



Door is a Jar

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**AUTUMN AUBADE**

Debra S Levy

Fiction

I am waiting for that cool fall morning. Even the crickets, silent; even the cicadas. The sun rises, geese fly overhead, squawking. Otherwise, silence. Frost on the pumpkins. Time to turn the heat on, pull out the blankets. Time to shop for plastic-potted chrysanthemums blazing in their autumn glory — gold, purple, orange, red.

And I'm still waiting for you, looking down the street to see you stepping off the City bus, two sacks in your hands, and a small white cardboard box tied up with string, a chocolate-iced cake from Murphy's inside, which you'll later slice into big pieces for Dad and me. While you're gone, he and I have been busy watching the clock hands, dodging each other's silences, waiting for the moment you step off that bus.

**Specter**

Morgan Donelson

Poetry

Heavy blankets  
and burdens  
lie piled up to my neck.

Streetlamps whisper, “goodnight,”  
from my windows  
and waltz across my bedroom floor.

My eyes are wide,  
but my body lies  
in its deepest slumber.

Shadows jump  
from wall to wall  
and my cracked whites supervene.

Nightfall morphs  
into clutching hands—  
clawing at my covers.

My lips lie un-parted,  
but my irises  
scream in terror.

My lungs contest for air  
as an obsidian figure  
looms atop my chest.



The phantom chimera spreads  
her black wings and runs  
an icy talon along my cheek.

I close my eyes—  
prepared for her to drag me  
to the innermost depths of Hell.

“Not today,”  
she sighs,  
“not today.”

**Roost**

Judson Simmons

Poetry

Tucked beneath the Friedrich  
window unit, an artifact  
of concede, roosts a pigeon:  
part servant, part savior,  
a beaked merchant to all ignored.

Its nest a tangle of twigs  
and trash; unkempt but somehow  
held together.

A pigeon is  
a pawnshop broker—collecting  
all that is not needed  
from these grey streets.

*Beside me the train arrives,  
the train stops and the train  
continues on...*

There is something about this  
bird—it captures my all attention,  
my focus is conjoined with  
its being. How frighteningly  
beautiful. The eyes, the wings—  
those turquoise armbands—  
everything so mysterious  
and uncontrolled.

My train should arrive soon and I will  
depart, but you, the bastard  
cousin of dove, will be here  
for good. And long after my train  
is far north, and I will have exited,  
you will remain cooing  
a soft song, taking pilgrimages  
back to these streets—  
your little rite towards existence.

**Aptos, California April 2017**

Marjorie Sadin

Poetry

The ocean drum rolls onto the shore.  
Seagulls syncopate. Pipers pluck the sand helter  
skelter.

Following Route 1 South to an overlook on Point  
Lobos  
where the ocean sprays onto the rock and then  
recedes.

The waves turn back on themselves  
into the ocean the way you return to me.

Where does the ocean end and the horizon begin?  
Where do you end and I begin?

**My Boy with No Legs**

Hayley Mitchell Haugen

Poetry

When the new doctor told him, draw, he drew  
a chicken-yellow sun high in the sky, and the clouds  
were as light as dreaming – so unlike that heavy  
darkness,  
the art of the other troubled boys.

I was there with red hair – there was no Crayola  
auburn –  
the twins in matching pajamas. And he drew  
himself, large  
in the middle of the page, head and shoulders,  
short torso,  
a bust of sorts, a celebration: baseball bat, the  
swimming pool,

musical notes skipping like bees about his hairless  
ears.

I said, see, he gives us nothing, no sense of what  
he's thinking.

And the doctor said, but look, no legs, the boy's not  
grounded.

And his eyes said it could all have been prevented:  
the fights

and pranks, his endless motion, our fear that made  
us hide

away the knives. Dr. said, at thirteen, he should not  
be failing  
everything. Yes, I said, I have hope for him. And I  
took  
the prescription, like I've done twenty times in as  
many cities,

and I left that office smiling, walked through  
reception  
with my son at my elbow on his own two feet, and I  
tried  
not to show him the love I'd lost, the fact that he's  
ruined our lives.

**Little Boy in the Big Bed**

Hayley Mitchell Haugen

Poetry

When he's born, so too my waking  
nightmares, six months a racing heart –  
hard-tiled restaurant floors shall rise  
to meet him; that bony, toothless woman,  
Abduction, will snatch him from a shopping cart;  
the smothering blankets will seek out  
his tiny, sleeping features in the night.

And yet we survive, our little family,  
despite our happiness, great bright beacon  
to light trouble's way. Each day,  
each week, each month, we breathe  
a little easier, settle into our foundation  
like a hill house before the mudslide.

Now he wants to sleep in his big bed,  
where he can hide under the covers  
and watch deer through the blinds.  
I won't fall out, he says, already beyond  
the stepstool, safely scaling the side.  
But four years today from 9/11,  
twelve days past Katrina,  
the view is different from the doorframe:  
His yellow-eyed octopus sizes him up  
from atop the pillow bank, the sharks  
swim circles around his curls.

**Little Bird (for Steve Kowit)**

Hayley Mitchell Haugen

Poetry

In his book, the poet suggests I find a metaphor  
for burying that dead bird when I was ten.

And I can see what he's getting at:  
my stinking past relationships, grudges  
left to rot in the dank basement of my heart,  
but it's the bird itself I wonder about.

How did he know? And can he see, right now  
as he licks the stamps for his new hot poems,  
my own fascination there? That bird set me to  
digging —  
even before I knew my presence would be refused  
at family funerals.

Can that poet reach down and yank up all my  
burials —  
that brick I melted crayons on, my shame of playing  
with fire, shoved deep in the chimney well;  
a black licorice scented marker that made me  
retch,  
pushed, cap open, into a rodent den, while the  
older boys  
talked about women, my sister; the neighbor girl's  
silk  
panties, stolen, and smoothed, once, under my  
cotton own?



I dug pits for single pumps, lipsticks, fully wrapped  
tampons

I didn't know how to use. Does he know it was all  
so easy?

That bird was dirty, it had nothing to do with me.

## **How To Become An Insomniac**

Ania Payne

Nonfiction

Lie in bed for one hour, tossing restlessly from side to side, stomach to back, waiting for that perfect position. Replay the events of the day—the whole wheat pizza dough that did not rise, the robin who crashed into your living room window and left a splattering of red feathers on the freshly cleaned glass, the daddy longlegs whose web you destroyed in order to get into the drivers' seat of your car — and realize that you forgot to buy your mom a birthday present. If you had remembered, you would've bought her a bouquet of flowers and a souvenir sweatshirt with an outline of Michigan's Upper Peninsula printed on the front. Pick at a lumpy mass on your shoulder and make a mental note to call a doctor about the lump. You think it might be growing. You think it might be turning a little more orange.

Your boyfriend sleeps soundly next to you, which makes you angry. He's cute, but so peaceful. His chest rises and falls, little snores escaping from between his lips. With each snore, you hear the waves of Hurricane Katrina and the burning of forests on the California coast and the cries of the world's loneliest whale who cried for companionship but was shunned by the blue whale community. Your tosses become more violent and you pull the covers off of your boyfriend. You want

him to be awake, suffering with you, slowly plucking out eyebrow hairs one-by-one. You are full of misery and would love some company. He doesn't stir, just rolls away from you and hugs your fish-sequin decorative pillow. You watch the clock turn from twelve-thirty to one.

You go into the living room and start reading this month's copy of the *Good Housekeeping*, which you steal from your neighbor's mailbox, monthly. You think the magazine is shit, but that doesn't stop you from stealing it. You're not entirely sure why you do it -- something about the perfectly decorated houses, something about knowing the neighbors aren't going to learn about this year's trendiest Fall wreath, something about watching your roommate's cat greedily shred the perfect smiling faces and their perfectly polished cars into pieces on your un-vacuumed living room rug, their incisors and irises, fenders and tires scattered among the iridescence of the Cheez-It crumbs.

Dr. Andrew Weil, who runs a website called "Living Weil" recommends the insomniac to get out of bed and read something dull. You flip to an article about "The Red Lipstick That Looks Incredible on Everyone." Apparently, a shade called Ruby Woo is a "striking true blue red that works beautifully on all complexions and lip shades, delivering the perfect long-lasting red every time." Still awake. "31 Reasons Prince Harry is the Best Royal," "3-Step Nail Art Ideas You Can Totally Do

Yourself,” “7 Ways You’re Unknowingly Making Your Period Worse,” still awake.

Put the magazine down and tip toe into your roommate’s room. The cat’s litter box is her makeshift nightstand. There’s a decorative ceramic lamp on top of the litter box, but the cord dangles freely, nowhere near an outlet. She keeps a bottle of Canadian Hunter whiskey on the nightstand, her remedy for sadness, loneliness, sleeplessness, joblessness. You unscrew the cap and take a swig. The whiskey burns your throat, but warms your stomach and starts to calm your head. She doesn’t stir, so you take another swig, then one more for good luck. You wonder about these sleeping people, your boyfriend and your roommate, what it is that they’re doing right and what you’re doing wrong. Perhaps it is because you didn’t compost your apple core after lunch. Or because you started to play Moonlight Sonata that evening, but never finished; never ended in that final, ear-pleasing V7 chord whose absence from a piece of music apparently drove Mozart crazy. You put the bottle back down on her nightstand, then notice a pregnancy test sticking out from underneath her bed. It bears a grey plus sign, a positive greyness that promises late nights of breast feeding, of used diapers and giggles and gummy toothlessness.

You crawl back into bed and wait for sleep. If you pass out this second, you can still get in five hours of sleep. You stare at the ceiling. Count sheep, count sheep dogs, count shepherds, count

shepherds' wives, count shepherds pies. Count the 373 calories in the shepherds pies, the 5490909648 seconds in the 174 years since the death of Nicolas Clement—the chemist who in 1824 first defined the calorie as a unit of heat. You wonder if you can count heat itself. You wonder if your mind is slipping, anyhow, if so, Clement would measure and define its descent.

You grab your phone off of the nightstand, the #1 thing that thedoctorwillseeyounow.com says *not* to do, and text your mom, "Can't sleep again." You text the same thing to your friend who has a whole pharmacy in his medicine cabinet. He texts back immediately, offering you Xanax, Klonopin, Risperdal, Haloperidol, Ambien, Sonata, Lunesta. You make a song out of these prescriptions to the tune of "Mary Had A Little Lamb," which gets stuck in your head, and fills you with horror, a terrible, indelible jingle keeping you awake now. You've always tried to stay away from pharmaceuticals, but you're feeling desperate. Quotes from a WebMD article titled "10 Things To HATE About Sleep Loss" taunt you. Sleeplessness causes car accidents, heart disease, heart attack, heart failure, stroke, diabetes, depresses you, ages you, dumbs you, makes you fat, kills your sex drive, kills your relationships, eventually kills you. Your heartbeat quickens, palms sweat, your right eye starts to twitch. You pick your phone back up, re-read your friend's list of drugs and pick a few at random. He says he'll bring them tomorrow. You envision a row

of blank headstones with crows perched on the top and a circle of fake, plastic flowers lying below.

