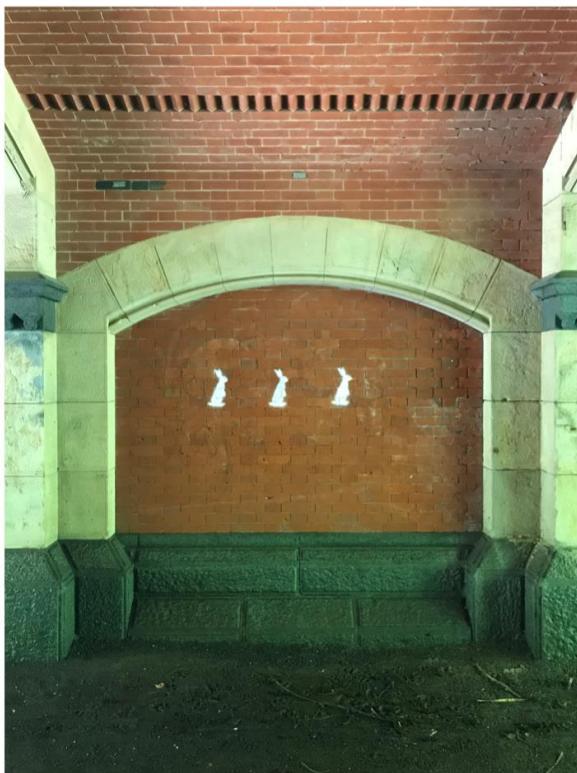


DOOR = JAR



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Cover Image "White Rabbits" by June Levitan

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Humanity Decoded
Sankar Chatterjee
Fiction

In fading glow of sunset, Dr. Maya Lin, Regional Director, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugee was standing on the raised rectangular perimeter of a flooded rice-field on the border of neighboring nations of Myanmar and Bangladesh. The sky was overcast with dark rain-cloud; monsoon had already arrived here. It had been raining for last three days, now there was a momentary lull. She looked across the field and spotted a silhouette of a young girl, all alone. Without any hesitation, she started crossing the flooded field, arrived on the other side, and found the young girl crying. Apparently, she got separated from her family during migration.

Over past few years, a monumental human crisis had erupted in the region. Majority Buddhist citizens of Myanmar encouraged by central authority and military had begun an “ethnic cleansing” of minority citizens of Islamic faith. Millions of people already fled to neighboring Bangladesh, itself one of the poorest nations on earth. Refugee camps had been bursting to seams, but more refugees were still coming. Along came incessant rain of monsoon adding to misery. Dr. Lin consoled the crying child. She gave her name Fatima Hassan.

On a flash, Dr. Lin started to see her own long-forgotten younger self from three decades ago into Fatima. She was born in Cambodia. In her early years, the country got entangled in the politics of cold war between two super-powers, eventually taken over by an ideology-based ruthless regime. Millions would disappear or be systematically killed for their resistance. Finally fearing for their lives, her family would decide to flee to a neighboring country. Like Fatima, she would

get separated from her own family in a moon-less night. A young couple took her under their wings. For next few years, she would move from country to country with the couple. Finally, they would get asylum in the United States, where the couple would adopt her legally. She flourished in academics in school and college, earning a doctorate degree in political science and eventually landing her current position in UN. That night, Dr. Lin would bring Fatima to her own tent. Next day, she handed her over to International Red Cross who flew her to Europe. Later she would learn that a kind family in Sweden adopted Fatima.

Recently, Dr. Lin was attending an UN-gala in New York honoring Ms. Sheila Khan, a Pakistani teenager who took bullets in the head for standing against the religious bigotry inside her own country. But she survived, moved to UK, and started a global movement for women's empowerment, while finishing her education. To her delight, Dr. Lin noticed a new Fatima, full of self-confidence, was sitting in the front row with other dignitaries, representing her adopted country in this movement.

She came out of the auditorium, went to the balcony, looked at the distant flashing lights of the city, and announced to the universe: "Listen all the despots of the world: the flame of humanity will always flicker, even in darkest moments."

*

At the same time, around half-the-world away, Dr. Arunabha Sinha, an MIT-educated brilliant Indian computer scientist settled in Bangalore (Silicon Valley of India) picked up a copy of the day's English newspaper *Bangalore Times* en route to company's café for his first round of morning coffee. He arrived early today to check out the latest output from a project on artificial intelligence he had been working on for last

several months. In the past, Dr. Sinha led a group developing a unique “messaging service” app that found wide application on a social media site that currently claims billions of users worldwide. This particular app became widely popular amongst foreign Diasporas living in European and American subcontinents. Instead of international dialing, the immigrants now can connect with their loved ones in their countries of origin via this app on that particular social media site.

However, lately Dr. Sinha had been learning about the monstrous turn of events this app created within his own country. Post-independent India, after spending two hundred years under colonial rule, emerged as a regional technology-based economic powerhouse in a very short period of time. Then globalization appeared in horizon, bringing foreign investments and expertise as well as availability of international brand-name merchandises, both cheap and expensive.

Dr. Sinha read the headlines quickly and then turned the front-page over. Right there on the third page, there was a full-page ad titled “We Will Fight False Information Together” from the parent company of the social media site. With several millions users out of a population of more than one billion, that particular “messaging service” app had evolved into an instrument in propagating fake information, false criminal charges involving child-kidnapping and rape, religious bigotry, and political propaganda.

Recently, an investigative journalist tracked down at least two dozen cases of mob-lynching of “suspected child kidnappers”, based on fake commentaries and gruesome pictures of photo-shopped mutilated bodies. Another journalist found evidence of similar cases of mob-lynching involving “suspected rapists”. But the toll had been heavy involving religious strife. The centuries-old friction between two main religious groups of the

country now finds new fronts on the computer-screens, gets twisted and propagated through false information via this messaging app resulting in deadly riots in different parts of the country.

The ad in the newspaper went on to offer tips how to spot false information, check out the origin and then re-check from another source about its accuracy. It also suggested checking out the information on sender, while putting forward a profound reminder “Receiving the same message again and again does not make it true.” But for Dr. Sinha, the “Genie” might be already out of bottle, given the country’s language, cultural, and religious diversity and economic disparity. He finished his coffee and headed towards his lab, murmuring “Maybe the robots with artificial intelligence would indeed be smarter than human beings to distinguish between self-preservation vs. self-destruction.”

Death and Doughnuts

Christine A. Brooks

Poetry

Hello there?

You look like my daughter, she has your eyes.
Do you know her?

Forgive me lady,
I have forgotten your name.
Have I already asked you?

You look like my daughter, she has your eyes
Have I mentioned that?
You look so sad?
Are you alright?

I had a doughnut today
Did you know that?
I don't know who brought them, but
She looked like my daughter, she had the
same
Eyes.

I wish I could go home,
I don't like it here.
Where am I?

I wish I could have a doughnut
Glazed ones are my favorite
Do you like doughnuts lady?
Forgive me, I have forgotten your name.

Maybe you could tell my daughter something
For me?

You look kind, I can see it in your eyes.
Could you tell her I love her and that I would love
another doughnut.

Glazed are my favorite.

Forgive me,
Did you mention your name?
I do hope my daughter comes soon.
She looks like you, she is bringing me
doughnuts.

Oh, look the doughnuts are right here,
By my bed.
Did my daughter stop by?
Was I sleeping?

Forgive me.

A New York City Guy Hikes the Catskills

Richard Luftig

Poetry

Not a Chinese restaurant in sight.
Or even a casino. And the trees!
God took the entire third day
of Creation to make them all.
Would it have killed Him to take
another to print name labels
so I'd know what the hell
I'm looking at? I mean, it's not like
He was getting paid by the hour.

And don't get me started
on mosquitos and poison ivy.

Right about now, I'd die
for a blueberry muffin
or a raisin cookie. An onion bagel
would be nice if it came with
cream cheese and maybe some lox.

And I'm not that crazy either
about all this wildlife. I mean,
deer are okay though I hear
they can cause some disease
named for a fruit that I'd just as soon
put in my *Corona* about now.
And the guy in the village who sold
me the hiking gear this morning
warned about wolves — or were
they coyotes — and rhinos and tigers
and something called Bigfoot.

My own fault, I guess,

for coming out here in the first place,
like some pioneer or mountain-man.
And now I have a sunburn
and blisters and a rash on my ass
where I had to use leaves because
no one was thoughtful enough
to supply these woods with toilet paper.
Punishment, I admit for being
out here in the first place.
You know, my own bear to cross.

The Shed Full of Lost Words

Gareth Culshaw

Poetry

The shed is up. Bookshelves stand
in their way. Books taken in,
and fill up the spaces, author names
spine my eyes as I come and go.

The bookshelves add weight
to the world. I pin a picture of my dog,
and a photo of my mother holding me
as a child. Our eyes young, full of Hiraeth.

Sometimes I sit with her, listening
to the corvids in the fields. Watch
birds hang on the garden feeder, hear
the day leave for the night.

My feet become stone cold, hands
purple, my head pauses. All the words
around me mean nothing compared
to the river of syllables my mother gave.

Now they have sunk too low
to remember, and I sit searching
for them in a shed full of silent words.

He Did Everything You Know

Gareth Culshaw

Poetry

He worked in a chippy
beat his Mrs with his fish hands.
She gave birth to two pies.
They all lived wrapped in paper.

