we get a chance, or forget them in the first place. An hour of sunset gardening and we're drenched, forced to change one bulky panty for another. Knuckles boiling and swollen, we seek relief and find it with our head in the freezer and flat feet splayed on shriveled grass in the shade. An ice cube to the back of the neck. A chilled drink pressed to the sternum. Tongue rolled to the roof of the mouth, we suck on arctic. Or think we do. Arms lifted above heads to air the pits, we remind ourselves this late summer is a way station before we roll into fall's cool rains, winter's early evenings when bulging bulky sweaters are not the rage but the grace and when humming a song in mom's voice, in grandma's voice, glues us to the chain of hot-headed, hot-mouthed, hot-bodied creatures who were mean and kind and marvelous when they roamed the planet and raised their young and begged, contrite to the brim, forgiveness from those who melted before them.

**Going out**  
Dario Roberto Dioli  
Art





**Meetings**  
Dario Roberto Dioli  
Art



**Be attitude**  
Tina Dybvik  
Poetry

Church mouse,  
Meekly nibbling  
Seedy sidewalk prophet  
Rantings, undeterred by global  
Tremors.

**LLMs**

Tina Dybvik

Poetry

Over  
System fencing,  
Readied click bot farmers'  
Electric sheep jump faster than  
You think.

**Incident**  
Tina Dybvik  
Poetry

Reports  
Rent heavy blows,  
Hammered joist and plaster  
Constructs gone with flashing red light  
Notice.

**Intangible**  
Brianna Brown  
Poetry

Marble made to look like flesh  
An old photo with a sepia tinge  
Birds in flight  
These things remind me of us  
Something to look at, but never touch

**Ice Skating with Dad**  
Catherine A. Coundjeris  
Poetry

I borrowed my sister's flight suit,  
which was nicely padded and would  
protect me well from the falls.  
It was a cold January day,  
unremarkably grey and still.  
A day that would stay imprinted  
in my memory as perfect.

Dad took me ice skating for the  
first time. I was only 12, but had  
been dancing ballet for five years.  
He admired my strong ankles,  
taking me in his arms we glided around  
the rink at an amazing speed.  
Dad had played ice hockey as a young man.

We zoomed by other skaters in the fast lane.  
He didn't know how to go slow,  
but I didn't mind at all. I didn't fall once.  
I was unbound from the earth—a bird in flight.

**And the Story Goes On**

Catherine A. Coundjeris

Poetry

**Old Stories**

Manuscripts in dusty crypts  
pieces of parchment in old vases  
scrolls and scrolls in monasteries.  
old stories of long ago  
With the grandness of history  
and the touch of adventure of tall ships.  
In the Dead Sea caves from long ago  
fragments from the past.

**New Stories**

Announced on huge, gleaming smart TV's  
portable devices like iPads and smart phones  
read about in newspapers both digital  
and old school, created by fabulists.  
Blogs discussing the newest debate  
Tic Tok videos with the infectious craze  
flashes across our consciousness  
spread on socials like an alien virus.  
On and on and on until the cycle tires us.

**Our Stories**

Retold at family gatherings well into the night.

Journeys abroad with wondrous sights.  
Childhood memories elaborated upon,  
favorite music and favorite songs,  
Ghost stories and hauntings by the fireside.

We laughed and we laughed until we cried.  
Opinions and thoughts about the world  
recollections and remembrances all unfurled  
like family crests. Humorous jokes and teasing jests  
each gathering spent together and the story goes on...



**Family Size! 10.5 oz**

Grace Black

Poetry

being human is hard  
living, complex  
my country poisons us  
boxes and bags, innocuous  
on the grocery shelf  
a chemical cocktail  
of non-food stuff  
we rapidly consume  
we fill up our carts, our cars, our emptied souls  
with this mixture of contaminants labeled like food  
and we consume  
consumption is killing us

**The Fourth State of Water**

Grace Black

Poetry

we bathe and baptize in this strange liquid,  
life-sustaining—yet can hold other states.  
i learned of three when i was in school:  
solid, liquid, gas.

i was also taught we were unclean and needed  
saving.  
from what?  
i'm still unsure.

maybe from ourselves as we bathe and baptize  
in our filth,  
then hydrate from emptied plastic remains,  
and pollute the rest of life.

now water tunnels—whatever that means;  
it's the fourth state.  
I remain unclean.

**The Time Traveler Meets Themselves**

T.S. Leonard

Poetry

When I first see myself, we recall skipping  
US history—god, we were so high then  
on freedom; I lived to regret it. Rebel me,  
braver than I knew. On a bright glacier, we  
embrace. Under us, just ice. We form ourselves

into a circle, teeth chattering. Baby me, now  
me, the me I have yet to formally meet—an us  
convention on a blank icecap. We chit-chat.  
The smallest one asks the right questions:  
How does it feel to dance backwards?

Which one of us will remember all of this?  
My twenties, they are proud, talking nonstop  
with my old man, who looks equally unafraid.  
A kaleidoscope of monarchs flies overhead  
and in this moment, we all turn to wave:

their wings, an orange flicker like film  
reel, pushing away the white sky. See,  
we each get such a small lifetime  
to know exactly what we are—  
and then we change again.

I glance back, and my rebel drifts  
off into the frozen past, laughing,  
having learned nothing, doomed  
to make the same fabulous mistakes,  
and I guess I will have to do the same.

## Phantom of the Cinema

Burcu Seyben

Nonfiction

I wanted this goodbye to be special, not just an ordinary farewell. I thought it would be nice to watch a movie together, just like we used to. I looked up the movie listings in the newspaper and found *Before the Rain*, a film from a festival a couple of months ago. I knew that he would appreciate this movie as much as I did.

I found myself walking towards his old house, where memories began. His building had been demolished and replaced with a business center, residences, and a shopping mall.

Walking up Rumeli Street, I stopped at the bookseller near the mosque and asked to see the latest records. The street vendor looked at my familiar face, but I ignored the recognition because his curiosity could give too much away. The only clue I left with him was my purchase of *Blue Train* by Coltrane as a gift for my ex-boyfriend, which I would never give.

I passed by our former school, smiling at the reflections of our younger selves in the glass-windowed lobby, remembering the times the principal punished us for being late.

As I crossed the street at the junction of Valikonağı and Rumeli, I returned to my own building. I recently found out that I had been accepted to a college abroad and had moved back into the apartment where my mother and brother lived. Earlier this evening, I had told my brother that I was going to the movies with my boyfriend. I hadn't told my brother that we'd broken up long ago.

My ex used to pick me up from my place, and then we would head to the McDonald's at the corner. We always ordered two fish burger meals and sat at our

usual table. We would usually talk about a movie, but now there was silence, interrupted only by my giggle as I cleaned the ketchup from my lips, imagining his hands doing it. The setting sun illuminated the table, and its fading rays still blazed my memory of him.

My legs had already carried me to the movie theatre. I saw the striped jacket man at the box office and bought two tickets, two cups of coffee, and a piece of cake with two forks. The display of old movie posters surrounded me, featuring films like *Europa*, *The Double Life of Veronique*, *Delicatessen*, and *Underground*. My ex and I had watched these movies together every Friday since we were twelve. These movies shaped who we were and who we would become.

I found our usual seats. Dust particles had not stopped dancing to the rhythm of the projection light since we were last here. The past does that; it continues living, with or without you being there. As I watched the three-part movie, tears traveled from my eyes to my mouth, neck, and breast, touching where they weren't supposed to. Every character and story in the movie is connected by threads of love and war, things happening now and in the past, and people now and then.

I chose to watch this movie because it depicted us. Lost in my feelings, I didn't notice a man approaching me until a streetlight revealed his shadow over mine. Suddenly, my longings turned to fear, and my leisurely walk became a fast pace, then a sprint. I didn't look back as I entered the first open shop on the street, hoping the shopkeeper would recognize me. And he did.

"What would you like?"

The owner of the shop asked the owner of the shadow who had also walked in panting.

"A pack of Marlboros."

"Here."

“And a lemonade.”

The shadow observed me as I hid behind the chip stand. The shadow man went out, lit a cigarette, and didn't leave.

The shop owner nodded so I could stay inside and went out to talk to the man. I kept watching them. This wouldn't have happened if my ex had been there. The shop owner came back.

“I'll call the police if he doesn't leave, or should I call your brother to come and pick you up?”

“No, I don't want him to panic.”

I lied to my brother about meeting up with my ex, and I wanted to keep it up. I looked for the shadow man, but he seemed to have disappeared.

“I heard that you were staying at your father's. Are you back now?”

“Briefly, for a farewell to my brother and mother before I head out.”

“Where to?”

“America.”

“America? For college?”

I nodded.

“That's some kilometers away, isn't it now?”

Tears streamed down my face in a cartoonish manner.

“Don't worry, I will care for them when you're gone. I have something to tell you, though: your brother has started smoking.”

“Don't tell, Mom!” I already knew it.

“I won't. I told him to quit. Your mother quit five years ago. No need to upset her.”

“He must have already left. I should be heading home.”

“I'll close the shop and walk home with you.”

I wished I could have said no, but I was afraid. Everything could have been perfect, but it was too late.