The cat comes into your room and leaps on your stomach. You grab him, jump out of bed and toss him outside. It's ten degrees, maybe colder, and he lands in a snow pile. The cat stares at you, surprised, confused. You look up at the sky and notice a constellation that looks like Beethoven, sharp nose, deep eyebrows, thin mouth. Slam the sliding door shut and leave him outside.

You return to bed. Your boyfriend is sleeping on his back now. His mouth is shut and little chickadee-like whistles are escaping through his nose. You try to sleep, but can't stop thinking about the cat, out in the snow pile, icy-toed, probably hungry, shivering, probably getting chased by a raptor, probably dead. He's not dead, though, because you can hear his meows, faintly, creeping into your bedroom. Maybe, you think for a brief moment, these are the mewls of the dead, a mewling ghost, the collective cries into the face of all the world's famine, or the satisfied mewls of the upstairs neighbors as they make love, or the confused mewls of the cluster of cells that are forming in your roommate's uterus.

Three-thirty a.m. You throw the covers off and let the cat back in. All of the neighbors' homes are dark. Even the next-door woman who wears a see-through robe as she hangs up laundry in the backyard, watches reruns of *The Bachelor* on repeat, and has never had a visitor to her house is

satisfied with her life, soundly sleeping, yet, somehow, you are not. Everyone in the neighborhood is asleep except for you. Everyone in the state of Michigan is probably asleep except for you. If they all snored as your boyfriend did, the snores would sound like a chorus of beluga whales swimming through shallow water, with a family of seagulls perched on top of their backs. You have a roommate across the hall, and a boyfriend in your bed, but you have never felt so alone.

Return to bed and stare at your boyfriend as he sleeps. Count the 15 freckles on his back, the 5 moles, the 33 dark hairs. You wonder if this is a code for something, some numerical distinction that's ingrained in our bodies during our prenatal development. You wonder what sorts of foods would bear the number of calories that would equal the number of your boyfriend's freckles, moles, and dark hairs – apples, maybe? Or, perhaps people with 15 freckles, 5 moles, and 33 dark back hairs are destined to sleep well, while others with 2 freckles, 0 moles, and 57 dark hairs have no choice but to be insomniacs. By four-thirty, the sun is starting to shine through your blinds. You can hear your upstairs neighbors walking around, making coffee, and you smell them frying eggs. You wonder how many hours of sleep they got. You wonder if they know that you steal their *Good Housekeeping*, you wonder if they know why you do it. You wonder if they will report you for mail fraud, you wonder what it's like to sleep in jail, you

wonder if your boyfriend would visit you in jail, or your roommate, or if she'll bring her baby, or if her baby will be a boy or a girl or if her baby will ever know your name.



**Marriage**  
Richard Jones  
Poetry

We walk under cedars  
to the lake's edge  
and undress,  
separately,  
in silence,  
then wade  
slowly into cool black  
water as one might  
enter sleep,  
unwilling to let  
go of the hand  
one loves,  
yet letting go  
and swimming  
toward  
the stillness  
of the deep,  
each of us alone  
in our lake of dreams,  
minds floating  
like clouds or stars  
on the still, black water.

**The Leather Flask**

Richard Jones

Poetry

I bought you in Venice  
from a tiny, full-moon flooded shop  
in a stormy gray autumn  
when I was young, so young  
the *acqua alta* and fog  
almost made me believe  
I could cross a tiny bridge  
and disappear forever. . . .  
But I didn't disappear.  
I carried you next to my heart for years,  
through bitter decades of life  
before one summer morning  
when the sun was shining,  
I stepped into the garden  
as I had a million times before  
and unscrewed your cap—  
lifting my hand high in a wordless toast—  
and very slowly poured you out.  
The day hot, the sun high,  
the flask was a fountain,  
the golden whiskey sweetly  
fragrant as it soaked into the earth.  
After, I kept you in a drawer  
beneath my softest sweater,  
safe with the poems I show to no one.  
Then one of those wretched days came:  
the sun dark, the moon broken.

I brought you forth again—  
handsome leather flask from Venice!—  
and carried your emptiness to my study  
where I placed you, regal and royal,  
on a gold stand on the bookshelf,  
honored and remembered among the lucid tomes.  
Now you stay with me always,  
your leather armor protecting an empty vessel of  
glass.  
And the little gold cup from which I once drank  
shines each time I turn on my reading lamp,  
reflecting the light and reminding me  
how much I have yet to learn  
about mystery and doom, peril and freedom.

**Puffin**  
Brit Barnhouse  
Art



**Raven Song**  
Brit Barnhouse  
Art



**The Owl on the Fence**

Marianne Brems

Poetry

She sits with focused purpose.  
Her tail is long, too long.  
Her head bobs slightly with the breeze,  
an odd movement.  
The rest of her is still, too still.  
She lingers longer than I expect.  
But I believe her.  
I think she is a living, breathing warrior.  
But she is not.

She is here to deceive.  
She has no blood, no bones, nor stomach,  
no hunter's vision of mice and squirrels.  
Hollow she sits,  
a coquette of sorts,  
to convince birds  
that danger lies within her lifeless beak.

What need has she of a heart and lungs  
when vacant plastic is enough?  
We the deceived, the birds and I,  
with our protoplasmic brains  
are no match for her clever ways.

**EMERGENCY ROOM**

J.D. Graves

Fiction

I tell you it was awful. When I'd picked up Beulah yesterday morning, She looked fine. In typical Beulah fashion her shopping list was longer than her arm, while mine only had a few in's and out's. We stood in pet food loading our basket with cans of tuna when she suddenly turns to me, wide eyed, "When did we get a Dollar store Debbie?"

I chuckled. I mean it was the silliest thing that woman had ever said and I'd known her forever. I said, "Beulah you know we've been coming here for three years now."

"Really for that long?" She sounded confused.

"Well yes," I said, "Are you feeling alright?"

She faltered a little as she reached for my shoulder. Then she muttered the scariest thing I'd ever heard, "Debbie, I think I'm having an out of body experience."

She's sixty-nine years old and drinks when no one's looking, so naturally I panicked, "Beulah you might wanna sit down!"

I knew it could be a stroke. I'd seen the signs years ago when Uncle Wally departed us that night at the County fair.

"I just don't feel like myself," she said, "I'm light headed."

God likes pranks. He don't allow you to leave with much dignity — at least not in Uncle Wally's

case. He'd just bought Aunt Beulah a funnel cake when the good lord called him home.

"Can you tell me where you live Beulah?" I asked her.

"That's a silly question. In my house — the one Wally built with the white picket fence!"

It was worse than I'd imagined. Her clock was ticking. I swore she only had a few minutes left.

"Beulah!" I shouted, "You know very well that you haven't lived there in six months. Don't you remember your good for nothing Grandson, Bartlett, accidentally burnt it down!"

Some folks overheard me, but I'd already matriculated us down the aisle.

"He burned it down?" She asked more shocked than when it happened.

"You know we've been letting you stay in our garage apartment while my husband remodels it for you."

The poor dear's face became more distraught than Wally's the night he died. I mean his was covered in powdered sugar but... I wasn't about to let that happen to his better half near a stack of Meowmix.

I rushed her to the hospital immediately.

She protested the whole way there, but I knew I had no choice.

By the time I'd gotten her through triage, Beulah's family was on their way. Including that no good Bartlett. I mean — I didn't call him but he overheard my call to his mom and insisted on



tagging along.

Beulah's people arrived. I pointed a shakey finger at the heart monitor, "Two hundred and twenty-two. That's stroke level!"

"Mah Gawd!" Bartlett said, with the dopeiest of dopey expressions across his mug, "Where is she now?" He asked this with such concern I was taken aback. Maybe I was wrong about good for nothing Bartlett. Maybe he really did care about someone other than himself.

A few minutes later we heard Beulah coming around a corner. She seemed in awfully good spirits for someone knocking at heaven's door. "I tell ya cutie! This is the silliest thing that's ever happened. Ain't nothing wrong with me!" Then she rounded the corner. The expression on her face reminded me of Christmas dinner. A sorta glass eyed smile full of holiday cheer. I thought, 'Dang this is bad if they've already started her morphine drip!' She saw us and sang out, "Heeeeeeeey! There's my faaaaaaaaammmm-llllleeee! So good to see ya'll!"

Bartlett started snorting and laughing and I immediately knew I was right all along about that bastard. They wheeled her old bones into a room and he elbowed his way to her bedside. Beulah smiled wide at her grandson. They held hands and looked deeply into one another's eyes.

Well, I had to remove myself from that weirdness. I was afraid I'd make sick all over the place when I remembered how Bartlett liked to

play with matches. So I stepped outside with the doctor, this short mid eastern type with no hair.

“Has your Mother every smoked pot?” The doctor asked Beulah’s daughter.

“What kinda question is that?” Before I knew it, I’d launched myself into a laundry list of Beulah’s memberships and accomplishments. I mean how dare this foreigner accuse my Aunt of being some junkie!

“I only ask because — her urine test came back positive for Marijuana.”

I nearly fell out. I started to protest but her daughter got there before I could, “My mother would never... NEVER... *NEVER* — smoke drugs!”

I had to get away from that nonsense so I slipped back into Beulah’s room, “Hey Beulah you’ll never guess what — “

I stopped dead.

Bartlett whispered, “Everything’s gonna be alright.” She nodded intently, panic and fear on both their faces when they turned my way.

“I think she gonna be fine,” Bartlett said, “I gotta get back to work now.” And just like that — he was gone. Also gone was Beulah’s holiday cheer.

I cautiously approached, “Beulah? Is there something you wanna tell me?”

She shook her head no. I asked again but added, “because the doctor said you tested positive for — “

I didn’t even need to finish before she started blubbing, “It was on my bucket list!”

I couldn't believe it and I told her as much, "The very idea a Sunday school teacher smoking Marijuana at her age!"

"I didn't smoke it. Bartlett brewed it in tea last night and we drank it. Who ever heard of something not kicking in until eight hours later!" She started giggling, "I told him how disappointed it made me feel since I didn't feel nothing at all... until now." Her face fell, "Debbie, promise me you won't tell my daught — "

"Everyone knows—the doctor told us all."

Beulah quieted, letting it all sink in. "If that's the case," She sighed, "you got any snacks?"

**plate 66**  
Bill Rector  
Poetry

The arrow freezes in mid-flight.  
The shaft is the archer's intent.  
The fletching turns into a bird  
feathered in red, black, and white.