He left the chippy to become
a mechanic. He hit her with a wrench.
She gave birth to a rounded nut.
He bought a garage.

Then he went into the army.
Shot his Mrs dead while she hung
out the washing took his kids
in a submarine to the polar regions.

They all lived in an igloo.
The kids asked for mum, and he said
she ran off with the newspaper.
But they knew he lied.

They saw him build a coffin
from the shed panels. He even dug
a grave. And the kids watched
with open eyelids.

Sandcastle
Tyler Grant
Poetry

Foundationally speaking, the wet sand held together
better than we thought,
What was once a polite nervous tic, hands digging and
moving the earth
Became a furtive, collective effort — me with incessant
questions and her with
Coy, beached gerrymandering.

She formed a moat first. The good ones always do.
Protecting the inevitable
Castle from riptide. My aimless nerves ran a trench at
this point hitting the water
Table. Before I knew it a tower rose from the *pitter*
patter droplets of sand from my
Fist like a chef's final seasoning. She firmed the base
and made constructive improvements.

She was forward looking in that way. At a certain point,
I put a shell as a door
And she broke a piece of dried driftwood to bridge the
moat. A translucent crab burrowed
Behind the shell. She laughed and looked up for the first
time in that half hour and
I felt like a king.

2 lines

J Mari

Poetry

last night
in bed before going to sleep
i had two killer lines.

i had two killers lines
but i was beat
and i thought i'd remember in the morning.

now it's morning
and they're gone
like old girlfriends.

i had two killer lines
and they were going to be
part of a killer poem.

i was going to
let you read it, and

i think
it would have
made you see me
in a different way:

it could have even
made you fall in love.

based on this poem
publishers and editors
would have
reevaluated my prior work:

the book sales were bound
to be significant,
a new life and its open door.

i think you were
going to fall in love.

i had two killer lines
last night
but now it's morning and they're gone.

i don't think they're coming back.

Scraps
J Mari
Poetry

it's usually a ridiculous thing
a stupid thing, like

talking on the phone
for minutes at a time
with a woman you once
slept with
in college 20 years ago

who now lives
6-states away
and found you
on social media, drunk,
or else

coffee or 3-4 beers
for an hour's time
max, once or twice a year
with a woman who
lives less
than 1 mile away
but with whom
you've never slept.

and their husbands or
boyfriends are
invariably insulted, offended

of ill intent, enraged

desirous of my
dismemberment, amputation

disappearance, death

jealous of my
15 words on the phone
or 30 minutes' worth
of company
at the casino
local bar
or coffee shop.

belly-full
they grudge me
my scraps.

The Horrors of 3AM

Timothy Starnes

Nonfiction

I wake up to a pressure directly in the middle of my chest, as if a Paleolithic caveman was attempting to bisect me with an extremely dull spear — it wouldn't be too surprising, as frequently when diving into a large meal, like I had earlier that day with my "adopted" mom, Lisa — a three-scoop banana split piled high with unrealistic amounts of whipped cream, canned pineapple, and chocolate drizzle — I describe myself as "a 900 pound gorilla."

The disorientation of waking up only lasts a few seconds — first feeling that my partner, Ethan, is there — then sensing that maybe this pressure is his nose or part of his face, it is possible, knowing his sleeping patterns — so I gently reach to feel out this new appendage and discover that he has directly buried his elbow between my nipples, padded by chest hair — it doesn't do me much good.

He lies there, asleep, his arm splayed out like a chicken wing, or as if he's in the middle of some bizarre ragtime animal dance. I lie there a bit, hoping he'll move it, but he doesn't — typical.

I would be lying to you if I said that this was a first-time occurrence. He is a serial sleep-induced torturer.

We've been together about six months. I'd say that I've been able to sleep for about three of them. Spending nights with him, I have quickly figured out why couples such as Lucy and Ricky don't share a bed — and it isn't because they were a mixed-race couple on television in the days of segregation. They just want to be able to sleep without getting beaten up.

Now, Ethan won't admit this, but I will — for him to wake me up like this, his subconscious must be actively

trying. Every night, I presume due to the untreated adult ADHD that fuels these rants and endless pet projects, I take a melatonin tablet as I get into bed to lull me to sleep — otherwise I may get to sleep at two or three AM and wake up genuinely miserable. It should be nearly impossible to pull me from this natural chemical-induced sleep — but, not be challenged, he manages to every time.

Another night I wake up like I'm caught in a villain's trap from a James Bond film — being squished to death by the bedroom wall, sandwiched between his skinny frame and the drywall. He is sound asleep, unaware, as I'm gently ground into an oily, pink paste.

Some nights I wake up freezing, discovering that every stich of blankets are gone, and that he's buried himself under six feet of them, leaving me to freeze to death under the assault of the industrial size fan in the room which he keeps on all night "for the noise" — "Just use a sound machine or online video!" I offer, trying to help as he complains about being cold, blankets pulled up around him like an Eskimo adult baby sans diaper. He refuses and retreats further under the wool.

At least half of the time we'll retire to bed after a full day, when I realize that it feels like I'm lying on sand — tiny little speckles of scratchy debris scratching into my butt and arms — it feels like it is molesting my soul, this experience being like being warmed by little tiny flies or crawled on by ants. This experience comes from him eating Pop Tarts, crackers, chips, Chex Mix - and any other similarly textured processed food that can torture me — in bed when I'm not around or watching.

After all of that eating, he's naturally going to have to get up and go to the bathroom, waking me up as he opens and closes the door, thinking that the ghosts of the house have finally come to eat off my face, as much as I wish they'd just eat off my excess pounds. When he

returns, I play foot warmer, since we don't have a medieval hot coal bed warmer or Victorian hot water bottle — he'd probably accidentally kick it over. If it isn't playing foot warmer, I'll be the awkward teddy bear, pulled into an awkward pose that even a contortionist wouldn't be able to handle.

But Tim, you're asking, what about the ghosts of the house? Yes. Someone did die in Ethan's house — an old lady, in her 80's — who passed away in the bedroom directly across the hallway, where no one ever wants to sleep. Ethan claims that my earnest and constant proclamations that the house is haunted are stupid speculations of a creative mind — I strongly disagree.

For example, in December of 2018 I awoke to one of those half-sleeping half-dreaming states, the odd feeling where you are awake and cognizant, but your eyes are still closed and you seem to be in the dream world still — able to affect what is happening in the currently ongoing bizarre scenario playing out. My intuition was telling me "don't open your eyes, there is someone at the end of the bed." — So I lie there, eyes shut. I hear Ethan begin to stir, so figuring it is safe, I open my eyes to look in his direction — he is already on his phone. "I just had the weirdest dream." Ethan begins, tapping away at Reddit. "I was dreaming that I woke up, and you were gone and woke up so mad." Just as I begin to tell him about the weird dream I was having, the gentle purr of a power outage whips through the air and the fan goes quiet. I have claimed ever since that this was evidence of paranormal activity in the house, negative energies affecting us in our sleep — Ethan claims that it was the snow piling up outside.

Okay, okay, it is three AM and I'm now wide awake. I might as well get some work done or watch a few depraved videos on YouTube. Nix that idea, as I'll have to reach over Ethan to reach my phone lying on the

bedside table — which will wake him, guaranteed. I guess this is what love is. I lie there, deciding to try and sleep again.

I push my butt against him and close my eyes, the sound of the fan gently roaring in the background of my mind. I guess I'll try again.

Closing the Door on My Selling Door to Door

Shelby Stephenson

Poetry

To speak in a squat-voice
is all that I could manage.
I heard the noise
of the bell and heard the damaging
gravelly voice of Rocky Mount,
North Carolina's Chief of Police.
"Do you have a permit
to solicit in this city?"

I was selling the *Richards
Topical Encyclopedia*.
"My crew-leader's from Jordan.
I don't know where he is."
"Well, you sit on this curb,
maybe he will show up."
My seat hardened: *Do not feel hurt,
though a hole fills your cup.*

I thought of my mom.
I saw a set of books
in a grocery along
about my tenth year. "Look,
Mama, the pretty blue covers."
They're on a shelf in the packhouse
now with other books I've gathered
over the years. I picture a mouse

Curating them,
for the sake of door-to-door canvassing.
It is no more, a real sin,
— and a definite dismantling —
in this young century.

When my mother was alive
she'd turn anyone in
who rang her bell, the white-

Hooded Klansman, even.
She was afraid of nothing.
“Take that sheet off, son,
and come on in.”
I just thought of this:
He was not on my side, that Chief.
Lord, I needed money
to go to college, Chief Thief.

Honor Thy Father

Devan Burton

Poetry

He works twelve hours a day.
Lifting steel —
checking glass —
building an empire.
Lunch is a pack of crackers and tuna.

The light from the television
is the warmth he connects to.
When he walked through Vietnam,
the steel was pressed against his chest.
At nights,
he counted the stars
he carried with him from Tennessee.

His son knows he should like his father.
Although the two do not speak.
The boy was crammed into a middle school locker.
Junior was pushed down the stairs.
He honors the distant parent
like he honors the moon
that is out of his touch.

He works twelve hours,
Lifting steel —
checking glass —
remembering what he ought to forget.