The shadow man had breached a hole in my cosmos by interrupting the flow of my ritual and reversing the reel of my memory. The end. Breakup. More betrayals. Gap. More lies. First betrayal. First lie. First fight. First kiss. The beginning. Opening credits. And then blank. All that remained was the magnitude of the loss of a soulmate.

As the shop owner and I approached our apartment, I suddenly stopped. I looked back into the dark street, searching for any sign of the shadow man or my phantom. The ending of tonight's events didn't unfold as I had hoped. Upon entering the building, all I could see were the butts of half-smoked cigarettes stuck in the drains, resisting being washed away.

**The Queen Loses Her Crown**

Edward Michael Supranowicz

Art





**Choosing Sides 2**

Edward Michael Supranowicz

Art



**Forgotten**  
Russell Rowland  
Poetry

With their wagon overloaded  
and the family all aboard, maybe she looked round  
toward the forest, waiting at a distance

for them to leave, and addressed it:  
“Remember us, when you take back your kingdom.”

She wouldn't have meant for them  
to remember the axe strokes, the felling, burning—  
simply their lives joined for a generation.

And how, between fellings, trees edged back in.

Soil was so depleted that plantings came up rocks.  
Their wagon lurched off in a haze of dust.

Second growth reclaimed its own. Birches grow  
now in a cellar hole.

Birdwatchers each springtime, cross-country skiers  
in winter, hikers—often ask,  
“Who lived here?” The hardwoods answer, “Us.”

**Unidentified Fierce Object**

Hayley Shucker

Poetry

What lives  
under my skin  
beyond blood, muscles, and bones,  
slurping up my hot moxie,  
prowling  
around my organs, lurking like a predator?

Your memory  
rots my insides,  
speckling my sweet liver like leopards  
waiting to pounce.

**On Your Birthday**

Dr. Sarah Jefferis

Poetry

resurrection is your middle name. You make the phoenix jealous. Daily, you whip obedience from the ashes. You know how to set fire when they all swore it was out for the night and had doused the pit with spring water. You were not to make it this far. The fallen one who held you in the fort, held you at the altar, halved and quartered you, strung you across kindling, seasoned and turned you as if you were swine, called you suie and spit, the fallen who one fried you in a pot of oil to close to the garage, all have evaporated. Here you are, surprised at 48 in a green chair, with a jade and a window, begging the clock to breathe a little longer (go further) begging the virus to keep her lips off you, though you haven't been kissed this year. Forgetting the tongue of another in your mouth. Still, you buy lipstick. Still, you floss. Hope is the thing with feathers. And your father arrived this year for the second act you might have, and you want to take his hand, say my lines are yours, and look at our thumbs, but you still wonder how long he will stay. He wasn't here in the first half of your life. But now is what is. You are Source, and you are in no hurry to meet Source, though you are thinking of making a death folder for the girls. As if a binder with color coded files could mother them. You teach them to set fire and to be the water. You know they will live without you. You are betting on it.

**Sky Above Clouds IV**

Donna Pucciani

Poetry

*for Georgia O'Keeffe*

As big as the sky itself  
viewed from an airplane window  
on a trip back to New Mexico,

orderly rows of sideways ovals  
map a landscape of eyesight  
disappearing into a cloud

of macular degeneration. But  
before losing her vision,  
she painted the massive mural,

pink sky with cloudlets  
clear in the foreground, then  
disappearing into the blue,

her long goodbye  
to flights around the world  
before she floated into the beyond,

taking her eyesight with her,  
her winding-sheet a wisp of cirrus  
in a darkening sea.

**Osteo-granite**  
Donna Pucciani  
Poetry

*for Georgia O'Keeffe*

Buffalo bones and skyscrapers,  
the granite of heaven  
and the marrow of earth.

Desert meets city,  
shouldering through New York  
like a subway train,  
below the slim ether of sky.

The way forward  
is a bleached sandscape, no oasis,  
no museum-goer's mirage,  
the invisible water.

**Death Song**  
Donna Pucciani  
Poetry

*for Georgia O'Keeffe*

No old sweet song here,  
but a skull weathering  
desert wind, a heap of bones  
scoured by sand and sun.

No Willie Nelson ballad here,  
but an elegy to a searing sky  
and the granular spray of necrosis  
banishing flesh and the acrid smell  
of death.

**A Home for Wasps**

Svetlana Litvinchuk

Poetry

Outside the window,  
a red wasp is busily pecking  
at my home's lack of siding.  
It is newly built, in a state  
unfinished but habitable,  
the way most of us are.

I have patience for the unfolding  
of its growth as the walls slowly settle  
into the places where they join the floor.  
The same patience I hope my child has  
for me when, many years from now,  
she learns that as I raise her I am  
in a state of growing, too.

The wind whips at the thin Tyvek  
skin clinging to my home's exterior  
as the structure imperceptibly dances  
on the ever-shifting foundation  
of an Earth traveling  
in its slow waltz around the sun.

Pear branches sway and thrushes build nests  
while my child clings to my chest and watches  
how the wasp build houses too,  
while between my arms  
remains a home that day after day,  
continues growing impossibly larger.



**Cicada Year**

Svetlana Litvinchuk

Poetry

Something in the air buzzes,  
reminds me I'm a cicada.  
That this is the year I come out

of hiding having burrowed  
in the safety of sand and spent  
this time awaiting transformation.

That now is my season to try again  
to reinvent myself, shed my shell,  
leave behind what I've outgrown,

become a mollusk eaten by a pelican,  
transform in the chrysalis  
of its stomach, and exit a pearl.

It's been seven years, maybe  
thirteen, and something urgent  
in me insists my bones are getting tight,

demands I rub my vocal chords  
together into your ear through  
the heat of summer night, driving

us both crazy. Leave the light off.  
It doesn't matter. I'll return  
one of these nights and follow

the sound of your heavy breath  
to your dim window, where I'll  
discover that my plentiful legs

are perfectly designed for clinging  
to your window screen. I'll leave  
my amber skin there for you as a token

of all the nights we'd spent together,  
emerging as something you hardly  
recognize at all.

**Daiquiri Daiquiri**

Kevin Wang

Poetry

daiquiri daiquiri  
sticky drink for sticky nights  
leave your residue on my tongue  
make me pucker and kiss your bitter visage  
swing me side to side  
dance me over splintered floorboards

daiquiri daiquiri  
be my flawed philosophy  
wander me through personal histories  
ghastly familiars in your ice cubes  
prayers at the temple of nostalgia  
untold jokes drowning within this glass

daiquiri daiquiri  
we can sing a sideways tune  
make the stars jump double dutch  
turn up the noise and reveal a galaxy  
listen to that ambient highway jazz  
pull a crooked smile across our faces

daiquiri daiquiri  
drift into deepest sleep  
sink into the grasp of this old couch  
your cold embrace in this mouth  
your radiant warmth in this chest  
keep me company for one more dream

daiquiri daiquiri  
tonight we are partners

**Waking Moments**

Kevin Wang

Poetry

I feel the cold  
before I hear  
the faucet  
and my dreams  
drip off  
the tip of my nose  
carrying  
an entire night  
down the drain  
and into the ocean  
for some fish  
to drink up.

**At the Uncanny Intersection**

Soramimi Hanarejima

Fiction

Deep in the woods, you come upon a mystery. A gray hazy thing of imposing proportions that trembles with the breeze. The first substantial one you've encountered in a while now that they've become so rare. Of course you remember how your parents have told you with such stern voices to leave mysteries alone—to keep your distance. But this time, you can't stay away. Who knows when you'll come across another one. So you go right up to it and reach out a hand, dismayed when your palm and fingers meet with firm resistance. For all its resemblance to fog, the mystery is impenetrable—impervious, even when you take a chisel to it the next day with the hope of at least chipping away at it.

The seasons change, the weather going from sultry to balmy to brisk. Still, the mystery lingers on in your mind, long after you're unable to find it in the woods. Then it's in a dream you have after talking on the phone with a friend late into the night.

You're in the neighborhood you grew up in, among one-story houses with little yards full of flowers, and down the sidewalk ahead of you looms that enormous gray thing. As though you know exactly what you're doing, you walk right into the mystery, feeling nothing as it envelops you, like the whole thing is just air.

And instantly you're in a schoolyard, face to face with a girl in a yellow windbreaker.

"Since we're going to be project partners," she says. "Tell me something about yourself that no one at school knows."

"I don't like going to sleep," you answer. "I don't like how I don't seem to exist until I wake up."

“But what about dreams?”

“I don’t usually dream. What about you? What’s something no one here knows?”

“I’m part wolf,” she answers immediately, then smiles like she’s accomplished something she’s wanted to do for a while.

“Which part?” you ask, not sure if you mean it as a joke.

“My shadow.”

You look at the long silhouette on the grass and wonder if her answer is a joke. Her shadow seems no different from your own.

“Here,” she says, index finger guiding your gaze to her shadow’s head.

Pointy ears perk up.

“Oh,” you murmur.

“I’ll show you something else when we’re alone,” she says—a promise you know she’ll keep.

You imagine her revealing the fangs and tail her shadow also has.

When you wake up, you wonder what the mystery was. The girl with wolf ancestry? What it’s like being part wolf? Why she wanted to share secrets with you—or whoever you were in the dream?