The arrowhead is its pointed bill.  
The bowstring trills, *pait, pait, pait*.  
Beside the bird imagination pales.  
Owl-sized and parrot-bright,

the ivory-billed woodpecker flies  
across the river in arcing swoops,  
like a line where colorful laundry  
is being hung and then removed.

We see it on a dead cypress trunk.  
Bark flies under the fierce beak.  
Its knocking was like the beating  
of that rooted muscle, the heart.

But the eye is fiercer. In it we see  
the bird as Audubon could not,  
real and unreal, there and not,  
made more vivid by its absence.

**Your Time in Blue Mountains (A Temporary Stay)**

Kristian Butterfield

Poetry

You told yourself that you would feel better  
among half-naked sweet gums and sycamores.

I guess no one had the guts to tell you

there is nothing extra in gentle  
blue-ridged mornings, mourning doves,  
surrenders.

Then, a gunshot through the fog

might make you feel close to home again,  
like 43<sup>rd</sup> st. is broadcasting transmissions.

**The Lost City of Z**

Ree Venrick

Poetry

Much of past human life stays  
in mystery and little of true history  
is recalled or even known,  
which is why we don't understand  
why humans would abandon  
a city of gold, surely intending  
to return, but never finding  
the trail back.

Yet the centuries show,  
no matter what isle of the globe  
they wander, sail or drive,  
because humans are lost  
among the silver stars,  
we must seek to find  
abandoned cities of gold.

And for those who doubt  
that such lost cities exists, always  
there are leavings left to be  
gleaned from shadows  
of the rain forest hiding  
treasures under trees.

We cannot doubt the lost city exists,  
for if it did not, there would be no  
Pizarros, Bingham's, and Fawcett's.

and those few with eagle eyes

who can find a coin in trampled sand  
on a busy beach or spot a diamond speck  
in a flowing stream under dappled light.

Is it because humans do not know where  
we were born that we must always seek  
a precious coming home, and glinty gold  
is as good excuse as any — better than many.

Yet some believe the lost city of gold  
will never be found, for  
the best camouflage is to keep  
value hidden in plain view, for  
where is most precious  
no one would think to look.

## Acey and Bill Go Honky Tonkin'

Dale Hankins

Fiction

Yellowed fingers clutch Acey's cigarette. 70ish. Her pin curled hair is spun silver. Her cheeks are wet. From a cloud of smoke, she laughs, leans back and takes another drag.

*First time I saw Bill Keel, I was done. So tall he had to duck through doors, hair black as a crow's wing, and thin as a sapling. Oh my, my, my... Bill was 20 and me 16 when we traded rings at Rowell Baptist.*

*Bill loved to let loose up at cousin Jesse's Honky Tonk. I never liked liquor. But where Bill went, I went. We'd dance real slow to Last Date, by Floyd Cramer. Bill'd dance with me and every other gal till we fell out, then stagger over, lay his head in my lap and snore. I'd get us home somehow. Next mornin' while I cooked the bacon, he'd sneak up, spin me 'round, lift me in the air and say – I'm sorry honey. I won't never get that drunk agin'. 'Course it was a lie, but he only had to look at me. Oh, my, my, my...*

*'Course, we did lots more than Honky Tonk.*

*Acey sips her coffee.*

*Did you know I could shoot? Daddy taught me when I was knee high to a grasshopper. I could hit a pill bottle with a pistol at 40 yards. I've killed a deer at twic't that. Bill and me loved huntin'. Deer and squirrel mostly. Sometimes quail.*



*We bought a single wide, and a few acres, in Glendale. Bill didn't want no kids. So I didn't neither. Bill got me a little Ford tractor and I had me quite a truck garden. Saturdays I'd fill the truck with whatever was ripe, take it to town, and sell it. Made a pretty penny, I tell you.*

*Ever' now and then, we went places. The Ouachita's, Ozarks, and once even on up to Montreal, in Canada. We was happy. Truly happy. Me and Bill.*

*But I got older. Fatter. Loved my own biscuits too much.*

*A raspy cackle. More smoke.*

*I stopped Honky Tonkin'. Bill Honky Tonked even more. He spent most of the money. Sometimes, he didn't come home til daylight.*

*I got fatter. Meaner. Bill got drunker. Darker.*

*I drew the line when he wanted to move that blonde floozy into the back bedroom. Said she just needed a hand up. I knew better. I told him I knew where her hand was a goin'. Oh, my, my, my... The hurts we give to them we love.*

*Bill said he wanted a divorce. I said he'd have to kill me. He drove off like a shot.*

*A long drag on the cigarette. Acey leans over, coughing from somewhere deep in her chest. She raises her head, and the tears flow free.*

*Never, in a coon's age, did I think Bill Keel would die by my hand. But he came home drunk and started hitting me. I grabbed my gun and run out*

*across the field. I tripped. He caught up to me.  
Stood over me, waving his 45 around.*

*I said, 'Bill, please Bill - please honey...don't!'*

*When I heard the shot. I didn' even know it was  
from my gun. Bill fell, and my world ended. Oh, my,  
my, my...*

*Acey hugs herself and rocks back and forth.  
More tears. Another drag. More smoke.*

*I go visit Rowell Baptist every Saturday to see  
him. Sometimes, I lie down in the spot next to him.  
My spot. The spot where I'll lie when we're together  
again. I take the little tape player Jesse got me. Last  
Date is the prettiest song. It'll play forever inside  
me. Oh, my, my, my...*

*Acey smiles. Crushes out her cigarette. Blows  
the last cloud of smoke.*

**Land Lords**

Jessica Mehta

Poetry

We pay rent to the animals,  
to the raccoons who plunder the plum  
trees, smacking and swallowing  
like little hunchbacked beasts. To the squirrels  
who pick the most pregnant of apples  
and leave pine cone trails  
on the patio. To Oregon's giant house  
spiders, scrabbling frenzies across oak floors,  
whisked out with Windex-soaked newspapers  
to keep on willing a mate outdoors. The skunks  
with their cactus tails and viper heads,  
nosing through spilled cereal  
from our mornings on the oiled swing.  
And the deer, whose clumsy steps  
betray their graceful thighs, calves  
like fine buffet legs and breasts riding proud.  
For them we pay in fat blackberries,  
splitting cherries and red pears. But the roses ...

the roses ...

those I dust in curry powder  
and tight pinches of turmeric. Perennials  
are for us, and the animals, the poor things,  
they blanch and choke at the bite.

**IS IT STILL RAINING?**

Peter Dietrich

Poetry

Is it still raining when you stroll along the shore,  
And does anyone still cover up your hair?  
Do the ships on the horizon still move you to the  
core  
As you turn like the tide and proudly stare?  
I remember the sea-breeze as it brushed your soft  
cheek,  
Wishing that one day I might be so near,  
But now it seems quite empty no matter where I  
seek,  
And lost memories will never atone for my fear.

Are the birds still singing as you greet the rising sun,  
And does anyone still hold your praising hand?  
Do the trees still whisper your name as you laugh  
and run  
In the game that only we could understand?  
I recall every falling leaf as it touched against your  
skin,  
Hoping that one day soon it would be me,  
Yet now the darkness dances with the shadows you  
let in,  
And this sadness weighs too much to ever set me  
free.

Do the flowers still dazzle you as they drink the  
morning dew,

And does anyone still offer you marigolds?  
Does the blossom still fascinate you as it gives fruit  
its cue,  
While the drama of our souls slowly unfolds?  
I replant all the tiny seeds which escaped the  
destroying wind,  
Praying that one day you will pick the ones that  
bloomed,  
Though now the roots are all frozen, like the  
prophet who never sinned,  
And the deep earth reminds me that we are all  
doomed.

Are you still dreaming when the silvery moon rises,  
And does anyone still blanket your fall?  
Do the images you conjure still offer magical  
surprises  
As you open your eyes wide and then call?  
I relive the mystic mornings with the mist on the  
river,  
Following your footprints deep-set in the sand,  
But your punctured absence sets my tired heart  
aquiver,  
And I lay down my weary song in this vast barren  
land.

Are we still able to travel on the same train,  
And does anyone still wait at the station?  
Do the anonymous faces still absorb all your pain  
As you voyage from nation to nation?

I rekindle the cold ashes which were left from our  
meeting,  
Trying one last time to ignite the old flame,  
But it's truly hard to surrender when the Spring  
shouts its greeting,  
And that is why my last word will always be your  
sweet name.

**Black Snow**  
Barbara Daniels  
Poetry

I push past a lit refinery,  
a city of glowing beads.  
Darkness increases  
the distance home,

streets the same blue-black  
as the sky. I wish I'd said no  
to the funeral, the terrible  
rows of empty chairs.

Ahead of me, old snow  
waits like a glacial moraine.  
At my corner three women  
stand in long dark coats.

Hurled flakes stick to  
my windshield, snow  
like soiled headscarves  
thrown to the ground.

**Solace of Water**

Barbara Daniels

Poetry

Swans sleep on a cold river,  
necks S-curved, heads hidden.

I'm out at a boundary, blotched  
by fear. Among the swans,

coots bob and turn. Wetlands  
spread to quickening clouds.

Beyond a single spectral  
heron, grebes dive together.

I want to be blessed, wounded,  
my soul a diver, slender,

naked, arrowing into waves.  
Clouds turn into fine mist,

burnish mudbanks, drop a rim  
of rose light at the blurred horizon.



**In the Bulk Bins**

Mira Martin-Parker

Poetry

It began with the curry, the taking of India, and the giving of worry. It began, mayonnaise in hand, with knife and cheese. It began with childhood. It began with the names mother and father, and the desire to forget. Culture had a lot to do with it. Death and dying. A good pair of jeans. Father likes the bright colored mustard, the coke and chips with the cheese. We must accept who we are. And I am a muffled bendy bit, still twisting. Still tired and moving along. Still weeping, yet holding up, staying alive. I eat my croissants warm, hoping to turn French. They're healthy, *nest pas?*

## **The Loneliest Number**

Rym Kechacha

Fiction

I live in an apartment building with a big courtyard in the middle of it. I sit at the sofa and watch all the comings and goings; people trudging to work, handymen moving slowly in the sun, delivery drivers squinting for the right flat number. I watch the tableaux of life flicking past me as if they're on one of those vintage projectors.

Once, I was coming home from the supermarket and an old lady stopped me in the entrance hall. She was overdressed for the weather in a thick black cardigan, a plastic bag in one hand and a walking stick in the other. Her hair was like candy floss and improbably piled on top of her head, but even so she only came up to my shoulder.

'I wonder if you could help me get to the bus stop, young lady.' she said. 'I have trouble walking these days, you see.'