Mother's Hour

Devan Burton

Poetry

I'm sure my mother became a saint
after her heart ceased to beat.
When she no longer accepted
the same air that I did.
Alone on her bed, she saw
the light from the great beyond
and had enough health
to sprint towards it.
In the seconds,
when choices cannot be made twice,
I consult her memory.
I summon the voice
for which I cannot remember its timbre,
and wait for signs and wonders.
I seek for knowledge
from a woman that moved
like a statue when I last saw her.
Like an icon—I touched her feet—
and asked her to pray for me.
It was the first time in years
in which she listened.

In Autumn
Larisa Harriger
Poetry

yellow moon
 becomes
amber mum
 becomes
question of bridges that go nowhere
 becomes
smell of paper, hot out of the printer
 becomes
something golden that
was alive just yesterday
 but today smells newly, richly dead.

**Invocation // The Beast That Makes Holes in the
Barrier**

Gregory Kimbrell

Poetry

The passengers on the foredeck chat about the bodies afloat in the still water as the ship slides

into a patch of algae the same color as the jade on the ambassador's tie clip. Meanwhile, in the

depths of the cargo hold the explosive devices concealed in one of the crates of pre-Christian

statuary remain unarmed because the saboteur lies half dead in the narrow, wall-mounted bed

within his cabin, having spent himself during a night of intricate love games with two or more

of the crew. And yet his fatherland, the people of which have not yet grown too faint of heart

for the rigid old ways, will endure, whether the one vessel sinks now or later—or never. Much

happens at sea without obvious cause, and the heavenly breezes of this afternoon give way to

tomorrow's dead calm. A God-fearing traveler does not expect to arrive intact at the terminal.

Little Seed of Mine
Kimberly Cunningham
Poetry

I carried with me a seed,
a gray seed, a slightly cracked seed
clenched inside my grip
as though it was a piece of gold
Barely could I walk
Yet strong my hand to hold

On shores of desperation,
trudged through silty sand
Tripped and stayed down
then crawled along barren land
Gale force winds defeated me
and they laid my body down
Stolen from me was that cherished seed
Kept on going til it hit the next town

Dreams quickly ran by me
Til they could run no more
Left all the hope I had
scattered along those shores

Destiny planted my little seed deep
It lay there in assigned new place
Time now for me to sleep
I joined that seed filling my own space
Will lay there forever
good rest I keep

Door and Fire
Robert Hasselblad
Poetry

The door in me
has no handle
no hinge.

The fire in me
no wood
or flame.

This door, this fire
both older
than the heart.

Simple, yes,
to push through one
rekindle the other.

Not simple:
how to keep
the fire from leaping
through the door,
the door from leading
to the unknown.

We Got Out As Soon As We Could

Claire Scott

Poetry

for my sister

Do you know that
every now and then I go back
to toss an empty bottle of bourbon
or wipe congealed cream from coffee cups
piled in the sink, precarious as a Jenga tower
to scrape strands of spaghetti off the walls
if it sticks, it's done
to see a knife stabbed & shivering
on the stairs, to hear the squeak
of her medicine cabinet as she popped
more pills she said would kill her
her if she drank
& she did & she did &
we lay awake in our separate rooms
hoping to hear her get more pills
terrified to hear her get more pills

I think of my stash of Ambien
your tumblers of red wine
& I wonder
if we ever really got out

Mirror Mirror

Claire Scott

Poetry

others envied her
my super-skinny-all-bony-
knees-and-elbows roommate
how does she stay so thin
as they ordered French fries
ate a fourth double-chocolate chocolate chip cookie
crick crack another snack
vowing to start a strict diet
tomorrow or maybe after finals
no freshman fifteen for her
that's for sure

but I knew
I knew how she did it
shoot shout secret's out

twelve glasses of water a day
no food till three
cottage cheese
saltines
apple slices
black coffee
that's it

she was just better than me
I dreamt of forests and cottages with tiny doors
dip dapple a poisoned apple

after spring break
slip slap she didn't come back
jangling grapevine
whispered hearsay/heresy

a shattered mirror

no dapper strapper prince in sight

I didn't mind

it meant I finished first

Worst-Case Scenario

Laure Van Rensburg

Fiction

Standing by the underground station entrance, I shift my weight from one leg to the other, but it doesn't ease the discomfort inside me. Nose in my phone like the dozen other people scattered around, I blend in — another jagged commuter who's arrived early, waiting for someone. In truth, you are fifteen minutes late and haven't replied to any of my texts.

One.

Your boss popped by your desk for a chat. Of course, you were free you told him. Nothing in your near future that couldn't wait for five minutes... or fifteen. You sat with him, knowing that whenever you showed up, I would be there — a predictable certainty in a green polka dress by the station entrance.

Two.

You ran into your ex at the corner of Neal Street and Long Acre. Literally. The shock of your two bodies colliding reignited that gravitational pull between you. Forgetting about me, you invited her for coffee — catching up before a familiar desire would drive you to take her home and become two naked bodies twisting under the sheets we bought at John Lewis. Finally surrendering to the truth, I had only been a consolation prize, the teddy bear people won at the fair but not quite the one they had their heart set on.

Three.

You were crossing Shaftesbury Avenue and never saw the speeding black cab. Your body drew a perfect arc as it flew across the street. Now lying on the asphalt,

all torn flesh and broken bones, a wreath of strangers' heads obstructs your view of the sky. You search for my face but I'm not there. Instead, I'm standing by the station entrance, worrying that you are cheating on me when you are really dying, and I'm the worse girlfriend in the world. And —

“Sorry, I'm late.” You smile.

The reason for your lateness is in your hand — all twenty-four of them, wrapped in clear cellophane, long stems crowned with yellow velvety petals. My favourites.

“Can you believe I had to try three shops before finding the right ones with that orange hue you like.”

I take the flowers I don't deserve. Cradling them, they weigh heavy against my arm. As we walk away, you take my hand, but your fingers don't lace with mine. The article I read in Cosmo said, interlocking fingers were a display of deep intimacy. I stare at your lovely present and start to wonder.

The Cerebral Roommate

JDaniel Richer

Poetry

Deep down I want to go that party
Strut in, turn up, be hearty
But my fight or flight response kicked in, no surprise
My body thought I was at war and no mantra could
convince it otherwise

You made me ashamed of myself
Took up residence in my mind and damaged my health
Your favorite game is worst case scenario and I'm done
fucking playing it.
You are not me, just a fearful voice with no wit.

You are the bane of my existence
There's only so much I will tolerate and you're building
up your resistance
Your army is marching forward, smug faced, and sweat
on your brow
I know I must defeat you, I just wish I knew how

Present your poem to the class said the teacher.
And my demon said
You can barely speak without stuttering
How are you going to recite this poem without
muttering?
They'll laugh at you for sure. You're a waste of breath, a
bore.
You suck and you know it, sit down, you're not a poet.

When I was weak in high school, you were at your peak
Irrational fear of judgement, too terrified to speak
Lack of confidence, thought I was a freak
Turns out, I was just more unique

Far too long I had “nothing to say”
No longer will I let you get your way
I share my thoughts for the world to see
Flip the script and weaponize my insecurity

We’ve all got our demons and this one’s mine
Insecurities remanifest from time to time
You tried to silence me and rob me of my social life
One more demon dead, smothered by my pillow of
strife.

Grass Springs Green

DS Maolalai

Poetry

as a child
in my granddad's place
there were cactuses
in the glass house, and it was filled too
with ornamental flowers,
and of course,
an Irish home,
jesus
all over the wall. now
no jesus
and grass springs
green
with weekday heat, bursting over footpaths
like rivers
in heavy rain. I am not
a garden person
end every weekend
I spend
sitting somewhere else
when I could be weeding
is a betrayal
of his trusting me
his property.

Everything ChangesA. A. Parr
Poetry

Girl on the subway is dancing
like she knows this song
and she wants me to remember it, too.

The train in front of us curves up the bend,
shifting other lives concurrently
into my own.

Maybe this is it,
that moment
when everything changes.

I need to go out dancing again,
need to caress these moments
with my hips, my lips, and fingers,

while she's all toes and pheromones.
I want her so badly that
I want myself again, too.

Metallic brakes squeal,
doors open, close, open again,
but I don't get off.

In 4.7 seconds, I will notice
that she is gone, and
this is the moment when
everything changes.

Make Me Feel

A. A. Parr

Poetry

I don't think you're happy.

There. I said it.

I think I could make you smile
in a way that only happens
when you're remembering
how the music
made you want to feel.

I think I could touch you
in a way that makes you want
to do everything that scares you
because you'd know
that I would kiss
your wounds.

I don't think I could make you happy,

but I think that if you were with me
you wouldn't need someone
to make you happy.

There. I said it.

I think you could make me feel
the way you feel when
you sing about the sky that night
and I think I could make you feel
like you hadn't just
made up the story.

I think you could make me happy,
and I'm not used to feeling
like I can place that sort of trust
in other people.

There. I said it.

Consumed

A. A. Parr

Poetry

He poured himself into me,
until I was empty.

I poured out all of the bottles
that had consumed him,
consuming them,
consuming everything in its path,
like the fires that threatened
our three-quarter acre
that winter after the floods
had washed away every trace of me
down in the city.

From up here in the hills,
it looks small,
but I still don't feel like I can
fill this space

Large things can be made small,
I've learned,
by a change in perspective,
and I wonder as I stare
into the motel mirror
if the inverse is also true.

Small change and empty bottles;
smoke in the hills, water in the valley.

At least we ended the drought.

