



**ATLANTA  
REVIEW**

**POLAND**

*International Section Edited by*  
**Cecilia Woloch**

Spring/Summer 2023

# ATLANTA REVIEW

at the Georgia Institute of Technology

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*Atlanta Review* appears in May and December.

Subscriptions are \$20 (\$25 Int.) a year.

**Available in full text in Ebsco, ProQuest, & Cengage databases.**

Subscriptions are available through Ebsco, Blackwell, and Swets.

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Up to five unpublished poems, without identifying information on any poem. Postal submissions **must** include a SASE & cover letter with contact information and a list of poem titles submitted. For more specific info, visit our website.

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**ATLANTA REVIEW**  
**686 Cherry St. NW, Suite 333**  
**Atlanta GA 30332-0161**

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*Atlanta Review* is a nonprofit literary journal.

Contributions are tax-deductible.

## WELCOME

Not so long ago, we had yet another public pronouncement about poetry being dead. The news of its demise travels faster in the world of social media. This argument seems to resurface every few years, and I have learned to meet the news without anger. Instead, I feel pity for those who think this because it is so clearly false—that is, if one takes a moment to look beyond the necessarily narrow definitions that would lead to such a conclusion. If poetry were dead, then there would be no reason to fear it—as so many people do. Poets continue to legislate the world, unacknowledged though they be.

Each spring we feature poetry from living poets from some other part of the world. Our guest editors spend months (or years) working on these projects: gathering works, translating, or arranging for translations, sequencing the poems, and writing their introductions. While we often have several guest editors working at a time, our policy has always been to publish the work on a first-completed, first-submitted basis. Last year, our Taiwanese editor narrowly beat this year's editor, Cecilia Woloch to line. A year into the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it seems as if the timing couldn't have been better. Woloch has spent years visiting Poland, with a special interest in the lands near the lower Carpathians—the homeland of her ancestors. To find herself so near the Ukrainian border during this period has given her work heightened purpose. As she explains in her introduction,

*Perhaps the end of this war, when it comes, will be the end of the story I've been working for more than twenty years to tell. The response of the Polish people to this war, their solidarity with and generosity toward the people of Ukraine, the efforts of every individual I know in Rzeszów to help the women and children who've fled the violence in Ukraine, gives me hope that even our darkest and bloodiest histories might be healed. I'm romantic enough to believe that this is possible, and that telling our stories, our truths about ourselves, however complex, matters, that language matters, and poetry, that transcendence is possible, and transformation.*

So, yes, poetry matters. And we welcome the poetry from Poland precisely because sharing across borders is the only hope we have for

understanding others. Polish poets, like poets in many parts of the world, have risked oppression, and even their lives, to offer others a glimpse into their cultures. As you read these poems, contemplate the sacrifice the writers and editors made to share them with us. As for those of us at *Atlanta Review*, we are yet again in awe.

We are equally pleased to bring you poems from our general submissions, where this year there are several poems with international connections, including the poem “The Immigrant’s Forgotten Apple” by Glen A. Mazis, which is a haunting work about what is lost over generations, and “Sher Darwaza, Kabul, 1962” by Rosalind Pace, that offers this:

When two friends say goodbye in Afghanistan  
they say “Menda ne bashen.” “Zenda bashen.”

Every day I am saying this by heart.

But I am not saying goodbye.  
I am saying a prayer.

*May you not be tired. May you be alive.*

And so, this is my wish for all of us: to not be tired, and to be alive—attentively and compassionately alive.

As always, much love to each of you,

*Karen*

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# Broken Triptych with Melting Ice Cream

This was the year I misplaced happiness  
In the sound of something breaking

The recipe only needed three ingredients  
in some drawer, I don't know, what a mess

just out of sight  
a cheap can of sweetened condensed milk

maybe it slipped into that crack behind the stove  
there, where the once whole stood

with a cup of heavy cream & a tblsp of vanilla, seriously  
mixed up in funeral bills I can't pay

couldn't I have tried to stop it  
no eggs to separate

still, the power went out & there's  
the fall from Old English "being" to "thing"

they call it comfort food  
that elegy I plan to write

the gun doesn't make sense  
they say to fold the ingredients carefully

could I have given it to someone to hold onto  
dying nights concealed & carried

handle it gently  
buried in the ever-growing file of probate court papers

all that time I consumed almost living  
it melts quickly in sunlight

wherever you've gone  
all those feathers drifting down

please tell me  
did I give it to you

*rose auslander*

## Poem That Wants to Be a Chinese Painting

gray branches  
of the ancient apple  
gnarled, unleafed,

each one bent  
by glowing crimson globes  
that tug

the limbs  
toward heavy-headed  
golden grass

*Rebecca Baggett*

## In France, Even the Dandelions,

*les pissenlits*, are a fair surprise.