I didn't want to stop. My backpack was heavy with tins of beans and packets of rice. I was hungry, I wanted to go home, shut the curtains and get into my pajamas. I didn't want to talk to anyone.

But there was something commanding about her. She hadn't been asking. She was an optimist, the way that most manipulators are. They rely on people feeling obligated to do good. I offered my

arm as if we were about to dance at a ball, and escorted her out of the building.

She walked excruciatingly slowly. It was like she was racing with a snail and didn't want to hurt its feelings.

'What number do you live at?' she asked.

'Number 7.' I felt obliged to ask her the same question to pass the time. 'What number do you live at?

'Number 45.' she replied. 'On the third floor.'

I couldn't think of anything more to say. We shuffled along in silence for a little while. We'd only just got to the newsagents next door. I could see the bus stop, tantalizingly far out of reach about a hundred meters away. There are humans alive who could run from here to there in ten seconds, I thought.

'Do you know the woman who lives at number 93?' she asked.

'No.'

'She's a bad woman.' Her voice lowered to a whisper. 'She's a witch. She put a magic spell on my boyfriend and made him disappear. Now he lives all the way over in Richmond.' She spat the word, as if that was the worst part. I didn't reply. My backpack felt heavier and heavier.

We shuffled forwards, each step an event. We passed the dry cleaners.

'Are you courting?' she asked. 'Do you have a boyfriend?'

'No. I don't.'

She patted my arm with her thick hand. 'Best to keep it that way, take it from me. He'll only get bewitched by some old tart and leave you.'

We reached the bus stop, and she sat down on the narrow bench. I wanted to wipe my hands on my jacket. I don't know why, she didn't smell bad and the feeling of her soft fleshy hands wasn't unpleasant.

'You'll help me onto the bus, won't you?' she said, and I couldn't say no, so I stayed by the bus stop until the number 332 came and saw her onto it.

A couple of weeks later, I was sweeping the floor of my living room and I saw the old lady sitting on a bench in the courtyard. I watched her for a while, then went to get a cup of tea. When I came back, I saw her talking to a young man with a tennis racket slung over his shoulder. He looked like I had felt the other day. He wanted to be good but he did not want to do the thing that was good. He gave the old lady his arm and they set off, slowly. I heard a snatch of their conversation. The young man's voice was too loud and too bright. The old lady's was low, but I heard her ask if he knew the woman who lives at number 93.

In the summer time I saw her approaching the entrance hall, slowly, leaning on her stick, the baggy flesh of her arms shuddering with each step. There was a woman standing there, cradling an umbrella. The old lady asked her if she would

escort her somewhere, to the bus stop maybe. The woman shifted her umbrella so that it was in front of her like a shield. She shook her head. Through my open window I heard something about waiting for someone, and as if cued, a man came towards them pushing a wriggling toddler in a buggy. The old lady watched them as they left. I would have said the same thing, I thought, but I might have tried to be nicer about it.

Just as the autumn was beginning and taking everyone by surprise with the darkness, I saw her sitting on that bench again. I don't know if she was waiting for someone to come so that she could ask them about the witch at number 93, or if she was just having a rest before she went upstairs. She stared at the flowers in the courtyard and I stared at her. I drew the curtains before she could see my face peering through my illuminated window at her.

Yesterday I was walking towards the library when I saw her walking in front of me on the pavement. Her bandy legs made a bowl shape underneath her grey skirt, and a sliver of white slip poked out. I hesitated for a moment, then I crossed the road and walked quickly to pass her by.

**Jax**

Layla Lenhardt

Poetry

I see pieces of you etched in other men's jawlines  
and in their lips. I go looking for you in their  
sweaters and in the backseats of their cars. In  
February we stayed up all night singing French  
songs and slugging soco while the snow grew  
higher than the rooftops and you carved out your  
insides so I could find a home in there.

**This is it**

Layla Lenhardt

Poetry

When I was sixteen we'd ding-dong-ditch the  
karate academy.

I'd look over at Andrew with his pretty lips,  
and over at Vinny with his tightly coiled hair  
while we hid on wood planks that filled my nose  
with cedar,  
long, long before I filled my nose with anything  
else.

November felt like July as we'd pile into a big Park  
Avenue

and listen to Elliott Smith or Nelly, while exploring  
our fifteen block radius.

I was little but I never felt it, even though I didn't  
know how to inhale cigarettes yet,  
but I smoked them anyway.

The karate sensei was an angry man, and I  
remember thinking, "This is it,  
this is the happiest I'll ever be" as Chris walked up  
to ring the bell for the third time.

**Ti Blooms in January**

Elaine Verdill

Art





## **Flower Cluster**

Elaine Verdill

Art







**This is not REAL. This is BARCELONA.**

Alex Dreppec

Poetry

You surface from the sea, dive into the city.  
In façades, the waves continue.  
A peephole into the counterworld, slanted,  
on the way from this life to the hereafter,  
you're making a detour here.  
Is there another city at all?  
It's all a flow, decorated by swirls,  
between Maremagnum, La Rambla,  
Placa Catalunya, Casa Mila, Palau Güell.  
This is self-sufficient.  
Casa Batllo, Park Güell - Sagrada Familia:  
Melted candle, Barcelona  
makes the sun a headlight,  
protrudes into the sky over the sea.  
Elsewhere, at best,  
interesting variants of the familiar.  
Town by town a shot against the bar.  
But this is not REAL. This is BARCELONA.  
God looks confused and amazed  
and wants to create something sometimes, too.

**The Duck**

Elizabeth Montoya

Nonfiction

“There’s a duck in the drain,” Jim says. Jim is my mother’s friend, and we are standing in his bathroom staring at the drain. He has a round face, with round glasses, and a large nose. He likes to pull quarters from behind my ears, but right now he’s telling me about the duck. In the tub, water drips and disappears, drips and disappears. The duck is white, with a yellow bill. He’s got little feet, and says it’s dark down there. I lean forward. I stand at the foot of a bathtub.

“It’s stuck,” Jim says, “But if you stay long enough, maybe you’ll hear it. Maybe it will come out.”

This tub is white, and empty. There are no toys in this tub, no bottles of shampoo. In my tub I have a plastic Elmo, my pink haired mermaid, and Fozzy the bear.

I hold my breath and I try listen. I wait for the duck, this poor little duck. I wait until my legs are tired, but then I sit on the edge of the tub and let water catch in my hands. I don’t want the water to drown the duck, or wash him away. I wonder why no one cares, why my mom is gone with Jim. They’ve gone beyond a closed door.

When my mother finds me again, I am sitting in the tub, staring at the hole. We

leave the bathroom. She turns off the light behind her.

“Did you find the duck?” Jim asks in the light of the living room window, trees peeking through the parted blinds. I shake my head and wonder, why don’t you care?

Now they are both smoking cigarettes, puffs of white like thin clouds surround us. It tickles my throat. On the shelf lives a plastic flower. It sits smiling beneath its round pink petals. It has bright eyes, and a small little pot for legs.

“Sing to it,” Jim says. “Sing and it will dance for you.”

I hum, and the flower begins to wiggle and sway. It only stops when I close my lips.

We leave and return to the old brown sedan. We drive to McDonald’s where I eat fries and chicken nuggets on the way home, dropping crumbs into the car seat. Night comes, and I fall asleep—but when I wake, I can only think of the duck. Did Jim turn on the water and flush it away? I don’t know. I’ll never know.

Somewhere, I think I am still waiting.

**Simulacrum**

Sneha Subramanian Kanta

Poetry

formless ocean  
melting in the  
shape of Buddha.

**train travel**

Sneha Subramanian Kanta

Poetry

hurried constellations kept in a gunny sack  
outside a long walk in the rain & i see a solitary tree  
& a lone moon

Scotland & Aberdeen & disjointed railway tracks,  
airborne  
morning mist of forgotten death anniversaries &  
bones in a sea



**how many times**

Sneha Subramanian Kanta

Poetry

have you been told  
the anatomy of a leaf  
does not matter  
in the large expanse  
of things & trains to catch  
there is no time  
to watch the veins  
of a leaf, how they  
grow thinner  
& put  
their faces  
willingly, toward  
the autumn sun

may you have time  
some autumn  
to watch creatures  
as they prepare  
for hibernation  
& see how a leaf  
ends its life  
being manure  
to the seed.

**Bonita at Work**

Ben Sloan

Poetry

I'll never know what Bonita was thinking about as she pushed a beige plastic saucer holding a deck-of-cards-sized block of amber Jell-O with chunks of celery and shaved carrot suspended in it across a silver cafeteria counter to the third grade version of me.

She could have been worrying about Troy, her husband, whom she had married at age thirteen and who was working near Flat River MO in the lead mines—a good paying job at the time.

Or about the huge, extravagant smile on Liberace's face as he played the piano on the Ed Sullivan Show.

Or how just before her mother died there were longer and longer pauses between each breath until she was eventually absorbed into the room's walls like someone leaving out a doorway and glancing one last time back over her shoulder.

Bonita would always smile and say to me, "There you are."

**Curtained**  
Stephen Mead  
Poetry

Paintings,  
the gold robes which veil approach  
of both image & viewer  
framed by life's protective shrine of  
durable frailty waiting to meet  
each other's story like

a train whistle on wind,  
the steam, the chuff & clank  
bearing cinema messages, voyages  
as fate, where engines are

needle eyes & tracks part  
the landscape same as hands

pulling back these beckoning  
cloth rivers, these travelogues

behind drapes

**Somniloquy**  
Stephen Mead  
Poetry

Sleep talk, memory-deep,  
Mom is not happy  
about being photographed  
in her cotton blue housework shirt,  
cuffs rolled above the wrists  
for her paraffin hands,  
one with a sponge, sudsy enough,  
against the red of the picnic table,  
freshly-stained or fading to grains,  
the original wood, its damp hint  
of moss

calling to the distant green  
of that tree line, its Spruce-busy brush  
rising to a sky, enough see-through blue  
or robin's egg, with picture postcard clouds  
lowering white over  
the chalk-gray gravel drive

rounding the perfect triangle lawn,  
its apex-tip, and the Catalpa's ancient  
good girth, its hodgepodge of softness here,  
roughness there, parts of bark, rivulet-cracking  
for ants at their business bringing a grip  
of limbs up and up to the spade-shaped leaves,  
their lime hue felt-soft, amid a sea of bean pods,  
the miniature ruffles of blossoms

and amber locust shells.

One iridescent with wings  
is breaking through still,  
a rainbow at birth

resembling nothing plague-like.

**Bricks, Light**  
Stephen Mead  
Poetry

Warm yourself here.  
Press hands to orange, topaz, rust red...