Sweet Longing
Hege A. Jakobsen Lepri
Fiction

That summer Lily had just lost 100 pounds and her photo was still on the "Wall of Heroes" at the local gym. My whole body ached from sucking in my gut every time she or anyone looked at me.

It was almost Labour Day when she found the time to go on a picnic. "Just the two of us, like old times."

Old times was last year. Old times, was tuna sandwiches and chips and lemonade spiked with her mom's vodka. Old times, was skinny-dipping in the river together, laughing our throats sore. Those times were dead and drowned in change, and we both knew it. But I couldn't say no.

From the outside things looked the same: We'd taken the usual path through the woods down to our place by the river. There were insects feasting on my bare arms just like last year. But now Lily was joking about the sugars in my blood, and she never knew how to tell a joke. She walked ahead of me. And I wondered, had her hip always done that weird thing that made her ass look like it was grinding something?

The black swimsuit was new, and she made perfect circles in the water when she jumped in—legs straight, arms above her head. She had remembered to pull back her hair in a ponytail, so when she reemerged and threw back her head, it didn't turn into a brown slug covering her face. I was on the riverbank, there was no way in Hell I'd place myself in the same frame as that swimsuit. I watched her tumbling and splashing in the water and noticed the coarseness of my black t-shirt. There was nothing to laugh about so we didn't.

Afterwards we sat down on the blanket I'd brought, the same picnic blanket we always used, but which

seemed to have grown, and there was a fresh gap between our bodies—plenty of room for the food and plates and thermos. I remember the veggies and dip I brought, the orange and red harsh against the faded plaid. The white dip with green speckles unopened.

She must have been in her swimsuit, her ever-shrinking ass leaving a damp spot on the fleece. But when I close my eyes I can't see her body. Instead, it's always the cupcakes that appear first.

There were two of them. Two chocolate miracles with a cloud of creamy red sweetness on top. To this day I don't know where she got them. In my memory they are more real than the bug bites, more palpable than my heartbeat. Unlike anything I'd seen: moister than mouths and fluffier than dreams.

I remember how it burned in my hand while I waited for her to take her own cake. *Hey Lily*, I wanted to say, *Just this once for old times sakes*. But my tongue had turned into a log.

And her words had dried up too, her head slightly tilted to the left, and she smiled as she waited for my mouth to give in. Even as an itinerant army of ants started removing the crumbs of the carcass of my cake, she was smiling. The dimple in her cheek was almost gone and still she was smiling. There was runaway icing on my arm and instead of licking it off, I rubbed the napkin onto it until paper flakes stuck to my arm.

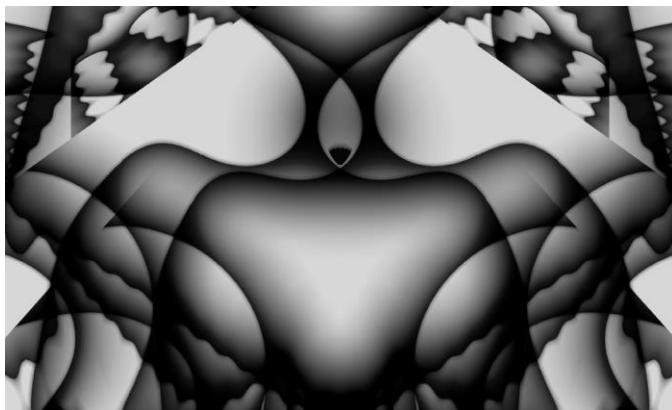
Her mouth unfroze only when I started packing up the knapsack with that last sugar bomb—the one I later threw into the garbage by the gas station. There were weeks until school started, but that would be our last picnic.

Sometimes, when I'm on the exercise bike and want to quit, I look over to the space where her portrait used to hang. I can no longer remember all of her face, just the dimples and her round chin, but I've never forgot

those cakes. The one she handed me, and that I held in my hand as I waited and waited for something to happen, someone to release us before everything fell apart.

That's usually enough for me to pick up speed again and keep going. I close my eyes as my mouth fills with the taste of iron during that last hard stretch. And that's when that August day comes back to me full force. Lily is half hidden behind the best cupcake I never ate, and the tug I feel is equal parts hunger and remorse.

Nude with Thin Neck 2
Edward Supranowicz
Art



not my tribe
Linda M. Crate
Poetry

always wanted to be a ballerina,
so graceful and beautiful in their swan like
movements;
didn't want anything to do with the jazz class
my mother signed me up for —
she told me
that it could be fun,
but i didn't fit it with any of the other girls
stuck out like a sore thumb;
wasn't friends with anyone in my class
it was a painful reminder
no matter where i went that i never fit in
begged her to quit and she let me
although i know she was disappointed —
you just can't fit a key into
a door it wasn't made for
i wasn't meant to open that room,
but maybe one day i will find my place with
all the people with whom i have always
belonged.

A Hundred and Fifty a Year

Jan Steckel

Poetry

That's how many die homeless in San Francisco,
City of the Golden Gate, of red pagodas,
of Coit Tower and Beat poets,
Summer of Love and the blossoming Haight.

Forty-five years old. That's their average age:
the mad, broken, unlucky, disabled,
addicted, unwashed, and unshod.
A little over half the span I expect.

A hundred and fifty a year is the number
of thousands I made as a doctor
just out of medical school,
before I was broken, too.

How They Became Homeless

Jan Steckel

Poetry

The corner family's daily garage sale
of flotsam skimmed from dumpsters
netted me three elongated shot glasses,
several books and a pizza-cutting wheel.

One night the space heater on
knob-and-tube wiring finally
burned the place down.
The family scattered.

It took three years for the landlord
to rebuild the house. Meanwhile
Oakland swelled with people
living in freeway right-of-ways.

Tents mushroomed up against
underpass walls. Women and men
cooked communal meals
on open flames.

Someday archeologists will discover
ochre handprints on the concrete,
dig middens of TV dinner trays,
guess about post-apocalyptic humanity.

Blues for David Gollub

Jan Steckel

Poetry

Sentences in my head.
Musical phrases in my ears.

Billie Holiday expired on the way
to the colored hospital.

David had a Stanford English Ph.D.
Only eight words are left to him.

He wore a Billie Holiday T-shirt
the day I first met him.

When Tom was dying years ago,
David brought Billie to the ICU.

Now David's in a hospital gown.
Ensure drips straight into his stomach.

A hybrid car glided silently into him
round a Berkeley corner at night.

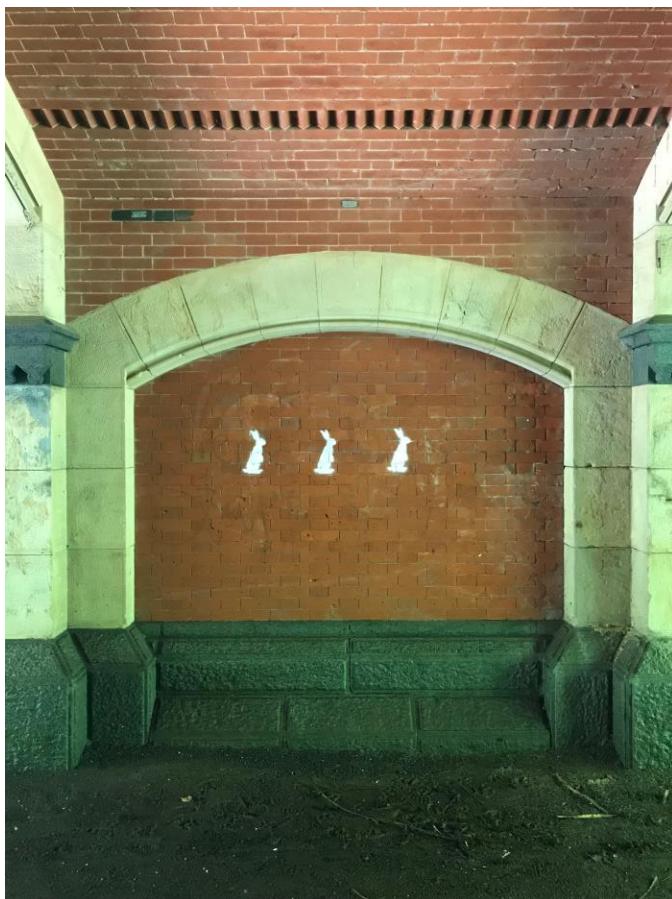
Blood flooded his speech center.
Synapses crumbled.

Let's bring a boom box
to the nursing home in the Fruitvale.

Play him some blues. Maybe
melody and rhythm were spared.

Poets collect in his room,
dazzled by silence.

White Rabbits
June Levitan
Art



Have Faith
Lorrie Beauchamp
Poetry

i can't remember when,
but i do remember then.

i was dancing joyously,
furiously, after dark,
on the rug.
laughing at my reflection,
letting myself
fly.

it's a nice memory,
i sigh,
as i drag popcorn to my mouth,
turn the page of a shitty novel,
seek the lazy escape of
sullen distraction.

cast as my own enemy
in this drama, i am
guilty on all counts:
giving too much
caring too hard...
opening up so wide
that some darkness fell in,
pushed to the edge
by
supreme
resistance.

i will dance again.

Smothering
Lorrie Beauchamp
Poetry

everyone
wants to parent me these days,
it seems.
as if i'm walking around
looking for another mother.

but no!
i reassure them;
i have never felt
more capable.
thank you
for your loving
suggestions,
your urgings
for me to
settle here or there,
do this or that,
spend more or less.

the only voice
i'm eager to hear
these days
is the
one
emanating from
deep within.