I watched as tendrils thin as wire  
spiked from the shaggy lawn.

Even as first buds fattened  
and uncurled, I suspected nothing.  
Then this morning! Petite faces

opened in unison, glowing centers,  
petals of gold, some wild and surging  
marriage of marigold and daisy,

inches tall to two gangly feet.  
Hardly discernable as the nemesis  
that brings me to my knees each spring.

I knew then what I was seeing.  
These lovely tenacious flowers,  
tough, in full force, all around me.

*Gaylord Brewer*

## Prayer to the Wind, the Smoke, and the Stars (Łódź Ghetto)

All around us are ghosts. Here and there they trudge  
not knowing they are dead. Wind swirls around their coats  
hung loosely over bones more visible by the day,

candle smoke carrying them to a time when they could worship  
openly. Rabbis ask God, *what harm would it do, to lift us  
from this existence?* All around us are ghosts,

and we walk though them, and we say to each other  
*how is it with you this morning? Did you get an extra ration  
of bread and soup? That cough of yours, is it any worse?*

*and did you hear about the poor schlepper who tried  
to enter the ghetto—can you imagine! This must be paradise!*  
we say, as we walk into snow that fingers our holey coats,

holding our identification tight against our skin. Upon waking  
a state of being entered my soul, the stars shone above the rooftops  
and factory smoke. We close our eyes to see those stars.

If we poured ourselves out, what would be left to count? Our bones  
held up in the stiff wind? When we were children we ate well,  
we were loved, still had some family left to love us. Someday,

we tell ourselves and each other, we will find the moon  
in a sky not coughing, count the stars become fatter  
on those souls who've given in to the wind. What surrounds us

but the future, changing faster than we can trudge  
toward faceless factories, saying follow me, your face to the wind,  
and I will breathe into you and hold you up.

*Ronda Pizsk Broatch*

## Somewhere, You Are Walking in the Vienna Woods

I haven't given up finding you. Meanwhile my cats  
curl into the velvet crevice of a doll's bed.

I still believe in the happiness of hummingbirds,  
how tulips fold into themselves for the night  
until they can't anymore,

until they've opened one too many times,  
petals cupping rainwater beneath naked stems.

As a child I fingered my family's wedding rings,  
gold fillings, sometimes with the tooth still intact.  
Coral earrings, enamel pendant adorned

with blue birds, the words *Andenken an Mariazell*  
engraved on the other side. Oval photographs, faces

of the dead almost severe, enveloped in black paper,  
the old German script penciled on the back.  
My heart was quiet in those days. Once

I thought I could fly. Once, I carried what I loved  
in a small wooden box and slept with it. My dreams

filled with feathers, with apple trees.  
Those who loved me best gave me bits of wood,  
scraps of yarn, carried my stones, my sticks,

and when I lost my sweater, another one  
was knitted for me. In moonlight the old stories

smell like honeysuckle. When you died,  
the apples still clung to the trees. Sometimes the stars  
sing in German. And the delicate mechanism

that makes the robin scurry and stop, scurry, and stop,  
over the lawn, pulling up the worm, is its own parable.

Once, as Juliet's mother, I wore your aunt's wedding dress,  
so tight my thin twelve-year-old body barely fit within  
the whale-bone stays.

I wondered at the bride, so small, so slender  
she almost disappears before her life can go on.

*Ronda Pizsk Broatch*

## Whistle and Moan

You are no longer the four-hooved archer  
with spiked tail and hair of fire  
but a snake-bearer no one wants to claim,  
the one not picked for the game.

The sky is a lie but the moon is true,  
at least half of it  
revealing the sun's dark secrets  
and the bright places we like to land.

Truth is

we all came through the mother portal,  
urged by a rising father. We grow,  
breathe, falter and flail, blow wind across  
the bottle mouth, through the poem

that whistles and moans. Things gather  
each day in you, the children you never had,  
the pets and friends you've lost.  
The universe listens amid the noise.

Amid the noise, you whisper your song.

*Brian Builta*



## Selkie

### I.

He thinks of me  
as a member of the species  
phoca vitulina. I know  
because I watch him  
from the waves,  
see him seeing me,  
a slick head, whiskers,  
a flick of flipper or tail,  
a sweet detail of seaside  
scenery, a note in a list  
of animals seen.

### II.

I did not know that the skinning  
would involve a knife, I thought  
  
it would be a gentle peeling  
back of seal-fur from woman-flesh  
  
but she gave me the blade, handle first,  
said, please undress me.

### III.

He thinks of me now  
as a woman, has forgotten  
that I prefer my food  
still wriggling. Give me  
rockfish clams and mackerel,  
salmon squid and crabs!  
I wish to scrape my teeth  
on cod scales, feel my prey  
perishing in my throat!

IV.