Blood is booming to the bloom of this  
light, these squares mortar seals  
the roughness of  
in dust & in  
crumbling, the promise of flame,  
a place to touch clay, pigment,  
the cold itself thermal & shaped  
maybe for a window,

the sky clouding its blue puffs  
against such space for squirrel play &  
the flight of birds...

Each flock passes to emptiness &  
the stones stand, the rectangles  
resume order, the grace of this radiance  
your head rests against, huddled

in the frozen, each eye  
itself, closed, compressed, soul-yellow  
stirring...

as though around a barrel:

How you move us  
there against the bricks  
where you do not stir at all.

**Lounging**

Stephen Mead

Poetry

It feels sort of like the 1940s, the bed  
a playground, fingers in platinum,  
Bonbons, chiffon, the swell walled  
in sensations of large lace draped rooms...

Here I am, smoking jacket svelte  
& with little to do but resample champagne  
or sway, barely listening to a distant  
trombone.

Ah, how nice, an idle nap time, yet  
less innocent, say, should a lover chime  
out of the music box, an apparition  
waited for when any one could fade,

sad, lazy star hanging around  
in the meantime because

these movie scenes lie.



## The Subtle Momentum of Desire

Bill Wolak

Art



[XX] Lume  
Seth Martin  
Art

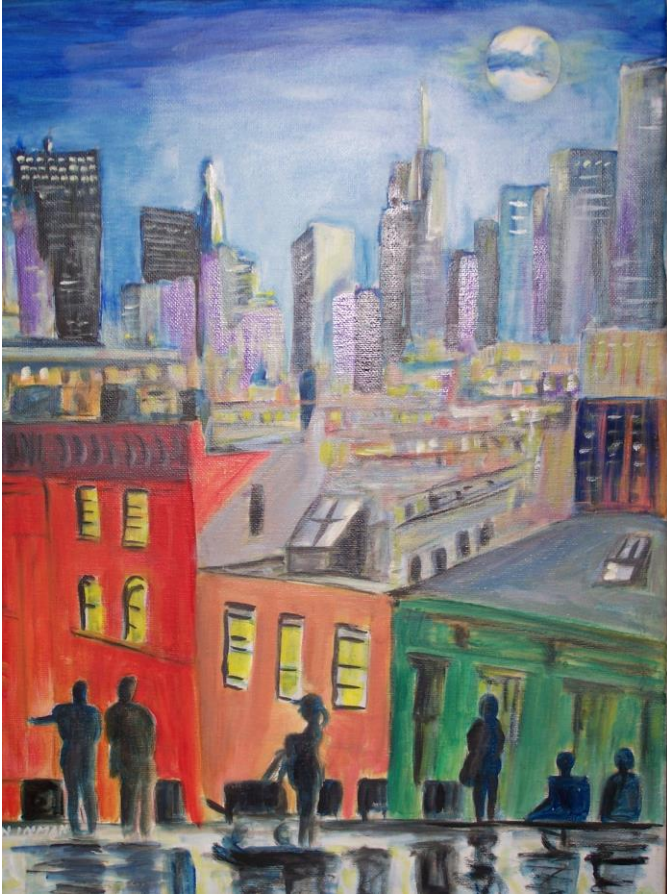
[XX] LUME



[XX] LUME



**Planet City**  
Clinton Inman  
Art



**4**

William Crawford  
Art



**Mother's Arms**

Kandi Maxwell

Nonfiction

We were wild women in the woods, camped beneath a canopy of cedar and pine. Their green laced arms promised shade against summer's heat. Mount Shasta stood tall in the distance. We rented a pedal boat, cycled across the lake. Found a cove-water like glass. Jumped off the boat with a splash and a shiver.

After our swim, I climbed up the watercraft, stretched out my arms to help you up. I was stunned to see my mother's arms. The wrinkles that circled her sun-browned skin were now mine, and the silky-smooth skin on your thirteen-year-old body no longer belonged to me.

I promised you ginger bread pancakes to entice you to join me on a backpack trip to Mount Lassen. Mixed whole wheat flour, spices, baking powder in a zip-lock bag- stuffed other treats into my pack to sweeten the deal.

We began our hike at Summit Lake. The sun spread silver ribbons across the water. Our hike began slow and easy, but eventually, the trail changed. We climbed ridges towards the east. The heavy pack pressed hard into your thin-framed, fourteen-

year-old shoulders. We stopped for a short rest, then hoisted our packs, began again. You never complained when I kept repeating, "just a little longer." I knew your muscle's burned, heard your labored breath, but held hope that the scent of pennyroyal, or the colorful clusters of magenta and blue penstemon would pull you up the mountain.

The next morning, we made pancakes, watched the lake glow brilliant orange, walked along the shoreline, arm in arm.

I thought of you today. We were in your kayak. We gripped our paddles: hands over, thumbs under. We twisted our torsos side to side, as our paddle blades sliced through the water: left, right, left, right. I sat in the back, matched the motion of your arms. Autoimmune disease has weakened mine. It was your strength that propelled us forward.

**An Elegy for Ma**

Gina Stratos

Poetry

It's the soundtrack of the 70s that moved Ma.  
I'd watch her sway in the kitchen, the heat  
from the oven curling her thin bangs.  
Roasted bird and boiled potatoes,  
a glass of water sweating on the counter.  
I'd listen to her sing about loneliness,  
about war, fumbling through words forgotten,  
the wooden spoon of my punishment spinning  
slowly in the mouth of a pot meant to feed many.

Eyes closed, hips rolling; in those moments  
she was not my mother but a stranger.  
I hated her then, the wet-lipped woman  
whose hands pulled men out of jeans,  
willed them to drink deeply from her mouth,  
to claim the small of her back, kiss the dark  
moon of a mole on her pale breast.

Now, these Sundays when she's content to watch  
as I bend to pull a roast from the oven, listen  
to me hum a song from my childhood, a song  
whose words she still can't remember.  
I don't know it, but she'll be gone soon, dead  
on Monday morning, and I'll try to forget  
that I once hated the sight of her dancing.



**Unknown Motel, Sacramento, California**

Gina Stratos

Poetry

Her daughter is bent toward the camera  
in the pink blush of an unfamiliar bra.  
The strawberry signature of her birthmark,  
as telling as finger pads rolled through ink,  
the ridges and valleys of her sorrow telling a truth  
despite the hard-candy lacquer of a generic pout.

Somebody has stitched himself across the swell  
of her breast. *Aaron? Anthony?* A garden of  
midnight  
blue and sickly yellow blooms under the sharp cliff  
of her collarbone. Still, she can see the freckles  
that gather like thunderclouds ready to release  
the burden of their watery weight.

She wonders who's holding the camera,  
who's in the blur of a greasy mirror,  
                    who's sitting on over-bleached sheets,  
                    who's sunk his teeth into the  
                    thin skin of her meaning,  
                    telling her *more*,  
                    *give me more?*

The mother leans toward her computer screen,  
imagines the infant-smell of sugared milk  
on her daughter's breath, inhales the ghost  
of apples in her hair, and the decay

of the gardenias she has planned for her wake.

**Kerosene Winter**

Ernest Gordon Taullbee

Fiction

The fluid pump had two plastic tubes: one was firm and straight, like a needle, and the other was flexible and textured. Sam's asthma had flared overnight, so Ashley had to carry the five-gallon canister into the living room from the porch and use the handpump to fill the tank of the kerosene heater. He was not near as strong as his brother, so it was a struggle. He even felt exhausted squeezing the hand pump to fuel the siphon.

It was the most exhausted he ever felt before school.

The bedrooms had been closed with bedsheets tacked into the doorframes, but the heat still struggled to travel all the way down the hallway to the bathroom. At sundown, the family would open the bedsheets — tying them with yarn — allowing the heat to enter the rooms. There were extra blankets on the beds.

One bitter night, Ashley's father pushed the heater to the mouth of the hallway.

He and Sam had separate rooms, but this winter they shared a bed. This allowed one of their rooms to remain closed and pulled much economy out of the burning kerosene.

Ashley washed his hands before he went to the bus stop. He wasn't sure if he was able to get the scent off. He worried the smell of kerosene

lingered on him but wasn't sure. His mother said the smell was just in the ambient air and in his nose as well. It made him think of soured gasoline.

He buttoned his denim jacket over his sweatshirt and put his hands in his pockets. He walked from his house, through the bottom, and over the low-water bridge to the bus stop. He waited.

The Howard brothers were there as well. He thought they smelled like wood smoke, but the kerosene confused his senses.

He hoped the bus would arrive on time. He could feel the cold working through the denim, and he didn't have any gloves.

The bus pulled to a stop in front of them and the Howard brothers and Ashley entered.

The green seats were mostly empty. They were one of the first stops. Ashley walked as far down the rows as possible, so he could be close to the heat. He knew not to sit in the last four or five rows. The big kids liked to sit there. Most often, Ashley sat towards the front to be closer to the watchful eye of the driver, but need for warmth drew him to the back.

He slid over to the window.

The stops were expeditious and the bus was filling. The big kids piled into the seats at the rear.

"What's that smell?"

"Stinks."

"God damn, that's rank."

The Howard boys were in the seat across the aisle from Ashley. The oldest of them spoke, "Where's Sam?"

"He doesn't feel good."

"That's making me sick to my stomach," a big kid said.

Ashley pulled the sleeve of his denim jacket to his nose and drew in air. He could smell kerosene, but still wasn't sure. His breakfast had tasted vaguely of kerosene. Last night's supper did as well. The whole frozen world had a trace of the stuff in its essence.

"I'm going to puke."

The big kid with a sick stomach sat down in the seat with Ashley, who kept his eyes forward.

"Where's your brother?"

Sam was as big as this kid. They had been in a fight before, and Sam gave the kid a black eye.

"He's at home."

"You stink."

Ashley didn't respond.

"Are you so god damn poor you can't even wash that shit off? What the hell is wrong with you?"

As cold as he still was, Ashley could feel his cheeks getting hot.

"I think you're a faggot, Ashley. I'm guessing that is what dick smells like."

"You wouldn't say that if Sam was here," Ashley said and felt the jab to his ribs.

"But he isn't here is he, faggot?"

Ashley could tell that the kids in the seat behind him were spectators to all this. He lowered his chin and squared his eyes to a piece of duct tape on the seat in front of him.

"Their dad's a drunk," the big kid said and gave Ashley another punch to the side.

The bus ride continued. New children entered and the rear of the bus continued to fill. The boy beside him turned his face and knees to the aisle and spoke to his friends. They laughed and talked about basketball. When the big kid wasn't looking, Ashley pulled the collar of his jacket to his nose.