“believe,” she says,
and winks at me.

(she's cheeky)

Graphology
Peggy Turnbull
Poetry

Is it true that we who
write the letter *a*
without knitting the top tight
are liars, unworthy of hire?
Presenting an *a* as a *u*
is our crime. They say *a*
has more value, can stand alone
and be added to.
It's the head of the line.
No one ignores *a*'s glory
to favor *u*'s grub
unless crossing a border
with something to hide.
They think we're contrary
to the original creation
and if God makes mistakes
we're in need of prayer
not affirmation.
Don't loosen all the stitches
to weave another pattern.
Be like the others.
Keep it tight, the way
you're supposed to,
or they'll have doubts
and woe to us,
they'll throw us out.

Children Who Never Met Him

Peggy Turnbull

Poetry

saw the soldier smile
in a picture frame
at grandma's.

Ran in his back yard
on brittle grass
avoiding shadows.

Sometimes they looked up —

felt an angel hover
during kickball
or jumping rope —

no one ever there.

The Heart Test

Peggy Turnbull

Poetry

Her 93-year-old heart quivers
in grainy black and white
on an ultrasound screen where
a technician draws green vectors
into an emblem.

Teeth jag into a universe
of solar flares
with blue and yellow plumage.
A machine speaks wow-wow-wow
in exultation, its spitting mouth
an anemone waving
in slow-motion.

Something and its companion
float through a tunnel.
Heads up, they face the light
while an errant signal
sings like a whip
followed by two tattoos,
the heel-toe sound of a man
walking on hardwood floors
in red leather cowboy boots.
Her husband in 1947
when they met in Wyoming,
his name emblazoned
on their gleaming shafts.

He comes closer,
their song now in its coda,
their boat now collapsing,
their peace still to come,
but soon.

Splendid Architecture

Marisa P. Clark

Poetry

— for Rose B. Simpson,
after a title by Joyce Carol Oates

Come fall, when I teach poets new to the craft,
I'll face mirrors of myself young, who'll reveal
my past mistakes. As I once did, they'll twist
grammar to force rhyme, impose clichés
on poetry's great themes of Love and Pain,
and capitalize abstractions to give them weight.
They'll blur the image (if one exists), compose
the tepid stuff of greeting cards, end-stop
all lines. At times their verse will be too free,
or else the rules too strictly followed. When
they learn form, they'll be afraid to stretch
the sonnet to a needed fifteenth line
and sooner die than risk a spondee
to relieve a thumping meter...like me,
as I still do — though I'll try to teach
them not to.

But just as likely, one will spin her lines
like a net of silk and catch a living
image in their form. Then I'll recall
an early morning walk when I observed,
cast among a rose's leaves, a web
of nested octagons jeweled with dew.
I leaned to inspect the architecture,
splendid and precise, and saw
the spider, serene in her design.
Though I did not witness the act
of weaving, I know something of the hours
and care she gave. Such art is more

than miracle; it is a feat of patient grace. It needs no teacher but wants someone to recognize its maker, now in repose and satisfied with her good work, and praise her.

Even in Dreams, the Queer Girl Faces Facts

Marisa P. Clark

Poetry

Mira, you say, and again, *Mira!*—
and look away from me. You hook
one arm around my neck — I bend
to this embrace. The other points
to a blur of brown male bodies:
some tall, some short, and whether stout
or lean, all muscle-cut; men sporting
close-cropped hair and neat goatees.

I clutch strong tall green stems tipped
with flowers of deep purple — larkspur
perhaps, or the flame-shaped buds
of the iris we both love, a gift
I try to press into your hand,
the one that reaches out, that's
out of reach. I know I'm just
a woman, a pale wisp to you,
though bright with desire —

and this is how desire goes, yes,
even as I dream: You look at them,
and I at you. So I don't see —
or can't, or won't — the woman
who may chance to notice me.

Impasse
Marisa P. Clark
Poetry

When you stopped the fight to ask if I had
good childhood memories of you, Mother,
I could have affirmed, but what came to mind
was the driveway on Elder Street, two ruts
of crushed oyster shells that led away
from the gaggle of grownups laughing
on the front porch, my family, you. Between
those ruts grew the grass strip I marched along,
a child of three, careful to keep each track
equidistant from me — a balancing act?
or my way of trying to be at the center
of things? Whatever the case, I aimed
for symmetry or escape through the front
gate, my progress inexorable — or so
I thought — until I saw the anthill. I
picture me got-up in a summer number
of lime and sunshine yellow, my shoes white
patent leather, with buckle straps. One stomp
collapsed the antbed. Then molten fire
filigreed my veins and froze me. I looked
for the red blaze but saw only folded-down
cotton socks polka-dotted with ants, ants
freckling my scrawny shins. I must have cried,
a shrill wail, because some grownup came
running, swept me up in grownup arms,
and beat away the beasts. If my hero
was you, Mother, thank you. But memory gaps
where pain resides, and I lose sight of you.
So when you stopped the fight, I held my tongue.
I wanted to affirm, but you resumed.

By Starlight By Starlight My Dear

Ann Wuehler

Fiction

Compulsion guided me to knock on the door, same as I do every year at this time. I hope Henry will hear it, let me in, speak to me, pretend I'm just coming back, pretend I'm yet alive. My feet do not mar the snow's virgin breast, my breath does not plume out in the air. The shuffle of feet, the door opened. Some other stood there, not my Henry. A tall woman, looking remarkably like a pelican. A big hooked nose, small mean blackberry eyes. We had watched the pelicans on the Snake River, when we stopped to rest up a bit. It's not much further, Henry had told me. We're almost home, Henry had told me. A knitted shawl as colorful as Joseph's coat flung about her big masculine shoulders, her dress homespun gray cloth. Scanty gray hair yanked back into a mean, hard knot. "You ha'nts," the woman spit to the side, then held the door open. "Come in, if that's what you wish."

"Where is Henry?" The stars move over my head, stars upon stars upon stars. The woman took up her tin cup of coffee, sat again by her miserly fire. "You need more wood on that."

"I know what I need." She tosses sticks on the low flames. "You looking for the old man that used to squat here? Of course you are. You ha'nts ain't got the imagination God gave a flea. I'd offer you some coffee, might even offer you a cold biscuit with some bacon grease. It's for my breakfast but you'd be welcome to it." Her lips send me a smile. I stood near the hearth I helped find rocks for. With my Henry. "I seen two others up here abouts. The snow get you? You can tell ole Martha. That's my name. Martha Feather. I used to be a muleskinner. Got too old for that. Just got too old." She

coughed, spit up something foul, spit it into the fire. "I let you in for the comp'ny."

"Where is Henry?" It became harder and harder to remember why I wandered about, why it seemed stars were my only light lately. Long hairs grew on her upper lip. Dark against her rawhide skin. "You never wore a hat."

"I didn't. No man ever cared how rough my hide was," Martha gave a great shout of laughter. "Oh, I had some fun times, honey. I never cottoned to all that Bible talk. There was an old man here, I found him. I buried him out back. He'd been dead a while, eyes eaten out by mice. Mice are terrible creatures. Terrible." She put another stick on her fire, from the stack she had nearby. "I had terrible pains today in my legs, so I stayed in bed. I supposed someone'll find me dead with my eyes eaten out. But catch me wandering about like you, honey!"

"I don't think I like you," I said, and the black eyes crinkled a bit. Black eyes in that rawhide ruin of a face. "Henry loved me, he said he'd love me his entire life when they found me dead. I froze to death walking home from the Kurtzbaer's. I'll love you my entire life, he told me that as he held me in his arms that last time. I visit him every year, I'm a good wife to this day. I'm a good woman to this day!"

Martha laughed, spikes of sound that stripped the world of sense. I knew what I knew. Martha laughed like she knew something else entirely. "You ha'nts! Like children still looking for jam in a broke pot. Like children! Ain't got any sense when you lived, still ain't got any sense now you're dead."

"Nobody'll ever make a ghost of you," I told this Martha, who lived where my Henry had lived for so many years. "Nobody'll ever remember you so hard you rise from the grave."

"I hope so, honey. I hope so," Martha said real quiet, sipping her coffee. She had hung her pot over the flames to keep it warm yet. "I'm about out a flour. Need to get to town one of these days. My last pussy cat done disappeared. She was real good company. A big calico. Caught the mice like nobody's business! Old Scratch's cat, I reckon. Called her home."

"I have to find Henry." I get up, the cabin full of Henry's possessions yet. His old shotgun. The basket I used to keep full of yarn balls. The vase I had carried with me so careful out here to the Oregon Territory. A mouse peeked at me from under the bed. A tiny bed barely raised off the floor. "By starlight, he said. We'd walk again in the starlight, he said."

Martha drained her tin cup, set it down. "Thanks for the visit. I still got some manners left."

Out into the night. Stars upon stars upon stars. I wondered how soon it would take before I could be called home. How long did a memory last? How long did starlight last? Perhaps I could discover where I could finally rest. I just had to keep walking this snow, this night, under these stars. I heard Martha laughing. I heard that as I wandered, as the stars surrounded me, as the snow did not crunch beneath my feet.