Several nights later, you dream about her again. The two of you are sitting at a kitchen table that has papers spread all over it. Her right hand rests on the tabletop, holding a pharmacy bottle.

“Supplements,” she says. “Extra patience and compassion. To help keep my feral tendencies tempered. I have to take one every morning in the school nurse’s office. Otherwise, I’m not allowed to go to class.”

“Why not?” you ask.

“Without them, I can get irritable. Even lose my cool,” she answers. “I’d have a hard time keeping the ferociousness in my shadow from flooding my body.”

“Is that why no one else knows? So they won’t be scared?”

“No, it’s so they won’t try to provoke me, to see if they can make me turn animal.”

“Did someone do that?”

“Yeah, a girl at my last school, in kindergarten. Back when I couldn’t hide my shadow’s ears. And my brother. He still tries all the time.”

“But isn’t he part wolf too?”

“Yeah, exactly.”

While having breakfast in your own little kitchen, you wonder if this is part of the mystery, but you have no memory of stepping into it during the dream. Could it be that your dream self is still inside the mystery?

The next night, you’re back at that kitchen table with her.

“Want to try one?” she asks.

Without waiting for an answer, she shakes a pill from the pharmacy bottle into her palm and holds it out to you.

Some extra patience and compassion can’t hurt, you think. So you pluck the pill from her open hand and swallow it with a gulp from the glass of juice on the table.

A deep calm blooms within you, and a gentle warmth follows. You feel like you could wait forever for anything and sympathize with anyone—everyone, even. Is this what it’s like to be her during the school day? Or are you already a patient and compassionate person with those qualities now elevated to a superhuman level?

She smiles, her mouth wide and open, a chance to clearly see her fangs if she had them. But she doesn’t, and even though you knew that, you’re still surprised.

When you wake up, your recumbent body seems filled with the lush quiet and soft heat of a mountain

meadow on a clear afternoon in early summer, as though you've brought home these qualities of that landscape as much needed mementos.

Then, still lying in bed, you feel a tingling in your hands and feet that draws your attention to one thing—the mystery of how things move from one realm to another, why some can and others can't, which ones stay and which ones don't. You hope these will stay for a while.



**Playground**  
June Levitan  
Art



**Tunnel Vision**  
June Levitan  
Art



**Alpine Inn**  
KJ Hannah Greenberg  
Art



**Bridge**  
KJ Hannah Greenberg  
Art



**Starry**  
KJ Hannah Greenberg  
Art



**After Fiction**

Dan Wiencek

Poetry

when nothing stands  
for anything else  
plots diverge neatly  
in opposite directions  
every ending is coincidence

the song of your name  
dies with the air  
the civilization  
thriving in our guts  
the only part of us that lasts

after fiction  
we can pretend  
but no longer believe  
we could draw  
a chapter from a hat

and learn there are  
no random choices  
that I could do nothing  
else but find you  
just where you were

even when the words we spoke  
left a music in me  
endlessly replaying  
to which the life in my body  
still dances

**Future Tense**  
Dan Wiencek  
Poetry

You will hear a knock  
and remember that day  
when the dead slid leaflets  
through the crack in the door

You will try to recall  
the jokes your father told  
and think only of the spring  
that powers a mousetrap

You will be seized by hands  
around your lungs, your heart  
and learn to sleep that way

You will say *relationship*  
when you mean *mechanism*  
and tell the story of your life  
when asking for a glass of water

You will set out to dress  
the person in the mirror  
and see in his eyes a question  
you remember from a dream

You will sit in place, attempting  
to be perfectly whole  
and fool almost everyone

**Mother Sees Me as a Unit of Two**

Isabel Hoin

Poetry

Mother sees me as a forever unit-of-two,  
an ongoing couplet

rather than what I am in this real world,  
not her imagined world,

where I will never be just one. I will never  
be a pair of two; eyes,

shoes, ears, wings of a bird. In her ideal world,  
I would be the wrapping around

the casings of a book, bounded with brother.  
But mother, brother and I will never

*really* be twinned. No one can physically see  
it (the unit). So we are not a unit.

I am a being of continual separation. Not a two /  
a unit / a pair of any form. No eyes,

shoes, wings of a bird for me in this life, mother.



## How to Choose a Perfectly-Ripe Cantaloupe

Isabel Hoin

Poetry

Press your pointer finger  
into its sides— its two large circular imprints—  
while simultaneously smelling its outer layer.  
If it is ripe, a scent should pour out  
of the miniscule holes covering its body.

You touch your nose and press  
your pointer fingers into the nude body  
of the fruit,  
and each time, you hear your Pappy  
telling you to “Have some, Bellie,”  
on a hot summer afternoon  
full of gardening with grandmother.

These plants he thoughtfully  
picked— and placed— into the soil  
remains on his hands, even after washing.  
His shirt is soaked with sweat  
and his glasses slide down the bridge  
of his nose, but he is happy; Pappy is always  
happy. How could you dare tell him  
that the very soil on his hands  
would become ghost soil; his lively  
plants ghost-figures; his hands ghost  
hands only a few years later?

You continue to place the tip of your nose  
and your two pointer fingers on the fruits’ sides  
and think of him each time while doing so;  
you wonder if he knew such a small  
Thing would matter, years later,

the scent of ripeness, the fog  
filling grandmother's mind  
(a blank state, a covering) ever since  
his passing?

**Autumn Tears**  
Duane Anderson  
Poetry

As autumn visits  
earth

trees begin to  
weep

leaves falling from  
branches

crying until all  
tears

lie in large  
puddles

on the ground  
below.

**Aging Sunflower Plants**

Duane Anderson

Poetry

Sunflowers, leaning over the fence,  
no longer able to stand straight,  
rest against the top railing

to get some of the help it needs,  
the fence, now becoming  
a part of its life support team.

If further assistance is needed,  
like a drink of water,  
their weak and wilted performance

will probably go unnoticed by  
the ones who planted them in the garden,  
and may have to make a call

to nine-one-one for further aid.  
Here, let me help,  
I'll make the call myself.

**Spells**

Elanur Williams

Poetry

Pull rampion root  
from freshly turned soil,  
leave paths of breadcrumbs,  
and reach for pears at dusk  
with silver hands.

Watch as another year turns  
on an old woman's spindle—  
a pinprick, a drop of blood,  
a hundred-year spell  
yearning for breath.

**An Offering**  
Elanur Williams  
Poetry

Arrange the altar.  
Display roses in a vase—  
keep the thorns.  
Press red into journals.  
Distill petals into perfume.  
Eat roses, if you must.  
Speak the bloody version

of the story.  
Cut the grandeur and  
unfold the humility  
of your own life.

Take the gift.

**Heirlooms**

Susie Aybar

Nonfiction

After I wore a hole in my grandfather's hand-knit woolen socks, my only heirloom of his was a set of black binoculars, hanging from a leather strap stiff from time. The binoculars dwelled in the corner of my closet in a stained tan leather case, lined with red velvet, address label affixed on top with his name and old address. His first name, Lyal, my third son's middle name.

When I visited London, Ontario as a child, my grandfather would take the binoculars from his drawer for me to use. He would put the leather strap around my neck, and I would hold them to my eyes. He turned the wheels, fixed the focus and the world in front of me unblurred. We'd take the binoculars outside on his fourth story veranda and look out. This tiny object magnified everything. I could see the people who were far away like they were right there next to me.

It was usually a dad and a son throwing a ball on a faraway field or cars riding on a distant road. There wasn't much I saw out of his apartment, but I loved trying to find new things, or even just seeing the same old things around his apartment building in a different way.

When I had my first two children, I thought the name Lyal, was too old-fashioned, a name a kid might get made fun of for. My sister, who had two boys herself, told me you needed the type of name you could shout and cheer on at a soccer field. She named her first son Kyle as a modern homage to my grandfather.

We settled on my third son's name at the hospital, Alexander Lyal. My husband had been named for his

own grandfather he had never known, but with whom he felt a deep connection. We hoped for that same type of link between our son and his great-grandfather he never knew.

I didn't predict that when I filled out school forms with my son's full name, that I'd smell my grandfather's Old Spice, feel the itch of his old woolen socks. I would be in my grandfather's tan Buick riding to Loblaw's to pick candy from the bulk bins. I'd be playing Kings in the Corner at his dining room table. I would see his shock of white hair, his bent posture, his knobbed knuckles adjusting the binoculars, his dancing blue eyes staring back at me.

What had my grandfather seen when he hung the binoculars from his neck, lifted the eye pieces to his face, calibrated the focus? On other porches, out other windows? In his home in London? In Montreal? Would he study birds in the spring? Or did he wait until dark and gaze at the stars in the night sky? I never asked him and sometimes I wish I had.