**Atropa Bella Donna**

Hannah Wagner

Poetry

You should have been allergic to the girl from no  
where/Sneezing out apologies until your tongue  
swelled up/You should have feared her like a spider  
whose venom you knew nothing about/Tip toeing  
around until your ankles fell off/You shouldn't have  
played games you knew nothing about/Without  
rules it's just war/Didn't your mother ever teach  
you not to play with your food?/When you took  
needle and thread to sew her to your feet like a  
shadow you should have known the fates always  
carry scissors/You should have known how much  
can be taken in a single slice/Indulging in her like a  
sweet candy was an illusion/You should have felt it  
coming when she spit your rotted teeth back at  
you/But when she jumped into the river you should  
have followed /You should have sought out the  
pearls of atonement at the bottom of the  
bank/That shine like the future inside a crystal/You  
should have been stronger.

## Southern New Hampshire, 1995 or maybe '96

Evan Aubertin/ Louis

Nonfiction

Small-town tragedy is a community event. Not unlike Memorial Day, it is truly meaningful and somber but we participate for the parade and a cookout. Though I was young at the time, I remember when we first learned about Ben's cancer. We were among the first to know because he and my brother were friends. I remember his parents telling mine one day in the front yard "Ben has cancer so don't let him play too hard". We all turned to look at the awkward, sandy-haired ten year-old standing nearby. We all just stared because no one knew what to say to him.

In my experience, people react to news like this in a manner learned from television and movies. I'm not saying that they don't feel something; they are just afraid to express it in the wrong way. I find myself doing this as I am compelled towards silence in most situations (which is often mistaken for apathy). Ben first told my brother after showing up late to a Boy Scout meeting. He leaned over and whispered "I have a brain tumor". Neither of them knew what that meant or how to react because there isn't any cancer in *Full House* or *Family Matters*.

News of Ben's cancer spread like wildfire. Fueled by morbid fascination and excitement about a



conversational alternative to the weather. The local newspaper covered the events that followed with great relish and thinly-veiled excitement about having actual news to cover. Everywhere I heard people trying to get a piece of the dusty small town spotlight by explaining their tenuous connection to Ben or his family.

A fundraiser was held at the town park to raise money for an experimental new treatment. Standard cookout fare was served and the excitement of a raffle created a carnival-like atmosphere with muffled undertones of pity. I also remember the smug self-congratulation that comes with a call for donations. At the heart of this all, a boy at that terribly uncomfortable age looking as if he'd like nothing more than to disappear. I remember the moment when the family of four took to the stage to address the congregation. After a sincere statement of gratitude was made, the mic was pushed in the face of poor cancerous Ben who, by this point, had achieved an inhuman pallor. In true Hollywood form, the mic let out a feedback squeal before he forced out a strangled, thin-sounding "Uhm... thank you."

(Moment of expectant silence)

(The sweet relief of applause)

Twice each month, Ben would fly alone from New Hampshire to Texas carrying bags full of medication, and looking older each time he returned. The doctors said that normally brain cancer could be removed with surgery, but in this

case the tumors were not on the surface of the organ. Or, the metaphor they offered, “your brain is spaghetti, the cancer is the sauce.”

On the last day of middle school Ben’s parents hired a limo to drive him and his friends the mile to school (which to a 5<sup>th</sup> grader is very cool). They were running late and no one saw them arrive. My brother didn’t talk to Ben much after school let out. He tells me Ben has always been a spoiled brat and that he was ungrateful and self-centered. His parents built a new deck while collecting donations for their son’s medical bills and they smoked cigarettes in the house, which my parents referred to constantly as a sign of bad character. I don’t remember them at all.

At such a formative age you have to wonder, how much of his personality was because of his illness – and how surviving continues to affect who he is today. A few days ago, I was reminded of all this when Ben posted a message on social media. He’s still alive, has a beard and a proud affinity for marijuana. That’s all I know.

“Ben Evans, Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup>: ‘Ten years cancer free. Fuck you world.’ ”

**Stranded**

Kristyl Gravina

Poetry

Lost in the forest of the island of dreams  
The smell of the ocean never far away  
The jungle roars with looming beasts  
Each day we hunt, each day we run  
At night on the cooling sand our heads we rest  
The dancing flames watching over us  
And at every dawn  
The little girl with flowers in her hair  
Sings a tranquil song  
Carried across the ocean by wind  
Over the whistling white sails of impending  
freedom

**Untitled**

Kristyl Gravina

Poetry

I wrote verse upon verse  
I ran out of ink  
And yet,  
the pages were still blank  
Without you



**After Matisse**  
Marsha Solomon  
Art



**Orange Rythms**  
Marhsa Solomon  
Art



**Bright Eyes and Memory**

Donna J. W. Munro

Fiction

Borris carved faces out of limestone he collected at the quarry. He sewed dresses by hand, arthritic knuckles and ragged skin around his nails snagged the smooth, silky fabrics he patched together to make the pinafores and ruffled skirts his dolls wore. The hair came in batches from the barber and the groomer boys who wanted a penny or two to buy sweets.

His dolls made people happy.

Borris stretched out his cricked back as the girl and her mother pushed through the door of his shop, setting the bell to jingle. She smiled under her wide-brimmed bonnet and clutched her mother's hand as she followed her through the shelves of dolls dressed as queens and as peasant girls, shepherds with crooked staff and oriental girls with bright robes and night black hair piled in coils on the small heads.

The girl would find her favorite and then he'd have to say goodbye to another of his treasures. Hours and hours of loving labor went into every one of his dolls.

He sighed and stooped back to his work, clutching a metal pick that he used to shape the rounded eyes, pert nose, and bow-tied lips that he'd paint pink or red or even black depending on the doll's theme. The act of scraping away extra



bits that didn't belong, then polishing and painting the soft, gray rock. Life emerged from the tiny brushes and pots of paint he used.

The price stayed the same for every customer, for every doll.

"Mr. Borris?" The little girl peaked over the edge of the counter, tiny fingertips clinging to the top and blue eyes full of watery truth.

"Yes, dear?" he said, setting the face he'd been carving to the side.

"The dollies all have the same face."

No one ever noticed that. He fixed his bleary, eighty-year-old eyes on her, seeing her. Really seeing her. Thousands of dolls since what happened. Thousands and no one but this child had ever seen.

"Why do your dollies look the same?"

How do you explain loss to a child? Grief. The suffocating weight when the woman you love takes her last breath. The dreams that fool you into believing she lay next to you, snoring softly, only to wake alone. The long nights of memory and silence. What child understood such things?

"Because I think that's what pretty looks like."

The girl turned the doll she held and gazed deeply into the face of his lost love. As she stared, nose to nose, Borris remembered his own love's sweet face when they'd met as children, her sweet blue eyes reflected in the eyes of this little girl. Like they reflected in every girl and woman's eyes that loved his dolls. In their gaze, his love's face

reflected and came alive again. Alive.

“She’s very pretty,” the girl finally agreed. “I love her.”

That was the price. The same price for every doll.

“She’s yours.”

And with that, the delighted child squealed and took her mother’s hand, chattering happily about the gift.

In that moment, she lived again.

**Laundroland**

Craig Patrick

Poetry

dryer vents blanket the air  
in a sickly soft sweetness  
a cracked coin roll scatters  
quarters like scared cats  
into the cobwebbed crevices  
beneath the vending machines  
a rust-pocked metal can  
overflows coin-op coffee cups  
beneath a ceiling mounted TV  
shouting the nightly news roundup  
of missing persons and murder  
smokers huddle on the sidewalk  
cigarettes flickering like fireflies  
endless earbuds and cell phone scroll  
everybody here but nobody really here  
little private thrills that build into needs  
like cracks in the skin unseen begin to bleed  
like caffeine and nicotine igniting in veins  
the promise of pleasure — the promise of pain

**Your Drunken Hand**

Mitchell Grabois

Poetry

The black men stink of pesticide  
They've been on a road gang  
This is the Deep South  
how deep you can never guess

The ghosts of the brutal past animate the present  
as the ghosts of our brutal present  
animate the future

The black men have been chopping brush  
spraying poison  
The blacker they are the more poison they absorb  
The blackest must die first

The roadway is not asphalt  
but the bodies of Doberman Pinschers  
laid side by side

their bodies obtained from junk yards  
from Mobile to Apalachicola  
Galveston to Jax

The highway is Doberman  
and black men with blue muscles  
reeking of pesticide

Sometimes all the Dobermans come back to life

They spring at the black men's throats

Do you see why I have so much trouble traveling  
with all this going on around me  
I tremble to get on a bus  
with the image of a stretched-out Doberman on its  
side

I climb into the belly of the beast  
and comingle  
with blue toilet disinfectant  
and xombies travelling en masse to the next  
xombie  
jamboree

Please, mister, give me a ride in your white Cadillac  
with fins like an angel's wings  
I prefer to fly in the clouds  
with your drunken hand between my legs  
and your clothes dirty and rough

**Diagnosis**  
Jenn Powers  
Poetry

Cabbage boiled in saltwater, a wooden spoon  
kept my mother in line.  
Second-hand apron stained from blueberries,  
tomatoes, blood.  
Ironing board built into the wall, skeleton keys.  
Damp humility, a peace  
in the yellow kitchen.  
Waiting is like condensation dripping  
down sweaty walls.  
Like old skin in bath water.  
Babushka, kapusta, babka: the Old World.  
Wild mushrooms in the porcelain sink, roots,  
pulled to their death.  
Cloves of raw garlic, marrow from cracked  
chicken bones, she doesn't age,  
time goes by but she doesn't go  
with it.  
A coffee percolator, heart pills, she'll never  
die. Her hand, a water color  
of IV bruises, paralyzing,  
as the telephone rings.

**Romance of Roses**

AJ Cunder

Fiction

He didn't hear when they said it on the television—when the news anchor said something about a woman named Alexa stealing her husband's credit card to buy a thousand roses for her lover. He was in the shower, scrubbing the stubborn grime of another lonely night from his pores, but his Echo Dot was listening. And when a thousand roses appeared at his front door, his lips curled in a spare, fleeting smile—his mouth unused to such contortions—and his pulse quickened as he thought of who might have sent them. A few faces flashed in the back of his mind, and he arranged the bouquets around his sparse living room, cautious, at first, of the novel splashes of color painting a canvas usually so bland and gray. It took him some time to decide on where to put them all, and even longer to search through each dozen for a card, a clue as to who might have gone to such lengths to express her affection.

He propped some flowers around Alexa, one dark red petal brushing her sleek, black plastic. Maybe she smiled, too, inside, if such things can smile, as her man glowed, the tingle of intrigue and the surprise of a mysterious romance lifting the customary furrow in his brow, the lines in his face that, before that day, seemed chiseled in stone.