Closing Time

Diana Raab

Poetry

Isn't it funny how each time we meet
In that dead of someone's night
after long lingering hours
nibbling on tapas, sipping our wine.

The owner makes his rounds to say
closing is in ten minutes.
It does not matter if it is a bar or coffee shop —
all the same.

It's closing time, like Leonard Cohen sang
at theaters years ago where we met
as you stood last one in line at our neighborhood wine
bar,
and I wandered by wondering what it might take

to seduce you into my life,
when that wine line was ending
and our affair was beginning —
always waiting in line
for something better than we have now.

Moonchild

Roxanne Cardona

Poetry

Glenda is seven years old,
her arms crossed over a worn
sweatshirt, loose and unapologetic.

As her teacher, I have to lift-up
her shirt. Picture the burns — like
craters, her skin erased of all color.

Her sister threw a pot of boiling water
meant for spaghetti. *It was no accident*, Glenda says
proud she never shed a tear. Tells me that kind of hurt

gets you nowhere. And one day, her sister is going
to pay. She rubs her thumb along the width
of the burn. I force myself to look again.

The moon left its face on my stomach, see?
I give my professional smile, pull up all my armor,
but she deserves more. *What did your mom do?*

Momma cooked up chocolate pudding.
She said, I was still beautiful. Not many
girls have the moon grinning on their tummy

Thinking of Anthony

Roxanne Cardona

Poetry

Ayeee, oooheee, No. Every morning, this one too.
Anthony crashes into our school building.
A howl so loud, so mournful, I stop

all talking. Thinking too. *Ayeee, no, no, no.*
His seven-year-old voice rises till it splits
the western octave into twenty-three

irregular pieces of pie. His untied sneakers
scoot past my room, I follow him up the stairs
and we stop in front of his classroom where he kicks

man-size holes into his door. *Good morning, Anthony*
say his classmates. *Good morning, Anthony*
say his teachers. *No, school, no.* He lets all his big

teardrops fall onto his blue and purple hoodie.
He was through with chairs with their woody silences,
their impossible straightness. Except those suckers

could fly when he chucked them. And all those doors,
so many to open and close, long halls to run
down but it's the bubble gum balls I know

he's thinking of. Strawberries and grapes,
blues and oranges. All of them collected
in a see-through plastic bag. For him.

He hops when he sees them. His lips curling
up. *For you, when I see you sitting in your*
reading circle, yes? A slow nod, another

unsuccessful snatch of his hand,
his wide-open eyes, then the long walk
across the room. *Promise? Promise*, I say.

Stitches
Roxanne Cardona
Poetry

This evening, the woodpecker loses his beak
in the maples. The more a thing gets repeated

the easier it is to ignore. The old wind knocks
outside our bedroom window,

only the glass complains. You ask me
that question. I want to answer but we both

know better. How questions beget questions,
will follow more questions. I won't answer you.

Not tonight, when the fringe on the rug
has detached from its corner,

lying at such an uncomfortable angle.
I place my hand between the rug and the fringe

to push the pieces together. I want to say,
I love you more, throw open the window,

set the birds free, name them—
Instead I say, *Let me stitch it*

with yarn and needle. The answer lies
in the holding and this will just have to do.

Power
Roxanne Cardona
Poetry

Handle it gently.
It's almost always round
red, and so hot.
Don't be afraid to grab it,
open its long jaw.
Be careful.
Stay away from its white teeth
and whatever you do
don't put your hand in its mouth.
It doesn't like
to be teased.

I know how to take care of it.
Give it to me.
The big school building on a hill.
See its red doors glisten,
its rooftop gargoyles open-winged.
Watch its cherry trees drop
their pink ears to
listen
for the sound of small feet.
They walk towards me
my arms so heavy with books
my hands ready.

In the Midst of Winter

Margarita Serafimova

Poetry

The snows were melting and, weighty, were falling
down.

I was queen of my heart,
and it was radiating.

From the Gut

John Grey

Poetry

The poet was reading, in a bar,
his latest great work,
page after page of scarifying,
self-immolating, soul-flagellating, verse.
A dozen people were listening to him.
But two men, both drunk,
were being loud and obnoxious.
The poet asked them to quiet down
as people wanted to hear.
One of the men flew into a rage.
The other tried to hold him back,
but to no avail.
The big galoot grabbed the poem
out of the poet's hand
and tore it to shreds.
Then he grabbed the poor guy
by the throat
and slammed him against the wall.
The audience was stunned at first
as the poet, when he could
momentarily free his throat
from his assailant's raw grip,
shouted something about
"evolution" and "Neanderthal."
His twelve fans packed up their stuff
and left.
They were willing to listen
to other's troubles
but didn't want to redden the bar floor
with any of their own.
The bartender came over
and tried to put a stop to the one-sided fight.

With the help of the man's buddy,
he was finally able to separate the two.
The poet lay bleeding.
The honor of the other was brutally satisfied.
"Are you okay?" asked the bartender of
the broken scrunched up figure of the versifier.
A simple "yes" or "no" was out of the question.

Cupid's Understudy

Linda Imbler

Poetry

The cryptic play upon the stage,
reflected in glass held in one's palm.

It would be better to learn lines
from the heart,
using our own eyes
to look at others,
and our own lips to send smiles forward.

To ask is but a part of drawing the lines,
to hear and acknowledge the answer
completes the ♥.

Paper Dolls Left in the Rain

Linda Imbler

Poetry

I must remember to grab the right half of truth,
that clarity sometimes breathed at dawn.
And remember the radiant substance
of our friendship.

Knowing you long ago,
and all the colorless girls and boys,
and what transpired
within a mere fraction of my life,
might seem to others as weak,

but what power it held.

Hearing of your silent death
throws such wistfulness my way,
and I can no longer truly feel
our reminiscences without you at the other end.

And though I wish to stop
and really relive my best years,
the ritual of time is pulling me along,
pulling me beyond
the demarcation line
between childhood to adult.

Spark
Marisa L. Manuel
Fiction

From the moment fire sparks to life in the kitchen, all it understands is hunger. It eats its way through countless dishes, causing each to burst into flames, to wither and blacken. It fills the room with smoke, invading nostrils, forcing hands to throw open windows. It skims palms as if shaking hands. And still, the fire craves.

One day — it's an accident, truly an accident — fire catches life on a dish towel. The towel, clumsily left across the stove, sets off the fire alarm; no one but fire hears. The family has left the house, gone to buy more food for fire to burn. And before leaving, 13-year old Wendy had turned on the gas burner, seemingly forgotten to turn it off.

That's the story Wendy tells her parents when they return to no home remaining. Fire has eaten the kitchen; fire has eaten the living room. Fire has eaten Wendy's own room, all of her clothes and games and comforts. But the girl doesn't mourn her loss, not as fire quickens before her, its stomach still needing more.

Her parents call the fire department. Firefighters arrive in time to save a few photos of Wendy—a snapshot of her tenth birth party, eyes transfixed as she refuses to blow out her candles; another one of her on a Girl Scout camping trip, roasting marshmallows, sitting far too close to the fire-pit. But these photos are the only things salvageable, and even they are damaged. The corners are bent from the heat, embracing the young girl within.

Though saddened by their loss, her parents remind each other of ever platitude: objects can be replaced, and at least the family's unharmed. At least their daughter remains. The sentiment is meant to warm them, but

instead, it leaves them cold. As cold as Wendy's eyes while she watches the flames extinguish.

Fire isn't gone. It remains safe in a lighter that Wendy keeps in her purse. The lighter was once her parents, but it was always meant for Wendy.

Fire returns multiple times that year. Once, in the garbage can of their new apartment. Then again in the nearby forest. A few days later, at a neighbor's house, where police are called in to investigate.

The police have some leads, but nothing definite. They have some concerns, but none they can fix. They have a hunger to know the truth, but it's a mere rumble compared to Wendy's starvation. Because wherever there is fire, there is hunger, and wherever there is Wendy, fire follows. And like that, the hunger grows, until there is nothing left but burning.

Queen Bee
Jude Brigley
Poetry

As busy as a bee, she was.
Her hive was often dusted,
and all her ornaments
spread out in vagary
ready to be polished,
waxed and centred
on the shelf's neat cell.

Call it her caprice,
but once a week
she liked to sit
and dust her
life's mementoes:
honey coloured stones
or solid wood;

glass poppies, surviving
into winter.
She stored them all,
took time
to ingest their beauty.
They helped
regurgitate the past.

In her ninetieth year
she stopped that
propensity for dusting;
no longer dreaming
of the meadows of the farm
she sealed her memory
with a stinging capsto

Grounded
Jude Brigley
Poetry

Her eyes were kept on the ground,
in case she spotted a coin,
a discarded screw, or a feather
from a ruffled blackbird.

Such scrutiny has saved her
from plunging into undesirable
detritus, or tripping head-long
into low walls or over chalk marks.

You could say she has missed planes
trailing in a June blue sky,
or stars in the frosty night of January
but she did occasionally glance upwards

to be surprised by the patterns
of firmaments and high buildings.
And yet the ground had a beauty
and gave out an illusion of permanence:

the solidity of a stanza of gravity.
She made her way close to the soil,
sure-footed with composure,
not trusting the uncertainty of steps.