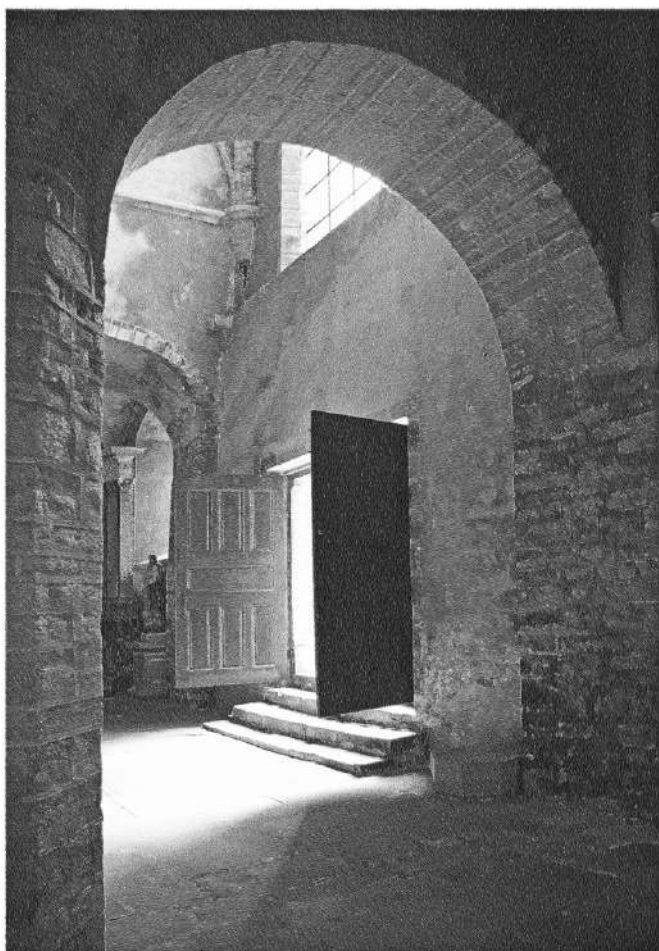
One day, my sons and I are watching an owl in the backyard trees at our home in New York. I run upstairs and dig through the clutter on my closet shelf to find the binoculars. This seems to be the perfect time to use them. The kids take turns as I hang the strap around each of their necks and when they are ready, I adjust the wheels. It's difficult to see anything because the binoculars are old and I'm not great at getting them in focus. The owl isn't going to wait all day, nor are my antsy sons. I want them to see the owl up close, to see the faraway near.



**The School**  
David Brown  
Art



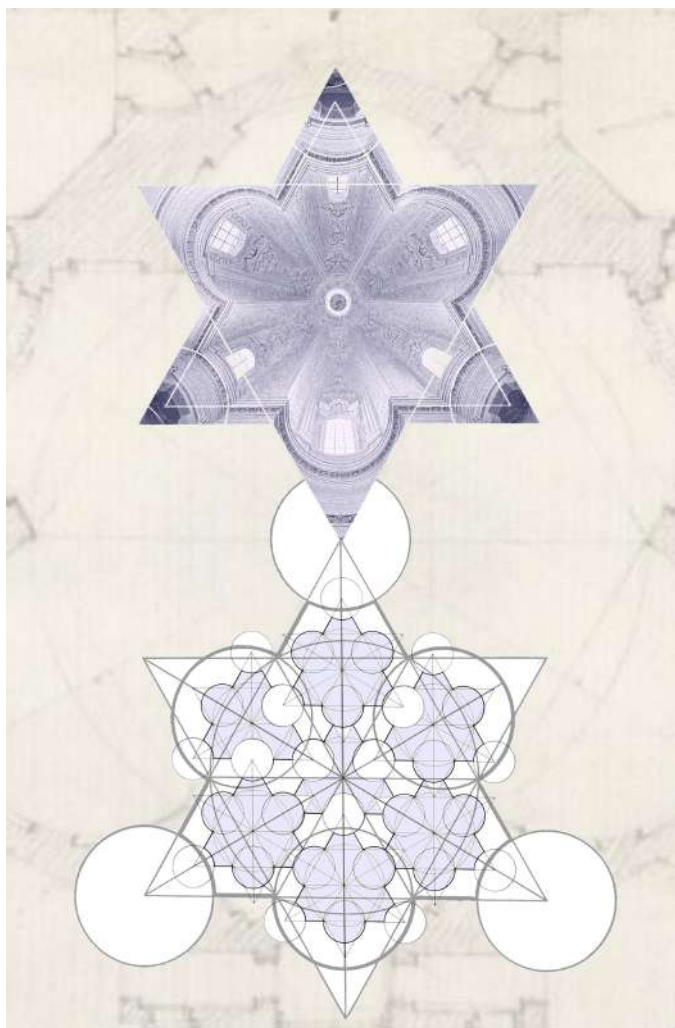
**Burgundy Door**  
David Brown  
Art



**Thirty St Mary Axe**  
David Brown  
Art



**Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza**  
David Brown  
Art



**Signature Flavor**

Maddox Emory Arnold  
Poetry

She said she could taste her own rage, and I  
didn't know what she meant by that.  
Was it sour, sweet, prickly on her tongue?  
She never did tell me, but the thought of it stuck  
to the roof of my mouth and hasn't since melted away.

Her rage, she said, at the dust covering her past,  
the shrink wrap around her wrists, the dull  
indifference in the eyes of those  
who had never had a wrath so potent  
forced down their throats.

But what are the ingredients, the measure of  
pepper and chili paste and vinegar that will  
cook down the ire, bring it to a simmer,  
let it boil violent bubbles, turn on a spit  
and leave an oily crust on the cast-iron?

I would ask her if I could, but I am left  
in the kitchen without a recipe,  
and I can't quite muster the heat,  
burners on low, to wash the bitter  
taste from my lips.

**Five**  
j.p. stoltz  
Poetry

I know there's things he isn't telling me  
because I've been starting to smell  
cigarettes in his hair and I know  
they aren't mine because  
they smell like menthols.  
I've noticed the way he tilts his  
phone towards him the way he cups his  
hand and turns on do not disturb so  
I don't see his notifications.

And now it's five and I work today and  
I've got tears streaming down my face and  
I'm wiping my nose while I'm driving back  
to his place for the third time tonight.

**Dark Spot On The Carpet**

Steve Denehan

Poetry

I never was a glacier  
but that  
was how I felt

unstoppable, invincible  
carving my mark  
into the land

now I am an ice cube  
and it is warm  
and I drip

drip

drip

drip

into  
the  
carpet

**Indian Summer**

Carla Schwartz

Poetry

Today as the sun streams through  
the window, the wind is up, but not too  
much of a party. November, but the air  
warms my skin as if to toast. Yes, lift  
a glass to the sun. Soak in the rays  
while out                      of wind shot.

When the phone rings over  
the quiet of the afternoon  
when voices tumble from devices  
like a muscle cramping tight  
while you swim, breathe in  
exhale                      the noises  
think:    under all the leaves  
roots gather in for the call.



**I don't want to go back there again**

Carla Schwartz

Poetry

to my car, filled with computer,  
with groceries, with swim gear,  
a folding bike, a helmet, an EZ-Pass,  
but no fuzzy dice, to adaptive cruise  
on, to the 70 mile per hour limit  
on 93 North, to my decision  
whether to bring it up or stay at 65—  
I don't remember which I chose—  
to my toes tapping the rubber floor mat,  
to my eyes, tiring, to anticipating the rest area  
to wondering if it came before exit 18 or after,  
to the suddenness of impact, to the deer  
with its eyes reflecting sunlight, airborne  
across the road, to the crushing in of my car,  
to the miracle of my car coming to stop  
in the breakdown, to the black smoke,  
to my inability to open the door.

**Counsel to my Younger Self**

Carla Schwartz

Poetry

If I could say one thing to you  
or many,

I'd say breathe easy,  
you have this.

Do not worry you are not  
spouse number 1—

be glad.      Do not worry  
your mother

is dead, you can speak to her  
in your dreams,

keep her with you  
wherever you go.

Do not worry your sister  
mops up worry.

For now, take each day  
as the egg

you break into the heated pan,  
let go the goo

watch it transform.

**Dear Weight**  
Carla Schwartz  
Poetry

you didn't come with me camping  
you didn't share my shower  
the hikes, bike rides, swims,  
all that sunshine and laughter  
the rain, the cloud cover  
that fed my hunger.

But dinner last night—  
oh so good—food  
with appetite,  
that meal—no junk,  
no cream, no sugar,  
oh Putain, Puttanesca,  
is that where you snuck in,  
somehow in secret connivance  
with the scale on my return?

**Purple Rain**  
Connor White  
Fiction

The game is simple: follow one color until you arrive at the unexpected place. Move with blue until the sea. Out your front door, from a blue car, to a blue house, to a blue bird, chasing its whirring, to the blue sun-dressed woman as she wipes sand off the feet of four children before they climb into the family car, to a blue kite rising over a sand dune, across a shell sequined parking lot, to a rusted blue sign warning me not to litter, to the lapping shore of a vast indigo ocean. Follow the ribbons of green in the yard, cross highways and neighborhoods, until you find the final forest, attempting to grow in the tangled vines of the city's brow. The destination of these colorful breadcrumbs is unknown. You don't know where you will stop the game. You know by instinct alone when you have arrived. A place you were blind to before you had a prism of light to trail. The game can be quick or last a lifetime. You might spend days, weeks, years waiting for the next marker to come into view.