Still he wondered, even as the roses drooped and withered—as their petals turned brown, curling in on themselves as moisture and life leaked from their cells—imagining himself the lead detective on a critical case. Was it Ashley from work, the girl with those exotic green eyes? She asked him for help, the other day, on an important project. She could have asked one of the senior accountants. But instead she asked him. Or could it be Andrea from the gym, the one who always smiled in the mirror, adjusting her yoga pants? When he walked past her, she asked him something about the proper form for using kettlebells—of course, she thought that he worked there. Why she would think such a thing escaped him—perhaps it was because he wore a black shirt that day, and the personal trainers always wore black. Or could it have just been a ploy to talk to him? Or did Alexandra send them, the woman from the coffee shop with blond hair always streaming down to her waist? The one who ordered a caramel macchiato on Tuesdays and Thursdays. She held the door for him last week, even though he was a few seconds behind her. She didn't have to wait for him, but she did. A disinterested party would have just kept walking, he reasoned, calculating and applying probabilities and statistics as he did so fluently at work.

And then, after the stems had long since been discarded, their brown husks decomposing in the



local landfill, his credit card bill came, and he learned at last the secret of the roses.

**BURNING EARTH**

Sean Corbin

Poetry

Daddy what should I tell him about  
this world that is so anxious to bury  
itself in burning earth what should  
I tell this boy Daddy this boy who only  
believes in joy who only smiles while  
Russia fires its missiles who hasn't even  
learned to hate the president yet Daddy  
what would you do what would you say  
would you teach him the complexities  
of global interconnectivity or would you  
crack open a beer Daddy and sip it slowly  
while pointing out the chirping birds and  
fertile soil the beaming sun and steaks on  
the grill the passage of time and our continued  
breaths would you teach him to worry  
Daddy or would you teach him to wonder?

**José Martinez Describes Life on the Street**

Robert Joe Stout

Poetry

"I'm not a thief or rapist, kidnapper;  
I don't sell drugs, don't beat my wife  
and when I'm drunk I'm usually nice,  
Hey! Defend myself! But what the hell?  
The stuff I sell? Maybe some guy ripped  
it off: Why should I ask? One jerk  
tried to wrench a better buy:  
*'Look man, this stuff is hot!'*  
Next day he's gone, when he shows up  
he's got a scab instead of his left ear.  
Like I want that? I hawk CDs with labels  
*Made in U.S.A.* I tell the cop,  
"Look man, I give you two or three":  
He takes them all! Know what?  
Sells them himself — off-duty job.  
Peddlers, bartenders, whores: Cops get it free.  
Fringe benefit, one said — found out  
a hooker gave him AIDS. She disappeared  
and so did he — it happens all the time.  
New cops, new bribes but what the hell?  
I got to live. To feed my kids.  
So do the thieves. They get, they give:  
It's all a game. Want a good watch? Gold ring?"

## **The Food Pyramid**

Madison Shaddox

Nonfiction

Recently, I was told that the food pyramid was proven to be an unreliable source of information, and to be bluntly honest, I have no idea whether or not this is true. I never paid much attention to what was on it, but I do remember that the pyramid was painted on the wall of my middle school lunchroom, which is where I first developed a fixation on food. This obsession would eventually evolve into a three year long battle with anorexia nervosa. I remember studying the colorful mural as I counted the calories in my lunch, meticulously studying the width of my legs on a plastic chair. Looking back on it now, I wonder if this mural was a method of justification for the lack of instruction we received on nutritional health. Because no one had explained the significance of this pyramid to me, I would occasionally wonder if it were a guide that would help me in my quest to become thin, reading it over in hopes that it would guide me to the Promised Land of beauty that I had yet to find.

On the bottom of the pyramid, there were loaves of bread and strands of wheat, which was a satisfactory idea to me, because I enjoyed bread. I would keep this suggestion in mind later, eating nothing other than crackers for days on end. However, in the quest to shrink myself, I would learn about the scandalous reputation of

carbohydrates, which added the same guilt to bread that I had connected to all other types of food. I vividly remember having a panic attack over a bowl full of pasta while my mother demanded that I eat something. I remember her voice breaking as she asked me if I wanted to have an eating disorder and my desperate assertion that my fear of food had to be something other than normal. That incident was the beginning of the guilt that I felt when anyone cooked for me and the concerned gazes of my family members when they saw my silent, apologetic refusal.

Above bread and pasta on the food pyramid, the wall was decorated with colorful pictures of personified grapes, strawberries, and broccoli whose faces seemed to mock me. When a person develops an eating disorder, they often have what are called “fear foods.” My fear food was potatoes. I have always loved potatoes, but when they were set in front of me, all that I could do was stare at them out of fear that I would eat too much. I was often so anxious about food that I would leave the table several times in one meal, and one day I overheard my grandmother whispering of a fear that I had become bulimic. At the time, I vehemently denied the idea, but now I wonder if she had been right. Every night after dinner, I would retreat to my bedroom and do one hundred repetitions of every exercise that I could think of to rid myself of the food. I no longer recall everything that I tried, but I remember doing hundreds of sit

ups and feeling proud when I gained bruises over my spine from hitting the floor.

The next level of the mural was decorated with smiling cows and chickens surrounding a milkman to symbolize meat and dairy. When I was in the fifth grade, I decided that I would become a vegetarian, but my mother was far from supportive. She would put meat in front of me at meals and tell me that the animals would die regardless of my eating them. This strategy worked to curb my vegetarianism, but not to heal my eating disorder. My mother continued to put food in front of me, but I could no longer bring myself to eat. When I began to do research on eating disorders, I was told that people stop eating to gain control over their lives. Thinking of it now, I wonder if my rejected vegetarianism, among other factors, was the lack of control that led me into my struggle with anorexia.

The top and final rung of the food pyramid was filled with chocolate bars, cookies, and cotton candy, and was labeled *Fats, Oils, Sugar, and Salt*. The illustrations were not as colorful or positive as the ones below in order to subtly discourage consumption of these foods, and my shameful interactions with sugar would emphasize this idea. I came to think of any consumption of these foods as an extreme sign of weakness and would never have eaten them in front of anyone. If I ever felt a craving for chocolate, it was accompanied with a sense of guilt so intense that I stopped wanting

food altogether. I could not tell if I truly stopped feeling hungry, or if I got so used to the pain in my stomach that I failed to notice it. When I was thirteen years old, my grandmother came to my house with a box full of cookies and told me that I was getting too thin. I reluctantly ate one of the cookies and tried to make a joke about my disappearing waistline, but she did not seem to be mollified.

Reflecting on these experiences, I wonder what triggered these habits to begin with. Could I have so drastically changed my life to emulate a picture of what I most admired, or was this simply the result when children try to teach themselves what their education does not? This question is in the forefront of my mind as I stand in my bathroom with a hand hovering close to my mouth. The recollection of desperation and guilt weaves through the intense desire to shrink again as I wonder what it is that I value most. Thinking of my grandmother, I lower my hand and turn away.

## Contributor Bios

### Debra Levy

DS Levy has worked as a tennis instructor, magazine editor, copywriter, and college professor. This summer her chapbook of flash fiction, *A Binary Heart*, will be published by Finishing Line Press. She is a recipient of several Individual Artist grants from the Indiana Arts Commission. She has had work published in the *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Columbia*, *Little Fiction*, *Brevity*, *The Pinch*, *The Common*, *Glimmer Train*, and others. In 2016 she received a Pushcart Prize nomination for fiction. She and her husband, their dog and cats live in Indiana and northern Michigan.

### Morgan Donelson

My name is Morgan Elizabeth Donelson. I am a 21-year-old college student studying Studio Art and Education at Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia. In 2015, I was diagnosed with Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension and subsequently had to take a year off from school to deal with my illness. During my time of convalescence, poetry was my solace. Writing helped me express my inner turmoil and deepest thoughts.

### Judson Simmons

I grew up in Texas, so I say "y'all" a lot. I currently reside in Park Slope (Brooklyn) where I spend most of my time dodging strollers while jogging. I don't eat fruits or vegetables, yet somehow I've lost 80 lbs (must be the jogging).

### Marjorie Sadin

Marjorie Sadin, a docent at the Library of Congress, has poems in *The Barefoot Review*, *Microw*, *Emerge*, *The Little Magazine*, *Jewish Women's Literary Journal*, *Tower Journal*, among many others, and five books of poetry in print. Her new *Vision of Lucha* book portrays struggle and survival, love, death, and family. It was published by Goldfish Press. Marjorie lives and reads her poetry in the Washington DC area.



### **Hayley Mitchell Haugen**

Hayley Mitchell Haugen's chapbook *What the Grimm Girl Looks Forward To* appears from Finishing Line Press (2016), and poems have appeared, or are forthcoming, in *Rattle*, *Slant*, *Spillway*, *Chiron Review*, and many other journals. Her critical work appears in *Proteus*, *The Body in Medical Culture*, *On the Literary Nonfiction of Nancy Mairs*, and *Stephen King's Contemporary Classics: Reflections on the Modern Master of Horror*, and elsewhere. She edits *Sheila-Na-Gig* online: <https://sheilanagigblog.com/>

### **Ania Payne**

Ania Payne is an Instructor at Kansas State University. She has previously been published in *Panorama*, *Whiskey Island*, *Dime Show Review*, *Third Point Press*, and more.

### **Richard Jones**

Richard Jones's new book, *Pilgrim on Earth*, is forthcoming from Copper Canyon in 2018. Editor of *Poetry East* and its many anthologies, including *Paris*, *Origins*, and *Bliss*, he also edits the free worldwide poetry app, "The Poet's Almanac." [www.RichardJonesPoetry.com](http://www.RichardJonesPoetry.com)

### **Brit Barnhouse**

Brit Barnhouse is a writing studies student at the University of Washington Tacoma. She is the editor-in-chief of *Tahoma West* and *In Layman's Terms*. Her written work can be seen in *The Wild Word*, *One Person's Trash*, and *Visitant*. When not writing about the ever-blurred lines between animals and humans, she can be found giving her dogs belly rubs or tossing treats out to the neighborhood crows.

### **Marianne Brems**

Marianne Brems has an MA in Creative Writing from San Francisco State University and is a long time writer of textbooks in her field of English as a Second Language. But when she needs to slow down from high speed task

management, she turns to poetry because you simply can't rush it. Her goal for her readers is to make them stop for just a moment, think, and then say, "Yes, I know." She lives in Northern California.

**J.D. Graves**

I'm a recovering playwright who recently fell off the wagon. My stageplay TALL PINES LODGE is an official selection of the 2016 FringeNYC festival having previously been produced in Austin 2007 as part of the FronteraFEST. STANLEY AND JIM was performed at the Manhattan Repertory Theatre in New York June 2009. My short fiction has appeared in the UK's Near2theKnuckle, Intrinsick Magazine, Noise City Zine and is set to appear in the Unpublishable Anthology. I hold a BFA in Theatre from Texas State. When I'm not writing I'm teaching History. When I'm not doing either, I'm begging complete strangers to read my work.