Bowl of Soup

William A. Kofoed

Poetry

the cold winter wind is blowing
across the brown and withered grass
as the mornings frost melts
in the pale sunlight

many days have been passed
spent outside in the sun
in the warmth of the light
on us as we ate

a bowl of soup so warm
held in our hands now
light through the window on us
staying inside now to eat

still in light of the sun
that warms us as we eat
the soup warms us it within
though cold it is now outside

Poems from Long Ago
Luis Cuauhtémoc Berriozábal
Poetry

I do not know many of my poems from long ago by heart; time erases my memories and where I was mentally when those poems were conceived. Perhaps it is a good thing to forget some things that will only drive you into deep depression and sometimes it is good thing to remember painful things to remind you that you are human and that you can overcome things that could have destroyed you. But here you are.

Blue Bin
Edward Lee
Art



Cones, Door
Edward Lee
Art



A Pleasant Recollection

Edward Lee

Poetry

On occasion
I find myself
thinking of you,
though I cannot remember your name,
if I knew it at all;
a chance encounter
on the way home from the pub,
led to an invite in,
another drink, not needed,
then some exploratory hours
in your sheet-less bed,
followed by conversation
consisting of our separate dreams,
hopes, broken by jokes,
laughter, imaginings
of other nights like this.

I left as a lazy sun streaked the sky
and never saw you again,
though phone numbers were exchanged
(I wonder which of us lost
the other's first),
and never really thought of you
beyond moments like this,
when my brain does
some kind of mental stock-take,
remainders of the pleasures
of the past
when hard days need softening.

I hope you found someone
to share laughter with everyday,

someone to talk to through nights
and into early mornings,

and more than anything
I hope all your dreams
came true.

Some of mine did,
the ones that mattered,
in the end.

The Vow
Jacob Butlett
Poetry

While my distant relatives stood before their father's shiny casket and spoke about the times he had driven motorcycles through rings of fire for fun, for money, for glory, I waited for them to talk about how he viewed equality—that Whites were better than Blacks, that faggots like me were no worse than commies, socialists, perverts, scum. I waited for them to stop talking about him as though he were a hero just because he drove through rings of fire for a living while instilling in his kids a notion that still makes my body stiffen with indignation: If you work hard enough, you can be superior to anyone (even though he died a poor, sick bigot). But when I looked at his sallow, wrinkled face, his pale, fat fingers, his red flannel jacket—he never cared much for formality, even in death—I felt sorry for myself: I wondered how many people would come to my wake and boast about my legacy, about my own rings of fire, even though I foolishly thought that I was better than, or superior to, him simply because he resented the outsider in me. So, for the rest of the wake, I said nothing about him to my distant relatives, vowing not to denounce his legacy—his legacy can speak for itself—but to nurture my inner outsider, who I imagined as myself riding a motorcycle down the street to leap through the sun, the biggest ring of fire of them all.

Breathless for Your Pleasure
Bronte Pearson
Poetry

I fell into your double helix kiss
and awoke in your veins.
I let your blood brush my cheeks
and your synapses clap in welcome
as I dove further into your chest
and breathed fervently into your lungs
until you shook me out
through the pores in your skin.
I sprinkled the floor like salt
in a crumbled elemental mound,
and you picked me up
and dusted me off
until you began to gasp
for resurrection,
so I continue to put myself through
the tragically magnificent cycle
all over again
for you.

Contributor Bios

Lorrie Beauchamp

I am a retired freelance writer, have had two short stories and two poems published, along with several magazine articles. I self-published a nonfiction book about the marketing world, and maintain two literary blogs. I have been writing all my life, but rarely share anything that I write. I just love writing, and it is therapeutic for me.

Luis Cuauhtémoc Berriozábal

Luis Cuauhtémoc Berriozábal was born in Mexico, lives in Southern California, and works in the mental health field. He spends much of his time reading, writing, working, and attending concerts.

Jude Brigley

Jude Brigley is Welsh. She has been a teacher, an editor and a performance poet. She is now writing more for the page.

Christine A. Brooks

Christine A. Brooks is a graduate of Western New England University with her B.A. in Literature, and is currently attending Bay Path University for her M.F.A. in Creative Nonfiction. Most recently a series of poems, The Ugly Five, are in the summer issue of Door Is A Jar Magazine and her poem, The Writer, is in the June 2018 issue of The Cabinet of Heed Literary Magazine. Three poems, Puff, Sister and Grapes are in the 5th issue of The Mystic Blue Review. Her vignette, Finding God, is in the December issue of Riggwelter Press, and her series of vignettes, Small Packages, was named a semifinalist at Gazing Grain Press in August 2018. Her poem, The Monarch, is published in the October 2018

issue and *The Man* is published in the November 2018 issue of the *Amethyst Review*.

Devan Burton

Devan Burton lives in the Knoxville Tennessee area. He is the author of *The Will of the World* (A Black Rose Writing publication). Along with listening to jazz, and teaching at a community college, Devan Burton also revises his poetry and prose on his numerous manual typewriters.

Jacob Butlett

I am a gay poet living with family in Iowa. When I am not writing poems or short stories, I like to watch the cardinals, bluejays, robins, red-winged blackbirds, hummingbirds, and hawks fly through my backyard. Everything and nothing inspires me, including family photographs and empty street corners. I have never had a boyfriend, but I do have a cuddly Maine coon named Chip (he has a chipped front tooth). What more could a gay guy like me ask for?

Roxanne Cardona

Roxanne Cardona was born in New York City. She has had poems published in *Animal: A Beast of a Literary Magazine*, *Commuter Lit* and *Poetic Medicine*. She studied with Philip Schultz in his Master Class, Writers Studio, NYC for over ten years and currently, Jennifer Franklin, Hudson Valley Writers Center. She has a BA and MS from Hunter College, MS from the College of New Rochelle. She was an elementary school teacher and principal in the South Bronx. Roxanne resides in Teaneck, NJ with her husband.

Sankar Chatterjee

Sankar Chatterjee possesses the passion for traveling worldwide to immerse in new cultures and customs to discover the forgotten history of the societies while attempting to find the common thread that connects the humanity as a whole for its continuity. His most recent essays appeared in Parentheses, Boston Accent, Foliate Oak, Wilderness House Literary Review, Door Is A Jar, and Pamplemousse (in press) among others elsewhere.

Marisa P. Clark

Marisa P. Clark pronounces her first name Ma-REE-sa, spells it with one s, and is queer in three or more ways. A native of the Mississippi Gulf Coast and a former resident of Atlanta, she makes her home in New Mexico with three parrots and two dogs. She's published work in every genre and had her creative nonfiction recognized as a Notable Essay in Best American Essays 2011. In her non-teaching time, she works out at the gym, takes night walks, and tries to decide whether she's more tyger, wolf, horse, or hawk. If you've forgotten how to pronounce and spell her first name, you may call her Dr. Clark.

Linda M. Crate

Linda M. Crate has been writing and creating ever since she was a child. She enjoys stories and how the same words in a different order can create another story entirely. She always falls in love with characters first, but great plots are not something she ever spurns. Linda has always identified with Lydia Deetz in that she, too, is strange and unusual. She finds beauty in both the small things like forgotten flowers and in things considered horror and macabre.

Gareth Culshaw

Gareth lives in Wales. He had his first collection published, *The Miner*, by FutureCycle in 2018. He has been published in various places across the UK and USA. His two dogs, Jasper and Lana, help redraft his poems.

Kimberly Cunningham

Kimberly Cunningham taught children in various settings for 32 years. However, writing always remained her passion. In 2017, she dusted off her journals, picked up a pen and started spilling ink. To date, she penned and self-published three books, "Undefined," "Sprinkles on Top," and "Smooth Rough Edges." In addition, she has 24 pieces of published work in journals, anthologies and on line. Kimberly has a BS Degree in Elementary Education and a MA Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. Her lifelong belief is of the idea that each one should teach one.

Tyler Grant

I am a lawyer and writer in New York. I am graduate of Washington and Lee University and University of Virginia School of Law. My fiction will be featured on The Moth podcast for my "StorySlam" winning story "Rivals." I was also accepted to attend the Kenyon Review 2019 Writers Workshop. My other written work can be found in USA Today, The Hill, and National Review, among others. I was also selected as 30 under 30 by the Washington Examiner.

John Grey

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in Midwest Quarterly, Poetry East and North Dakota Quarterly with work upcoming in South Florida Poetry Journal, Hawaii Review and the Dunes Review.

Larisa Harriger

Larisa Harriger is a detective, archeologist, taxonomist, cartographer, cowboy, dancing bear trainer, and occasional janitor to a variety of inherently unstable systems. She holds a charmingly old-fashioned Master of Librarianship degree but couldn't lay her hands on her copy of the Iliad on a five-dollar bet. You can read her occasional ramblings at shinymagpie.net.

Robert Hasselblad

Robert Hasselblad has been writing poetry since college days, half a century ago. Recently retired from over forty years in the lumber industry, he now devotes time to writing, walking, reading and napping. His poems have appeared in OntheBus: The Final Issue, Avalon Literary Review, riverbabble, and the anthology WA 129: Poets of Washington.

Linda Imbler

Linda Imbler has three published poetry collections and one hybrid ebook of short fiction and poetry. She is a Kansas-based Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net Nominee. More information can be found at lindaspotteryblog.blogspot.com.

Gregory Kimbrell

Gregory Kimbrell is the author of *The Primitive Observatory* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2016), winner of the 2014 Crab Orchard Series in Poetry First Book Award. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in IDK Magazine, Impossible Archetype, The Operating System, Otoliths, Phantom Drift, Quail Bell Magazine, and elsewhere. More of his writing, including his sci-fi/horror magnetic poems and erasures, can be found at gregorykimbrell.com.