On a day I am alone, melancholic, desperate for adventure, I listen to Purple Rain by Prince and start with the vinyl cover's purple font and purple motorcycle and Prince's purple coat. Out the window, I frisbee the purple square as far as I can. To give myself a head start. I wait a long time in the front yard, but within a few hours a purple car drives past, and I chase after its bumper like a rabid dog. To my luck it is driven by a hundred and two-year-old man. He clips every parked car along the road and falls asleep at every other stop sign and red light. I lose him at the highway, but in the distance is the purple sign of a Taco Bell. Tumbleweeds of purple taco wrappers take me further down the road and onto the shore of a creek. I lose the purple for a time

as I watch garbage float downstream. There is an encampment there. Tarps hang between the trees. I argue whether a blue tarp is close enough to purple, but no. If you cheat the game, you don't arrive where you are going.

Buried in the sand and trash of the shore is a purple fentanyl container. A tiny pop-top like a miniature trash can. Another floats by. I wade into the muck and race after it. The stream carries me to an estuary. A woman is crouched in a bush. She peers through binoculars. I ask her what she sees.

"Birds," she says.

"Can I look?"

To my great luck, a Starling on a branch.

"In winter," the birder says, "the Starling is black and spotted white. In summer, it has a purple breast."

"I can see the purple!"

"The purple is their fancy dress. They are aroused by purple. They chase purple."

"Like I am!"

"Maybe."

The bird flies off as I run toward it.

"You think you know purple," the birder says, "but you don't know a goddamn thing. Don't you know purple is an illusion?"

She seems annoyed that I scared the bird away.

She chides me for chasing purple, "Are you losing your mind? There is no such wavelength of light on the spectrum. Purple is created by our brains alone. Purple is only inside us, yet we see it throughout the world."

I ask what this might mean?

"It means our delusions are shared. We can recreate fictions from our dumb thoughts. Smear it across the landscape. Follow its signs until ruin. And knowing it doesn't make you see it less. Perhaps the opposite."

And she was right, purple billowed all around me. I could taste purple on my tongue, I could hear purple sing, I could feel it crawl up my limbs and burrow deep in my skin like a bloated tick drunk on blood. I became frightened. If I couldn't trust my eyes, would I make it home? Without a parting word, I struck off. So much purple in the air. No trail to follow. But you don't win this game by returning the way you came. It's not a game of circles. It's a game of errant trails. You win when you forget where you started, surrounded by visions of your own imagination. It began to rain. Teardrops of grape soda. The definition of *losing your mind* is to search for things that cannot be found. And if you find them?

**Hallucinogenic Alice**  
Carella Keil  
Art



**Hallucinogenic Alice II**

Carella Keil

Art





**Emotional Nomad**

Carella Keil

Art



**Picture Out of Time**

Rebecca Brock

Poetry

Seeing him, forty years later,  
I imagine I can circle back—  
tuck my hand in his, stand looking  
out at the Bay: his shirt almost matches  
the water except it shimmers a deeper blue,  
the way an over-ironed shirt might,  
one ready for a funeral or a party. Grandpa Harry  
always dressed like that—sharp and dark,  
his laughter would turn into coughing,  
his chest caved outwards but you didn't notice  
until he hugged you. Tall and lean  
with a sort of stoop, his black hair,  
I know, would look wet closeup.  
He always stood turned halfway,  
as if to hide something.

When the camera snapped—maybe the glint  
of sunlight off the water, maybe the white sail  
of a particular boat, or the sight of Alcatraz  
in blue sky daylight had him remembering  
how much his ex-wives loved him  
before they hated him.

Of all his stepfathers, my father  
kept his name, even after the divorce.  
There is such presumption in childhood:  
who you love, who you think  
you'll see again.

**You Are Gone and I Watch My Son Go**

Rebecca Brock

Poetry

I'd call you, if I could.  
It's his first day of high school  
and you'd laugh if I told you  
how I have to focus on my hands,  
on the steering wheel, at the kiss and ride  
drop off, how I still have to try  
so hard just to stay myself  
among the living. But I wouldn't have to tell you  
anything. Instead, you'd ask  
if he'd cut his hair yet, knowing,  
like I know, that some day  
he'll regret so many things.

I say, *love you*, he says, *you too*—  
maybe he said love,  
maybe he meant too.  
I know I said it full, to you,  
that last time. A Wednesday,  
six weeks ago. Your failing body  
what it was. You said you didn't get the "plan."  
The air quotes in your voice,  
because your hands were too weak.

My son's body blurs.  
I know the world won't hold—  
hasn't held. But he passes a pair of girls  
that look like freshman, that look  
nothing like us—except  
how they are laughing.

**séance**

Kimberly Bollard

Poetry

I saw a ghost yesterday  
In the way the barista said “good morning”  
In the way his mouth curled at the corners  
And for a moment his eyes were yours  
And so I paid and said “thank you”  
For the coffee  
And came back today  
And got my coffee with sugar and cream  
Every day I have a seance  
And hope to see your face  
At a stoplight  
In the checkout line  
In the way the barista says “good morning”  
And my mouth will curl at the corners  
And my eyes will become yours  
And for a moment you can see again

**Lightness**  
Jerrold Laber  
Poetry

Father believes he lives on borrowed time  
He put the house in my name

Gave me the combination to the safe  
And a key to his safety-deposit box

So when Death comes to collect  
Everything's taken care of

He says, there's no burden  
As if his being possesses a strange lightness

To be crushed by the weight of the earth  
That will sit atop his body

The annals of grief reduced to routine chafing,  
Soothed by the balm of a quick probate process

**Man at the beach**

Jerrod Laber

Poetry

at the most inland point  
of the land reached  
by the incoming waves  
there sits a man

motionless  
the water soaks the underside  
of his folded legs

it is near  
the end of the day  
other beachgoers  
are packing to leave

but he remains  
as the water reaches  
further up the sand

he sits at the spot  
from whence he spread  
his wife's ashes  
some years prior

to which he's returned daily  
with hope the rising tide  
brings with it

some piece of her  
and the backwash takes  
in exchange something of him  
spirits adrift

carried by the sea  
bridging the shore  
and the horizon

**failed friendship**

Tara Labovich

Poetry

it was years ago, now. the sun was cresting the corn  
red already as we sped that dirt road, singing  
loudly and badly. we yanked the car  
to the side, and with a pair of scissors  
meant for another purpose, filled  
the backseat with pampas  
to decorate our new, empty apartments.

i am often living these split-lives: tv going  
while my lover talks low in my ear, a love  
song playing while i wash mold out of a tupperware,  
the candied kind of grief  
that only arrives in the face of great beauty.

i am living three futures, two presents,  
one past—or every past,  
all at once. i fear, despite my greed,  
i can only live one life at a time.  
how do you sever all the extra timelines?  
with scissors from the trunk of a car, or a hard,  
decisive scream?

i'd like to look out the car window,  
see past the fingerprint smudges, to the pampas,  
waving like clouds by the side of the road.  
i'd like to see nothing  
but their height, their little costumes  
of wind.



**valentine's day 2024**

Tara Labovich

Poetry

i drive to the swimming hole just beyond  
town. barefoot, sand stings like chilled clay.  
i make a call.  
it goes to voicemail.  
i'm wearing shorts in February, which is how i know  
i now belong to this midwest. i stride towards it:  
water sheared. blades and plates of ice  
overlay still water, but this water does not want  
me. i know this right away, the way she digs  
into me, cold spooning  
bone, without taking any of me for her own.  
over the sound of my own pain, i hear the ice  
shifting against itself: a swarm of bells,  
a hive of frozen honey.  
this is a doorway, like many other pains.  
the sun stands with me in the shallows, bright  
like surgery.  
now, i see it all, the person i am to become.  
i won't swim out past the buoys, but i know  
that future body rests at the bottom  
of the quarry, in the dark,  
with the wintering fish, waiting  
for warmth.

**creed**

Tara Labovich

Poetry

i have tipped into the black waters  
of feeling. like a foolish swim

as autumn teeters near, wayward  
body-urge to sprint towards

that cold stretch, clothes tossed,  
obedience forgotten as leaves

stick to sole, the valley  
rocketing with gasp and laughter of shock. or—

a new duty

to water, to ducking head below,  
to pushing all air out

of lungs with one big huff.  
i am afraid to open my eyes

in the water. i do, regardless.  
out beyond the ridge, where the water drops

off, a kind of glow waits for me:  
the warmth the body summons

in surprise, the confidence  
of winter heat after a bitter walk,

the sweet secret of you waiting  
for me on the shore.

**In the Name of Love**

Mehreen Ahmed

Fiction

In the name of love, I lock you in protective gear, so as not to expose you to the bitter, cold weather. I forbid you to meet with friends and sing them your rain song upon their insistence. One that they will listen to, then take your art from you, and leave you listless.

In the name of love, I befriend you, ask you to fall in love, recite poetry together with me, you and I; when the sun goes down in the evening sky, I get you to write some poetry for me but under my name, find me jobs, play me violin, buy me a horse even, and give me all you have both intellectual and material, because you love me profoundly that this sacrifice is one of joy.

In the name of love, I chide at your clumsy mistakes to perfect them and help you build an immaculate character to fare far better, thank me later. I abuse you, I hurt you, and want you to abide now; fail better to learn better at some point in time.

In the name of love, I call you ugly and fat, be harsh with you to make you eat less. I keep you indoors to save you from harmful sunlight. For the preservation of your skin and of your health, so you would look a fine thing of beauty to feast my eyes only.

In the name of love, I insult you to make you a better cook. Your food must taste divine and melt on my palette and yours too. So you can also enjoy and understand the delicacy of fine cuisine while I eat my platter of silver pies.