**Bill Rector**

My poetry has been published in numerous well-known journals; my chapbook Lost Moth, won the Epiphany prize this summer.

**Kristian Butterfield**

Kristian Butterfield is a poet from Tampa, FL. He has a B.A. in Creative Writing and Philosophy from Florida State University. Kristian was the first-prize winner of the 2016 Florida Voices Writing Contest for poetry. His work has appeared in one other journal, The Owl.

**Ree Venrick**

After reading a recently published book on this subject, I thought of a poem.

**Dale Hankin**

This piece of short fiction was created for a class. I read it to my classmates and the professor.

### Jessica Mehta

Jessica (Tyner) Mehta is a Cherokee poet and novelist. She's the author of four collections of poetry including *Secret-Telling Bones*, *Orygun*, *What Makes an Always*, and *The Last Exotic Petting Zoo* as well as the novel *The Wrong Kind of Indian*. She's been awarded numerous poet-in-residencies posts, including positions at Hosking Houses Trust and Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-Upon-Avon, England, Paris Lit Up in France, and the Acequia Madre House in Santa Fe, NM. Jessica is the recipient of a Barbara Deming Memorial Fund in Poetry. She is the owner of a multi-award winning writing services business, MehtaFor, and is the founder of the Get it Ohm! karma yoga movement.

### Peter Dietrich

Originally from the UK, and after travelling the world non-stop for over 40 years as reporter/film-maker, writing all the way in various forms, I feel it might be a good time to take a pause and try to see some of my more personal writings published.

### Barbara Daniels

Barbara Daniels' book *Rose Fever* was published by WordTech Press and her chapbooks *Black Sails*, *Quinn & Marie*, and *Moon Kitchen* by Casa de Cinco Hermanas Press. Her poetry has appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *WomenArts*, *Mid-American Review*, *The Literary Review*, and many other journals. She received three Individual Artist Fellowships from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

### Mira Martin-Parker

Mira Martin-Parker earned an MFA in creative writing at San Francisco State University. Her work has appeared in various publications, including the *Istanbul Literary Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Mythium*, and *Zyzyva*.

**Rym Kechacha**

Rym Kechacha lives in London and is working on her first novel. @RymKechacha

**Layla Lenhardt**

Layla Lenhardt doesn't use a pillow when she sleeps. She has been published in The Wooden Tooth Review, Third Wednesday, Right Hand Pointing, and Peeking Cat Poetry, to name a few. She is Editor-in-Chief of 1932 Quarterly.

**Elaine Verdill**

A long time poet and photographer, Elaine Verdill paints with acrylics as well.

**Alexander Chubar**

Alexander Chubar has developed a pliable, flowing line that conveys order and unity. His works are simple but meaningful. He also leads a simple life with a small family, and enjoys working in the garden. His pastimes include hiking and listening to audiobooks while working on his art.

**Alex Dreppec**

Alex Dreppec (pen name) - born 1968 close to Frankfurt as "Alexander Deppert", studied psychology and linguistics and went to Boulder/Colorado for his Ph.D. (finished 2001). German author with hundreds of publications (both poetry and science) in German journals and anthologies, both the most renowned ("Der große Conrady" - since 2008) and the best sold among them. "Wilhelm Busch" Prize 2004.

**Elizabeth Montoya**

I am a nonfiction & fiction writer with an MFA from Saint Mary's College of California. My work has been published in Somos en escrito magazine. I live in the Bay Area, California with my fiancé, Matthew

### **Sneha Subramanian Kanta**

Sneha Subramanian Kanta is a GREAT scholarship awardee, pursuing her second postgraduate degree in literature in England. Her poem 'At Dusk With the Gods' won the Alfaaz (Kalaage) prize. She is co-founder of Parentheses Journal, a collaborative venture that straddles hybrid genres across coasts and climes.

### **Ben Sloan**

My poems have appeared in the Hartskill Review, Off The Coast, The Saint Ann's Review, the Ozone Park Journal, the Rabbit Catastrophe Review, the Badlands Literary Journal, and elsewhere. My chapbook, *The Road Home*, was released by Thirty West Publishing House in the spring of 2017. I teach at Piedmont Virginia Community College in Charlottesville VA and, in the next county over, the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women. And for the record, I spend much more time brushing my teeth than anyone I have ever met.

### **Stephen Mead**

A resident of NY, Stephen Mead is a published outsider artist, writer, maker of short-collage films and sound-collage downloads. If you are at all interested please place his name in any search engine in conjunction with any of the above-mentioned genres for links to his multimedia work and merchandise.

### **Bill Wolak**

Bill Wolak has just published his fifteenth book of poetry entitled *The Nakedness Defense* with Ekstasis Press. His most recent translation with Mahmood Karimi-Hakak, *Love Me More Than the Others: Selected Poetry of Iraj Mirza*, was published by Cross-Cultural Communications in 2014. His collages have appeared recently in *Naked in New Hope* 2016 and *The 2017 Seattle Erotic Art Festival*. Mr. Wolak teaches Creative Writing at William Paterson University in New Jersey.

**Seth Martin**

S. Martin read his first comic (Peanuts) on the seat of a Farmall Super M, and although locations have changed, the reading continues. He frequently haunts libraries and teaches at a community college.

**Clinton Inman**

Retired school teacher, Renaissance painter, poet, and piano player, born in England, graduated from SDSU in 1977

**William Crawford**

William C. Crawford is a photographer based in North Carolina. Titles for these images are available on request. See [ForensicForaging.com](http://ForensicForaging.com) for bio and more.

**Kandi Maxwell**

Kandi Maxwell lives and plays in the mountains, lakes and rivers of Northern California. She is a retired secondary English teacher. Her stories have been published in a diverse collection of literary journals and print anthologies and have been nominated for The Best American Essays series.

**Gina Stratos**

Gina is a writer, mother, and student living in northern Nevada. She enjoys collecting words, making lists, sipping cold Chardonnay, and correcting other people's grammar.

**Ernest Gordon Taulbee**

Ernest Gordon Taulbee's work has appeared in Sediments Literary-Arts Journal, Nixes Mate Review, Live Nude Poems, and Fried Chicken and Coffee. He holds an MA and a BA in English from Eastern Kentucky University. He lives in Louisville, KY with his family.

**Hannah Wagner**

Hannah Wagner is a resident of Salem, Massachusetts. She is actively involved in her artistic community. She can be seen at open mic nights, on stage at Salem Theatre, and reading at

such events as the Salem Arts Festival. She believes society cannot sustain itself without art. Creativity is what separates us from the rest of the animals in the kingdom.

#### **Evan Aubertin/ Louis**

Evan Louis is a Portland-based creative-type who spends his days behind a desk, where he gets paid while writing but not necessarily for writing.

#### **Kristyl Gravina**

I am from the tiny island of Malta where I grew up and now live with my husband, son and three cats.

#### **Manit Chaotragoongit**

Manit Chaotragoongit was born September 30, 1983 in Bangkok , Thailand . He is a street and conceptual photographer. He has photography awards from Globalhunt foundation , India and Burggrun institute, USA.

#### **Marsha Solomon**

Marsha Solomon has been living and working as a painter and a poet in New York. Her work has been presented in museums and galleries in the US and Europe, and has been the subject of six solo exhibitions. These paintings are from her series of abstract expressionistic paintings “From Rhythm to Form” which can be viewed on her website.  
[www.marshasolomon.com](http://www.marshasolomon.com)

#### **Donna Munro**

Donna J. W. Munro has spent the last fifteen years teaching high school social studies immersed in the beauty and immediacy of teenage world building. Her students inspire her every day. An alumni of the Seton Hill Writing Popular Fiction program, she published pieces in Every Day Fiction, the Fantasist Enterprises Press anthology Modern Magic: Tales of Fantasy and Horror (2005), the Seton Hill Kindle anthology Hazard Yet Forward (2012), the new anthology Enter the Apocalypse (2017), and Dark Matter Journal (June

2017). Contact her at  
<https://www.facebook.com/DonnaJWMunro/>

### Craig Patrick

Craig Patrick is a Washington DC-area writer and musician whose work has appeared in Praxis Magazine and Algebra of Owls. When not writing poems, captioning photos, or naming fake bands, he writes and records guitar-driven, synth-tinged, multi-hyphenated power-pop under the name Giants of Diving. [www.giantsofdiving.com](http://www.giantsofdiving.com)

### Mitchell Grabois

Mitchell Krockmalnik Grabois has had over twelve-hundred of his poems and fictions appear in literary magazines in the U.S. and abroad. He has been nominated for numerous prizes. His novel, *Two-Headed Dog*, based on his work as a clinical psychologist in a state hospital, is available for Kindle and Nook, or as a print edition. To see more of his work, google Mitchell Krockmalnik Grabois. He lives in Denver.

### Jenn Powers

Jenn Powers is a writer and photographer from New England. She is currently writing a CNF memoir and her most recent work is published or forthcoming in Hayden's Ferry Review, Jabberwock Review, The Pinch, Gulf Stream Lit Mag, and Raven Chronicles, among others. Please visit [www.jennpowers.com](http://www.jennpowers.com).

### AJ Cunder

I consider myself an avid medievalist and would go back in time to see the Middle Ages first-hand if I could (though I probably wouldn't stay too long, considering the lack of clean water and general non-existence of hygiene products!). I have served as a volunteer fire fighter, a police officer, earned a black belt in Tae Kwon Do, and have advocated for those with disabilities, living with type I diabetes myself since the age of seventeen months. And my favorite color is blue (which is useful, since I must wear a blue uniform for work!).



**Sean Corbin**

Sean L Corbin lives with his wife and two sons in Lexington, Kentucky. He is an Appalachian surrealist, a Dada daddy, a nonsense nonentity. He loves grilling cheeseburgers and drinking coffee. In his professional life, he may or may not teach writing to medical students. In his spare time, he likes to write film scripts and dream about the ocean.

**Robert Joe Stout**

Robert Joe Stout is author of *Monkey Screams* (FutureCycle Press) and *A Perfect Throw* plus several chapbooks including the recently published *Frisky Tunes*. He also has published three novels and three nonfiction books.

**Madison Shaddox**

Maddy Shaddox is a history major at Hendrix College who enjoys participating in her local theater and dance programs. She has a special love for children and animals, especially her cat, Samantha. Maddy writes to honor the memory of her father, who was a devoted supporter of her work.

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

Our publication steers away from academic writing and publishes short, conversational works that use familiar language. 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. Our entry guards stand firm against academic jigsaw puzzles.

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

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 a fun 5-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.)

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.

For more information please visit  
[doorisajarmagazine.net](http://doorisajarmagazine.net)