William A. Kofoed

William A. Kofoed was born in Logan Utah. He now lives in Magna Utah. He has been published by Poetry Quarterly, Utah Life, Dual Coast and Encore 2018. He began writing in High School.

Edward Lee

Edward Lee's poetry, short stories, non-fiction and photography have been published in magazines in Ireland, England and America, including The Stinging Fly, Skylight 47, Acumen and Smiths Knoll. He is currently working on two photography collections: 'Lying Down With The Dead' and 'There Is A Beauty In Broken Things'. He also makes musical noise under the names Ayahuasca Collective, Lewis Milne, Orson Carroll, Blinded Architect, Lego Figures Fighting, and Pale Blond Boy. His blog/website can be found at <https://edwardmlee.wordpress.com>

Hege A. Jakobsen Lepri

Hege A. Jakobsen Lepri is a Norwegian-Canadian translator and writer based in Toronto. She returned to writing in 2011, after a very, very long break. Her writing has since been longlisted several times and she was recently shortlisted Briarpatch's 'Writing in the Margins' contest. She's been published or is forthcoming in J Journal, Saint Katherine Review, Monarch Review, Citron Review, Sycamore Review, subTerrain Magazine, Agnes and True, Forge Literary Magazine, Fjords Review, Grain Magazine, Typehouse Literary Review, The Nasiona, WOW! — Women on writing, Burning House Press, Crack the Spine, Carve Magazine, The New Quarterly and elsewhere. You find her on twitter @hegelincanada and on her website: www.hegeajlepri.ca

June Levitan

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

Richard Luftig

I am a former professor of educational psychology and special education at Miami University in Ohio now residing in California. My poems and stories have appeared in numerous literary journals in the United States and internationally in Canada, Australia, Europe, and Asia. My poems have been nominated for the Pushcart prize and two of my poems recently appeared in *Realms of the Mothers: The First Decade of Dos Madres Press*. My latest book of poems will be forthcoming from Unsolicited Press in 2019. My webpage and blog may be found at richardluftig.com

Marisa L. Manuel

Marisa L. Manuel recently fought an angry refrigerator and lost, so now she's getting over a concussion (...seriously). She loves dogs, olives, and problematic fictional characters. Her favorite genres are horror, fantasy, and sci-fi. When she's not writing she can be found learning new languages, pretending she knows how to knit, or hanging out with friends and family.

DS Maolalai

DS Maolalai has been nominated for Best of the Web and twice for the Pushcart Prize. His first collection, "Love is Breaking Plates in the Garden", was published in 2016 by the Encircle Press, with "Sad Havoc Among the Birds" forthcoming from Turas Press in 2019.

J Mari

The "poet" recently published a thing called "the sun sets like faces fade right before you pass out", but more importantly, he was given a prestigious award at this watering hole for drinking 15 long islands and being able to stand up afterwards and still kinda talk.

A. A. Parr

A. A. Parr is an arts educator and the founder of Toronto art+healing space The Art Within, through which she supported and assisted individuals in using the arts as a tool for personal development. She writes an ongoing series of poetry about strangers entitled "I Wrote You This Poem" on Channillo, and has a heaping handful of pieces published in local magazines and underground zines - or performed in the back rooms of bars over the past two decades. Her plays and performances have graced stages across Ontario, and her artwork has been shown in galleries in Canada and the United States. At present she is writing her second novel, a literary fiction which explores themes of trauma, gender identity, and unconventional love. In all of her writing, though it is fiction, she writes from a place of personal experience.

Bronte Pearson

I am a recent graduate of the Johns Hopkins University Master of Arts in Science Writing Program. By day, I am a Medical Writer and Editor at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. By night, I jam to dirty alternative rock music, often singing into an invisible microphone for my audience of two human children and four cats. I am also a chocolate slave. All hail the great and powerful cocoa plant.

Diana Raab

Diana Raab, PhD, is an award-winning poet, memoirist, blogger, speaker, and author of 10 books and over 1000 articles and poems. She's also editor of two anthologies, "Writers on the Edge: 22 Writers Speak About Addiction and Dependency," and "Writers and Their Notebooks." Raab's two memoirs are "Regina's Closet: Finding My Grandmother's Secret Journal," and "Healing With Words: A Writer's Cancer Journey." She's blogs for Psychology Today, Thrive Global, and PsychCentral and is frequently a guest blogger for various other sites. Her two latest books are, "Writing for Bliss: A Seven- Step Plan for Telling Your Story and Transforming Your Life," and "Writing for Bliss: A Companion Journal" Visit: www.dianaraab.com.

JDaniel Richer

JDaniel Richer is an independent journalist, social anxiety survivor, and professional freak.

Claire Scott

Claire Scott is an award-winning poet who has received multiple Pushcart Prize nominations. Her work has been accepted by the Atlanta Review, Bellevue Literary Review, New Ohio Review, Enizagam and Healing Muse among others. Claire is the author of Waiting to be Called and Until I Couldn't. She is the co-author of Unfolding in Light: A Sisters' Journey in Photography and Poetry.

Margarita Serafimova

Margarita Serafimova was shortlisted for the Montreal Poetry Prize 2017, Summer Literary Seminars 2018 and 2019, and Hammond House Prize 2018; long-listed for the Christopher Smart (Eyewear Publishing) Prize 2019, Erbacce Press Poetry Prize 2018 and Red Wheelbarrow

2018 Prize, and nominated for Best of the Net 2018. She has three collections in Bulgarian. Her work appears in Agenda Poetry, London Grip, Waxwing, Trafika Europe, Landfill, A-Minor, Poetry South, Great Weather for Media, Orbis, Nixes Mate, StepAway, Ink, Sweat and Tears, Leveler, Mookychick, HeadStuff, Minor Literatures, Writing Disorder, Birds We Piled Loosely, Chronogram, Noble/ Gas, Origins, The Journal, miller's pond, Obra/ Artifact, Arteidolia/ Swifts&Slows, Memoir Mixtapes, glitterMOB, TAYO, Guttural, Punch, Tuck, Ginosko, etc. Visit:
https://www.facebook.com/MargaritaISerafimova/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel.

Timothy D. Starnes

Timothy D. Starnes is originally from the small town of Waxhaw, North Carolina, a place consisting of aging train tracks and a few overpriced antique stores — his personal knack for the odd, outrageous and macabre shines through his work, spicing his works with odd occurrences, invasive visitors from outer space, drag queens, the mishaps of suburbia, small town politics, underground societies, hand puppets with PTSD, hauntings and more.

Jan Steckel

Jan Steckel left the practice of medicine when she discovered it made a lousy day job. She took care of Spanish-speaking families until she got an erotic short story published. Her father now introduces her at parties: "This is my daughter. She used to be a pediatrician, but now she's a pornographer."

Shelby Stephenson

Shelby Stephenson was Poet Laureate of North Carolina, 2015-2018. "Closing the Door on My Selling Door to

Door" is a true story. I mean It happened. Waking up in the morning is like a door opening into reality, the wonder, too, of the necessity to make things up. That salvaged my life. Trying to write, find words for being alive, gives me a life.

Edward Supranowicz

Edward Michael Supranowicz has had artwork and poetry appear in various US and international journals. He grew up on a small farm in Appalachia.

Peggy Turnbull

Peggy Turnbull lives in the city where she was born, on the border between the industrial midwest and northern eco-tourism. Read her poems in Ristau Journal, the Origami Poems Project, and Rat's Ass Review.

Laure Van Rensburg

Laure Van Rensburg is a French writer living in the UK. Her short stories can be found in online magazines including Across the Margin, Ellipsis Zine, Barren Magazine, Storyg and Reflex Fiction. She has been longlisted for the Bath Short Story Award, the 2018 Ink Tears Competition and twice shortlisted for TSS Publishing Quarterly Flash Competition

Ann Wuehler

A native Oregonian with ambitions and apparently a need to see more of the planet than a few feet beyond her back yard. I received my BA in Theatre from Eastern Oregon University and my MFA in Playwriting from the University of Nevada/Las Vegas. My Oregon Gothic was published in 2015 and my House on Clark Boulevard was published September of 2017. My newest novel, Aftermath, should be out, oh, soonish. I had an evening of plays this September with the Ilkley

Playhouse in the UK. Bunny Slipper, a short story, was published in Whistle Pig this fall. The Moth and the Whale was published January 2019 in Door Is A Jar.

Submission Guidelines

Door Is A Jar Magazine is looking for well-crafted poetry, fiction, nonfiction, drama and artwork for our digital publication. Please read over these submission guidelines carefully before submitting any work.

Our magazine features new artists and writers and works that are accessible for all readers. Please look at our current and archived issues before submitting your work. Works that are confusing, abstract, or unnecessarily fancy will not be considered.

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

Contributors can submit to multiple categories; however, only submit once to each category until you have received our decision about your piece.

Upload your submissions to Submittable with the category you are submitting to and your first and last name as the filename. Within the cover letter please include your full name, contact info, and 3-sentence bio.

We accept simultaneous submissions; however, please notify us immediately if a piece is accepted elsewhere. We reserve first initial publishing rights and then all rights revert back to the author. We do not pay contributors at this time.

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