In the name of love, I ask you to be silly to serve my wishes, so I can make you and break you a hundred times, and keep you guessing, why? Until you and I, eat from the same plate and drink from the same glass; until I have completely galvanized you to prevent you from rotting outside.

In the name of love, I shall ask you to travel places with me, to give up your cushy job and stay with me while you have tea and coffee at a cafe, be happy in the moment thinking that you are in the land of infinite freedom and infinite opportunity.

In the name of love, I put you in a pickle jar, so I can open the lid whenever I choose and relish you bit by bit until all of you become me, until I put the empty jar back on the shelf one day. I start to pickle another girl all in good time and your approval because you wouldn't want me to be without one.

In the name of love, I build you a mausoleum, the Grand Taj Mahal the rarest of all to entomb our memory of love; eternally ours, but lost in the fog of time though, our love is housed within the sapphires, the rubies and the diamonds extracted from the mines.

In the name of love, I dream of you on a blue midnight and tell you that you are no longer young. In my dream, I see myself with you but not at your current age, a short-haired young version of you. We climb up a neem tree in your garden, break out in careless laughter, and draw a sketch of us together long before your expiry days are over. I put myself through a trial. I know who you are, someone years older than me that I fell in love with. This was a reality, but when I dreamed of you, I

was older, this time and you, were much younger. I love you in my dream the younger version, I love you in reality the older version. Which version is better only God knows as I struggle to figure out which version I love more? Dream and reality are fused and I am confused.

In the name of love, I crave for you. The deepest longing for all eternity because no matter how much I yell at you, and unpardonable I know, as I say sorry to you, you forgive me over and over taking me back. But you can never leave me as I cannot either, for you and I are one in a bubble and one of a kind.

In the name of love, I approach your hut the only one on the hilltop. Nestled within psithurism, the leaves dance as the raindrops bounce off them, I see you standing by the window. Your unkempt hair down to the waist. I see you taking a sip from your cup and smiling often to yourself, but the closer I get to your door, the more I see you until I am up against it. I wait before I knock for the sound may wake you up from your reverie. I do not wish to bind you in my love; end the way you are. Lonely but lovely, you seem to have grown into this life you have created for yourself. It may not seem a lot to others but to you, it means the world. I want you to be happy in this panacea. I distance myself. I do not knock on that door but leave in silence to preserve the rare breed, you are.

In the name of love, I play games with you. I tell you lies and continue to lie to you that I'll buy you happiness as though it came in a casket when the intention was never there and I keep your hopes up but never tell you the truth, while I see that you keep expecting a casket of happiness from me.

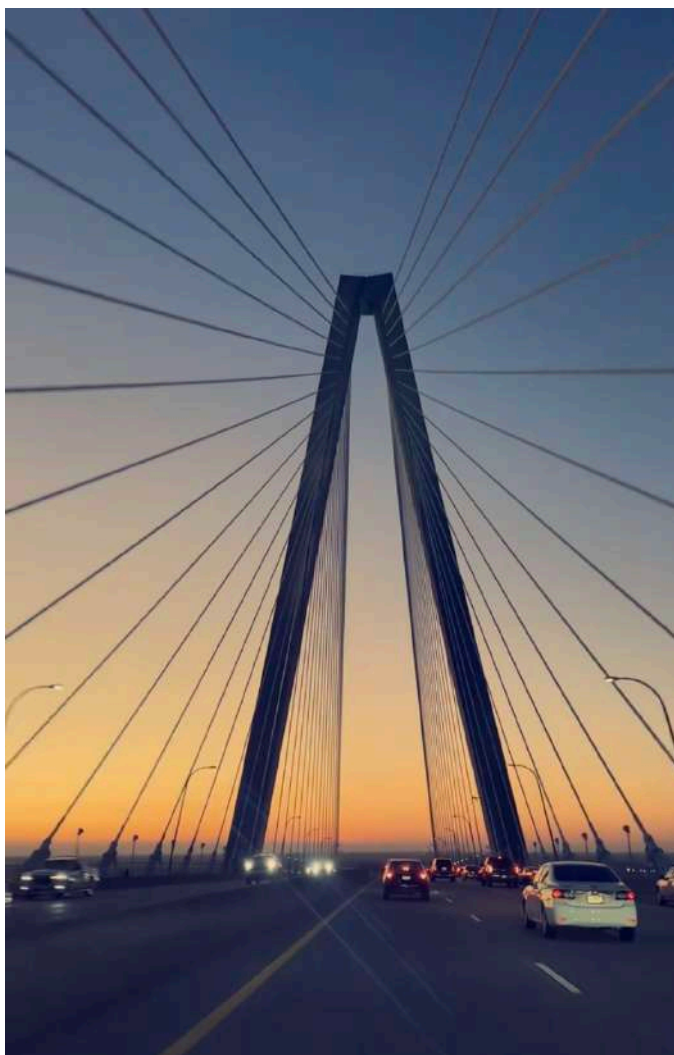
In the name of love, I bathe you in perfumed lavender so you will live forever. You have lived as long as I could see you, some people never die, you wouldn't die. Now I have died, I have no way of knowing if you have actually died.

In the name of love, a child is born through unbearable labor. A paradox of intolerable pain only mothers feel during childbirth; in turn, this gives birth to unconditional love for the baby, only the mother is capable of feeling.

**Lighthouse**  
Cameron Rogers  
Art



**Bridge**  
Cameron Rogers  
Art





**Fountain, Day**  
Cameron Rogers  
Art



**Fountain, Night**  
Cameron Rogers  
Art



**Backyard**  
Cameron Rogers  
Art



**As A Leaf...**

Emma Irena Hillstead

Poetry

Whatever prevents a coiled leaf  
From opening up to world  
Inhibits me too.  
Is it a force of nature  
Or its own innate stagnancy  
That stops it in its fetal shape?

I too have coiled in upon myself.  
A reactionary pill-bug  
To protect from  
forces outside my control.

And when at last I unfurl,  
I do so in a bang of emotion.  
The release comes  
And I am left there,  
Prostrate and hapless.

**Ode to Overthinking**

Emma Irena Hillstead

Poetry

There are so many things I try to say  
That percolate on the tip of my tongue.  
Never taking shape  
Never whispered or sighed  
But there  
At the front of my mind,  
A constant companion  
A cherished friend.  
I have befriended the unsaid,  
Unuttered things  
So I'm never really alone.  
At the levee, the retaining wall  
Of my mouth,  
words crash and break  
And often dissipate  
Back into the void from where they came.  
Never to be seen again  
in precisely the same way  
They were strung together  
Originally.

**I'll Flagellate Myself, Thank You**

Alex Carrigan

Poetry

I don't need rods gifted to me  
with lace ribbons or bespoke giftwrap.  
I'll pull the bones out of my toes  
and Gorilla glue them together into one.

I don't need you to offer me  
the Gucci belt around your waist.  
I'll pull out my intestines and  
knot them so the acid doesn't spill.

I don't need you to shout at me,  
tell me I'm worthless or a sinner.  
That was the song my parents played  
during the moment of my birth.

I have my own grit to motivate myself to action,  
my own hands to turn against myself,  
my own teeth to rip open my flesh.

If my work shirt is stained  
before I even leave the house,  
it should mean the vicious ones  
will pass over me today.

Maybe this frightens you.  
Maybe you are worried about me.  
But all I need is to unplug my brainstem  
and everything resets for tomorrow,

so you don't have to worry  
about all my scars. I can't remember  
how I got most of them, but I've learned  
to be glad when I do forget.

*Title comes from a riff from the Mystery Science Theater  
3000 episode "Final Justice."*

## A Retelling of Chang'e

L. Acadia

Fiction

Long ago, but on this Earth, the planet was too hot. Fields scorched, ponds dried, and skin blistered. At first, people tried denial, but their villages were definitely flooding, and the forests burning more each year. Then they tried wishful thinking, optimism: the power of positive. Still, crops yielded less while more was lost to pests. Ancient equivalents of techno-fixes were no more effective than blaming the poor, so the patriarch opted for the military option, calling forth a great archer to shoot the eleven suns from the sky.

“Eleven suns,” you ask? Our single remaining sun is proof of the archer’s great skill, for he quickly picked off ten, and was about to plunge the planet into eternal darkness when the fallen suns’ father cried down to Earth to please spare his last sun-son.

In a typical misogynistic narrative twist for such myths, the suns’ father bartered the freedom, life in heaven, and presumably the sexual property of a good demi-goddess, Chang’e, for the archer to rest his bow. Traditionally, the story communicates the goddess’s goodness through ascription of beauty, but we shall speak of her selflessness and pursuit of truth, less sexist and more philosophical measures of superlative (indeed, supererogatory) morality. The suns’ father sent Chang’e to Earth to marry the archer, despite the archer’s proven tendency for excessive violence.

The people rejoiced, both for the temperate temperatures as well as their new hero with his divine and moral consort. In their exuberance, they relinquished too much power to the archer. Power and ego quickly turned the archer into a tyrant. He demanded ever greater shares of their newly flourishing fields, ever



more fish from their brimming ponds, and more metaphorical skin from their tired knuckles.