I hid the seal-skin where I thought  
she'd never find it, hoped

she would prefer legs to fins,  
children to pups, and above all

my caresses to the rough embrace  
beneath the waves.

V.

He does not understand  
That I will only stay  
on land for breeding season.  
These racing pulses  
are for the surface.  
I will slow my heart  
back down  
for the deep dive.

*Rachel Aviva Burns*

# The Shade of Your Tree

*(for Amber)*

There are flowers growing next to your gravesite.  
A tiny, delicate cluster, reddish-orange,  
growing up out of hard, rocky soil.  
And a very small tree, no more than  
three feet tall, sits right above you,  
its black-brown trunk and branches  
artfully gnarled like the trees  
in the Chinese landscape painting  
that hung in the room that you slept in.  
I bring it water each time I visit.

But the best thing, the part you would love,  
is the patch of soft earth between the  
tree and the flat smooth rock that serves  
as your headstone. That little patch of earth  
is the perfect size for a small desert animal,  
perhaps a rabbit, to make its bed.  
I imagine it happening, and I smile.  
A furry brown cottontail, curling up  
under the shade of your tree,  
finding refuge from the hot summer sun.

*Johnny Cordova*

## Dialogue

I cannot say it would be different this time,  
that the yearning of clouds to be rain will fail,  
the singed leaves will float up to meet the sky  
as if better things were happening there,  
where we cannot see threads plundered from the day,  
hours uncoiling.

The stars continue to burn, explode  
into darkness,  
the Vallam Kali unwinds again, snake-boats  
race against the river's ripples,  
on the shore, ankle-deep in mud and lotus,  
each side cheers on its champions.

Love, you have gone where I cannot follow,  
I listen to the drip of water on stone.

*Shaheen Dil*

## Fox

From my kitchen window one frigid February morning, I spot a red fox sprawled on the lawn industriously grooming his paws the way my cat does (I say *his* only because of that robust, cocksure machismo that smacks of alpha male)—then extending his front legs like a cat poised between hoisting itself up on all fours or squatting like the Sphinx of Giza, but this unflappable denizen of our nearby wood merely proceeds to stretch the length of his body out on the grass like a redemptive yawn, toes to tail tip, before rolling onto his back—white bib and belly gleaming in the bright sunlight—and turns over again, pleasuring himself in the seclusion of a rear yard removed from neighbors pulling out of driveways or walking their dogs—utterly at ease and apparently well insulated against the cold, taking the air after a pre-dawn breakfast, I surmise—altogether content to linger before strolling off into a thicket of shrubs, disappearing within his realm of stealth and shadow.

*Linda M. Fischer*

## The Oyster Bar at the Old D.H. Holmes Restaurant in the French Quarter

It had the feeling of a bar maid from  
a Renoir Painting, old mahogany and glass,  
high ceilings and thousands  
of liquor bottles before a huge silver mirror.  
The bar counter was a long snake of dark mahogany.  
This is where I met Mother for a lunch one weekend  
after I had run away to New Orleans.

She came down from Alabama on the train and  
stayed at The Marriot Hotel on Royal Street.  
We sat near a window at a small table  
looking out onto the street trying to make  
conversation. The waiter with his short, pearl-handled  
knife opened the oysters. He served us fresh oysters  
from the bar.

We could see ourselves reflected  
in the beveled mirror, sitting on bentwood Thonet  
chairs whose curves recalled a Degas woman stepping  
into her bath.

Mother, slight, thin, nervous, concerned that everyone  
was looking at her, drank her black coffee slowly, and we said little.  
("A daughter whom we have to help out.")

A heavy sadness lay between us as blue as the wisteria  
in our yard -- my father's coldness and brother's cruelty,  
Mother's guilt over my sickness.

And hours were passing,  
carrying us farther and farther apart.  
We would live our separate lives,  
without knowing one another.

*Margaret Guilbert*

## Sappho, Summoned

*“Now you are a broken seal: / A scarlet stain upon the earth.”*  
—*Sappho’s Fragment 105(c) tr. Anita George*

The resplendent blue of the friezes and columns  
has bleached away. I rise reluctantly to the circling  
of sparrows.

Passing through the walls of a holy city,  
I see smoke. Through shrine after shrine,  
centuries departed

from Mount Olympus or the Corycian Cave,  
a holy man supplicates the heavens.

He has no beard.

Before him, a fiery pillar is fed odes  
to garlanded girls and the goddess who steps  
with foam-cooled heels.

I cannot return to sleep, seeing the preservation  
of Greek kings and scripture from the bonfire.

It is my ink

which makes the fire rise, red as the poinsettias  
blooming in these holy walls,  
cardinal red

like the hair of a girl I once knew.

Into the coals they drop what I wrote to her,  
slip after slip consumed.