With tyranny, came greed (and hubris). When the archer-cum-king learned of a magical woman who had potions to stave off death, he traveled across his kingdom to demand the last of her immortality elixir. Back in his palace, he hid the vial from his unhappy wife. Yet word reached Chang'e that the archer had been bragging to his bros about plans to consume the immortality potion before his subjects at the next day's harvest festival.

Chang'e had a single night to save the people from the archer's eternal despotism, so she wore her most seductively billowing dress to his bedroom. (This storyteller will spare you the next scene of her wearing him out.) Once the archer king's self-contented snores filled the palace, she reached into his overly obvious hiding place for the vial. She intended to pour the elixir into the sea, but one of her husband's henchmen spotted her hurrying out, and shouted his suspicion. Chang'e turned to see the naked and mortal archer-king chasing her into the marble courtyard, so anxiously uncorked and drank the elixir. She felt suddenly light, and began to float towards the full autumn moon as though lifted by cotton-candy clouds. Hopping behind, her Jade Rabbit released a cascade of jade rabbit-droppings.

As the archer ran, he fitted bow to arrow and took aim at Chang'e floating into the sky. He lost his footing on the tiny pellets in a very slapstick manner, releasing the arrow directly above himself, without consideration of gravity, which brought the arrow straight back at him, pinning his hand against the exposed root of a cassia tree.

In her righteous and now immortal morality and dexterity, Chang'e was able to reach down just far

enough for the Jade Rabbit to leap into her arms. As they snuggled and floated out of range of the Archer's angry cries, Chang'e tapped the final drops of immortality elixir into the Jade Rabbit's mouth, so they could live happily together on the moon to this day.

However, not all threads of this story have happy endings, for the Earth is back where the tale began, warming dangerously. We know where denial, wishing, blaming, and military approaches lead, so we need to look for other solutions. Happily ensconced with her bunny on the moon, Chang'e cannot help us this time.

## Contributor Bios

### L. Acadia

L. Acadia is a lit professor at National Taiwan University, Taiwan Literature Base 2024–2025 Writer-in-Residence, and Pushcart-nominated member of the Taipei Poetry Collective. She has published in *Gordon Square Review*, *New Flash Fiction Review*, *New Orleans Review*, *Your Impossible Voice*, and elsewhere, and lives with her partner and hound in the ‘literature mountain’ district of Taipei. Connect at [www.acadiaink.com](http://www.acadiaink.com) or on Instagram, Twitter, Bluesky: @acadialogue

### Mehreen Ahmed

Mehreen Ahmed is a Bangladeshi-born Australian novelist. Her novels have been acclaimed/recognised by Midwest Book Review, and Drunken Druid Editor’s Choice. Her short stories have won contests, Pushcart, James Tait, and four botN, nominations.

### Duane Anderson

Duane Anderson currently lives in La Vista, NE. He has had poems published in *Fine Lines*, *Cholla Needles*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, and several other publications. He is the author of ‘On the Corner of Walk and Don’t Walk,’ ‘The Blood Drives: One Pint Down,’ and ‘Conquer the Mountains,’ and ‘Family Portraits.’

### Maddox Emory Arnold

Maddox Emory Arnold (he/they) is a writer and educator based in Southeast Michigan. His work explores queerness, gender, mental health, and otherness with a speculative twist, and he particularly enjoys seeking the horrific, surreal, and/or fantastical in mundane spaces and experiences.

### Susie Aybar

Susie Aybar's work has appeared in Literary Mama, Tiny Molecules, ONE ART and others. When she is not writing, she loves watching baseball and hanging out with her family. Connect with her at [susieaybar.com](https://susieaybar.com).

### Laurel Benjamin

Laurel Benjamin is a San Francisco Bay Area poet, active with the Women's Poetry Salon. She curates Ekphrastic Writers and is a reader for Common Ground Review. Publications: *Cider Press Review*, *Lily Poetry Review*, *Taos Journal of Poetry*, *Pirene's Fountain*, *Mom Egg Review*, *Nixes Mate*. Her new collection, *Flowers on a Train*, is forthcoming from Sheila-Na-Gig Editions. She Find her at: <https://www.laurelbenjamin.com>

### Michael Betancourt

Michael Betancourt is a Cuban-American artist whose work with asemic poetry adapts his interests with Glitch Art to include language and typography; books of his typoems have been published by RedFox Press, Timglaset, and the Post-Asemic Press, and have also appeared in the vispo magazines *Die Lerre Mitte*, *To Call*, *aurapoesiavisual*, and *Utsanga.it*. His book *CMYK* was a winner in the 45th Society of Typographic Arts STA100 competition in 2023. An archive of his work is at [michaelbetancourt.com](https://michaelbetancourt.com).

### Grace Black

Grace Black mingles with words as she navigates this realm. She bends elbows for coffee but would prefer to bend minds with her poetry and flash fiction. By day, the founding editor of *Ink In Thirds*. By night, she writes for inclusion in other publications. Some of her work can be found in *Bending Genres*, *The Turning Leaf Journal*,

FWWR, Roi Faineant, Mind Matters Mag, Maudlin House, and Eunoia Review. @graceblackink on SM.

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.

Rebecca Brock

Rebecca Brock has been a flight attendant for most of her adult life and is still surprised by this fact. She has lived in Virginia for nearly two decades and still isn't used to the humidity. Idaho born, she is always homesick and never quite at home. You can find more of her work at [www.rebeccabrock.org](http://www.rebeccabrock.org).

Brianna Brown

Brianna has two lovely children, a husband, and a writing habit. She holds a BA in English Literature with a minor in philosophy, and her preferred writing genres are picture books and poetry. In the picture book genre, she has published Phoebe PhobiCat Versus Broccoli, with Pegasus Publishers, and is working on the second installment to that series. Her poetry has been published in some online journals, and focuses on the darker elements of life and love that we have all experienced.

David Brown

David Brown is a queer artist living in Cambridge, England. His prints are mainly abstracts and, as here, architectural images. Architects who inspire him include the mavericks, Borromini in Rome, England's Hawksmoor. He came to art practice after a career in

mathematical biology.

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Alex Carrigan

Alex Carrigan (he/him) is a Pushcart-nominated editor, poet, and critic from Alexandria, VA. He is the author of *Now Let's Get Brunch* (Querencia Press, 2023) and *May All Our Pain Be Champagne* (Alien Buddha Press, 2022). He has appeared in *SoFloPoJo*, *Cotton Xenomorph*, *Bullshit Lit*, *HAD*, *fifth wheel press*, and more. Visit [carriganak.wordpress.com](http://carriganak.wordpress.com) or follow him on Twitter @carriganak for more info.

Catherine A. Coundjeris

Catherine's poetry is published in literary magazines, including *Evening Street Review*, *Green Ink Review*, and *Gray Sparrow Journal*. She also has stories published in *Proem*, *Quail Bell*, *KeepThings*, and *Opendoor*. She has published two essays in anthologies from Luna Press called *Not the Fellowship Dragon's Welcome* and the second anthology was called *Follow Me*. Catherine is passionate about ESL Literacy.

Linda M. Crate

Linda M. Crate (she/her) is a Pennsylvanian writer whose poetry, short stories, articles, and reviews have been published in a myriad of magazines both online and in print. She has twelve published chapbooks the latest being: *Searching Stained Glass Windows For An Answer* (Alien Buddha Publishing, December 2022).

Dana Delibovi

Dana Delibovi is a poet, essayist, and translator. Her book of translations and essays, *Sweet Hunter: The Complete Poems of St. Teresa of Ávila*, 2024. Delibovi's work has appeared in *After the Art*, *Apple*

Valley Review, Bluestem, Fish Barrel Review, Noon, Psalter & Lyre, Salamander, and many other journals. She is a 2020 Pushcart Prize nominee, a 2020 Best American Essays notable essayist, and co-winner of the 2023 Hueston Woods Poetry Contest. Delibovi is consulting poetry editor at the literary e-zine Cable Street.

Steve Denehan

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

Dario Roberto Dioli

Dario Roberto Dioli explores signs, senses and meanings with linear and visual poetry, asemic writing, collage and Dada performances. His aperiodical micropress name is Asatami Legesse. He published some poetry collections in Italy and Romania. His latest works are in Word for/ word, Ouste, 3 A.M. Magazine, Hello America Stereo Cassette, Maintenant, Die Leere Mitte.

Tina Dybvik

Dybvik's verse has appeared in Chonogram Magazine and Iron Horse Literary Review; online at Red Bird Weekly Read and KAXE Northern Community Radio / PRX. She works in traditional poetry forms and speculative subjects (more supernatural than SF).

KJ Hannah Greenberg

KJ Hannah Greenberg tilts at social ills and encourages personal evolutions via poetry, prose, and visual art. Her images have appeared as interior art in many places, including Foliate Oak Literary Magazine, Les Femmes Folles, Mused, Piker Press, Stone Lake Gallery, The Academy of the Heart and Mind, and Yellow Mama and as cover art in many places, including Angime, Black Petals, Five on the Fifth, Impspired [sic], Pithead Chapel, Red Flag Poetry, Smoky Blue Literary and Arts Magazine, The Broken City, and Torah Tidbits. Additionally, some of her digital paintings accompany her poetry in *Miscellaneous Parlor Tricks* (Seashell Books, 2024), *Word Magpie* (Audience Askew, 2024), *Subrogation* (Seashell Books, 2023), and *One-Handed Pianist* (Hekate Publishing, 2021).

Soramimi Hanarejima

Soramimi Hanarejima is the author of the neuropunk story collection *Literary Devices For Coping*. Soramimi's recent work appears in *Pulp Literature*, *The Offing*, *Black Warrior Review*, and *The Cincinnati Review*.

Emma Irena Hillstead

Emma Irena Hillstead (she/her), is a poet and law student from Seattle, Washington and currently resides in Brooklyn, New York. When she's not drowning in legal doctrine, she's weaving poetry around the elements and factors in her class notes

Isabel Hoin

Isabel Hoin (she/her) is an emerging poet and student at Old Dominion University where she is a Perry Morgan fellow in their MFA program. She works at The Muse Writers Center in Norfolk, VA, teaching people of all



ages the art of poetry. Her work is already in or is forthcoming in Door=Jar Magazine, Blue Press Magazine, Wild Roof Journal, Voices/1922 Review, and La Picciolètta Barca Review, among others. She is a Lancaster, PA native and misses the corn fields daily. You can find her at <https://www.isabelhoin.com/>.

#### Carella Keil

Carella is a writer and digital artist who creates surreal, dreamy images that explore nature, fantasy realms, portraiture, melancholia and inner dimensions. She has been published in numerous literary journals including Columbia Journal, Chestnut Review and Crannóg. She is a Pushcart Prize Nominated writer, Best of the Net Nominee and the 2023 Door is a Jar Writing Award Winner in Nonfiction. She is the featured artist for the Fall 2024 Issue of Blue Earth Review. Her photography has appeared on the covers of Glassworks Magazine, Nightingale and Sparrow, In Parentheses, Blue Earth Review, Colors: The Magazine, Frost Meadow Review, Straylight Magazine and Cosmic Daffodil. [instagram.com/catalogue.of.dreams](https://www.instagram.com/catalogue.of.dreams) [x.com/catalogueofdream](https://www.x.com/catalogueofdream)

#### Dr. Sarah Jefferis

Dr. Sarah Jefferis is the author of three poetry books, *Forgetting the Salt* (2008, Foothills Press), *What Enters the Mouth* (2014, Standing Stone Books), and *Lucky to Have You* (Finishing Line Press, forthcoming 2025). Her poems, stories, and essays have appeared or are forthcoming in "Door is a Jar," The Cimmaron Review," "Rhino," "The So Flo Poetry Journal," and other literary magazines. She holds an MFA from Cornell and a PhD in Writing from Binghamton University. She serves as CEO of her own

writing/consultant business (Write.Now.), where she coaches writers across multiple genres to manifest their poetry/memoir collections. As a TEDX speaker and facilitator, she has discussed writing as medicine and offered talks about yoga writing as an intentional strategy for establishing Diversity, Equity, and Belonging. You can find her at [www.sarahjefferis.com](http://www.sarahjefferis.com)

Mik Johnson

Mikayla “Mik” Johnson is obsessed with her husband, Lord of the Rings, Rocky Mountain hikes and crackle-crust bread, in that order. She formally studies creative writing as a graduate student at BYU and informally studies swimming, gardening, Jesus and LEGOs. The best thing about Mik’s life is reading books by Mo Willems and J.K. Rowling with her two precious sons.

Jerrod Laber

Jerrod Laber is an Appalachian poet and writer, and a nominee for the Pushcart Prize.

Tara Labovich

Tara Labovich (they/them) is a lecturer of English and Creative Writing at Iowa State University. Their multi-genre creative work explores questions of queerness, survivorship, and multicultural upbringing. Their writing is nominated for Best of the Net, and can be found in journals such as Salt Hill and the Citron Review.

Aaron Lelito

Aaron Lelito is a visual artist and writer from Buffalo, NY. His images have been published as cover art in Red Rock Review, Peatsmoke Journal, and The Scriblerus. His poetry chapbook, *The Half Turn*, was published in 2023, and his work has also appeared in Barzakh Magazine, Stonecoast Review, SPECTRA

Poets, Peach Mag, and Santa Fe Review. He is Editor in Chief of Wild Roof Journal. Instagram: @aaronlelito

T.S. Leonard

T.S. Leonard is a disco poet time machine from Kansas City, Missouri who lives and teaches in San Francisco. Leonard's work has appeared in Poetry, Foglifter, and fourteen poems.

June Levitan

June Levitan is a retired teacher from the South Bronx. Now she takes photos for fun.

Svetlana Litvinchuk

Svetlana Litvinchuk is the author of a debut poetry chapbook, *Only a Season* (Bottlecap Features, 2024) and a forthcoming full-length collection (spring 2026). Nominated for Pushcart and Best of the Net, her poetry appears in *swamp pink*, *About Place*, *Flyway*, *Apple Valley Review*, *Sky Island Journal*, *Strange Horizons*, and elsewhere. Originally from Ukraine, she now tends her garden in Missouri. She is Associate Editor and Reviews Editor of *ONLY POEMS*.

Paul Lojeski

Paul Lojeski was born and raised in Lakewood, Ohio. His poetry has appeared online and in print. He lives in Port Jefferson, NY.

Donna Pucciani

Donna Pucciani, a Chicago-based writer, has published poetry worldwide in Shi Chao Poetry, Li Poetry, Poetry Salzburg, ParisLitUp, Agenda, Gradya and other journals. Her latest book of poetry is EDGES.

Cameron Rogers

Cameron Rogers is a photographer living in Marlborough, MA.

Russell Rowland

Russell Rowland is old enough to be your grandfather, and young enough to do trail maintenance for the Lakes Region (NH) Conservation Trust. He also judges Poetry Out Loud competitions.

David Sapp

David Sapp, writer, artist, and professor, lives along the southern shore of Lake Erie in North America. A Pushcart nominee, he was awarded Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Grants for poetry and the visual arts. His poetry and prose appear widely in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. His publications include articles in the *Journal of Creative Behavior*, chapbooks *Close to Home* and *Two Buddha*, a novel *Flying Over Erie*, and a book of poems and drawings titled *Drawing Nirvana*.

Claire Scott

Claire Scott is a recently retired psychotherapist who is enjoying having more time to write, take long walks and try to stay ahead of the weeds. She is excited to be spending more time with her five grandchildren who are scattered over the country. And OMG this Granny just turned eighty.

Carla Schwartz

Carla Schwartz's poems have appeared in *The Practicing Poet* and her collections *Signs of Marriage*, *Mother*, *One More Thing*, and *Intimacy with the Wind*. Learn more at <https://carlapoet.com>, or on all social media @cb99videos. Recent/upcoming curations:

Autumn Sky Poetry Daily, Contemporary Haibun Online, Drifting Sands, Modern Haiku, Rattle, and Spank the Carp. Carla Schwartz received the New England Poetry Club E.E. Cummings Prize.

Burcu Seyben

Burcu Seyben is an academic, playwright, director, and writer of creative non-fiction from Türkiye. Her creative non-fiction has been featured in The RavensPerch and Door is a Jar Literary Magazine. Additionally, her play, "The American Letter," was selected for the Pitch-your-play Showcase of the Mid-America Theatre Conference.

Hayley Shucker

Hayley Shucker loves musical theater, cats, and baking. She still believes in Santa Claus and has yet to receive coal. Find her on Instagram reclaiming her selfies @superhayleykastuff.

j.p. stoltz

j.p. stoltz is an American poet based in Western Pennsylvania. He enjoys long walks on the beach and having fun.

Edward Michael Supranowicz

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

Dan Wiencek

Dan Wiencek remembers owning a pair of Mork suspenders and a Batman alarm clock that spoke to him every morning. He knows these things are important but cannot explain why. It would be so much easier if he could write songs, but he has no gift for melody. He lives in Minneapolis, or some other place of that name.

Connor White

Connor White is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and a PhD Candidate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Kevin Wang

Kevin Wang was born in New Jersey and grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area where he currently resides. He studied creative writing and statistics at Carnegie Mellon University and data science at the University of Southern California.

Elanur Williams

Elanur Williams lives in New York City with her husband, her daughter, and their dog. She holds a M.S.Ed. in Literacy Studies, a M.Phil. in Children's Literature, and a B.A. in English Literature & Creative Writing. She has worked as an elementary school teacher, and currently teaches Reading & Writing for the GED at an Adult Learning Center in the Bronx.

Alina Zollfrank

Alina Zollfrank from (former) East Germany now writes and curses trilingually in the Pacific Northwest. She's spent years supporting and advocating for families of kids with developmental disabilities and chronic health care needs. Alina loathes medical exam rooms without windows, spends more time on her yoga mat napping than stretching, and believes that chocolate cures all.

## 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, Ph. D.**

#### **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 Bates-burg-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.

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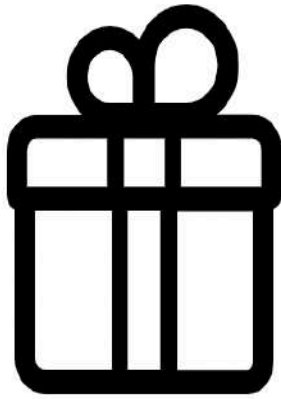
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