*Audrey Hall*

## Near Palm Springs, Thinking of Dylan Thomas

The force that twists the old sea floor  
up through this basalt  
folds my ages upon themselves,  
pressing memory's writhings  
into unrecognizable forms.

When you walk out onto the desert you see shoes,  
shell casings, empty wallets, hair brushes,  
guttled appliances, mutilated furniture,  
drifts of broken glass, once jagged and cruel,  
now polished into gentle pebbles.  
Remnants of luxury and violence and revelry,  
their significance already eroded by sun and run off,  
at the fault's next burlesque left step and squeeze up,  
these signs will be reassigned,  
abstracted and inverted  
in continuous counterpoint  
with conglomerate beds far below.

A slow fugue of subsidence and uplift  
sings in this desert and in my old face—  
the wisp of feather clinging  
to a high heel among the ocotillo  
tells how the signs by which I know myself  
are subducted into new meanings.

*Susan Harvey*



## Pip in the pasture

*“... the multitudinous, God-omnipresent, coral insects,  
that out of the firmament of waters heaved the colossal  
orbs.”*

—*Moby Dick* XCIII

Wordless, heartless,  
timeless joyousness  
comes to some in silence,  
but for me it was enfolded  
in the abominable roar of a tractor  
on one of those ever-changing  
spring days. Let me tell you.

The tractor lumbers like a large animal  
through stands of thistle high as your head,  
but it also seems to be bounding  
over waves of grass like a boat.  
After the first bone-jouncing hour  
you are time-numbed. Clouds spill  
over the hills beyond your field,  
then gold light fills your eyes,  
then rain drums on your hat. The colors  
of the grasses change with the changes  
of light, so it could be that  
many days have passed.

You can't tell if you are rolling slowly  
or racing along. When you turn at the end  
of a row it seems that the landscape  
may be slowly swirling while you are still.

Before the prow of the tractor,  
multitudes of tiny insects swarm up  
from the firmament of the grass—  
fundamental elements of life  
more felt than visible (you will discover  
red welts on your belly, arms and throat tonight).

You look up and back,  
and there following above your wake  
are barn swallows and kingbirds  
and meadow larks and blackbirds and a raven,  
all exulting over the feast you have  
aroused from the grass.  
For a moment you still know  
the names of the birds,  
then words are lost to you,  
but you don't need them anymore  
because the birds are words,  
they are their own names.

Who can tell it? Who can tell  
what the grasses and the birds  
and the tractor and the insects  
and I were part of,  
and the sky.

*Susan Harvey*

## The Second Waltz

Well the brutal sunlight skids down  
and tumbles on the cracked concrete road  
as a shred of the sky falls cluttered  
between buildings.  
The laterite facades burn like regret.  
It's a day like this that makes me want to break  
out of my body and wade  
into the blue of an unreachable sea.  
See the laundry fluttering  
from the window like impatient handwaves;  
See the heat vomiting  
technicolor onto the fabric and cicadas  
pitching broken notes from beneath.  
What a terrible day I think  
and sink into the sofa as the invasive  
smoke's rubbing nicotine into my breath.  
The world could just as well end like this,  
not with a bang, nor with a whimper,  
not in fire, nor in ice (I suppose!)  
If not the thin melody of a vinyl record  
edges through to me  
like schooners charting a new territory.  
Suddenly you open the door,  
your face earnest like the sun breaking red,  
"Care to dance?"

*Aiden Heung*

## When You Appear This Time

it's on a cliff above the sea  
June morning, newly blooming sea roses  
magenta and white petals filling the air  
with their sharp tang  
wind blowing hard enough to send  
white spray up against the rocks

and you're not dead, you're laughing  
not a snicker either or a giggle  
you throw your head back when you see me  
and laugh so completely, I have to join in  
though all I really want to do is cry  
hard enough to bring you back

*Joanne Holdridge*

## Possum

Lunch was a turkey sandwich with mustard sunlight from  
backyard lit windows. Turning away, chewing a last  
bite, my vision's edge caught

a  
lash  
    of  
        skeletal  
            tail  
                attached  
            to a lumbering mass as odd  
            as cottage cheese, an improbable  
waddle                                couching  
  
            two curl,  
            tail young,

treble clefs on measures of  
fur, a toothed snout adagio  
sounding her ballad forward,  
persuading disbelief, pondering  
her destination toward my  
suspicious dread to do what  
she's been plotting all  
along: depositing her  
andante where it doesn't  
belong to take up  
a slow residence  
and play dead  
un dernea th  
    my hard  
    earned  
    deck

*Alexander Komives*

## Trumpet Sounds

In my old age, wearing my  
floppy hat to meet the sun  
for another moment to walk to  
the mailbox, sip an espresso at the café  
    o-la-la! life! I buy a bag of sumo oranges  
    a farewell gift for my friend from Seoul  
    for who knows if I ever see him again?

I take the longer route home  
through the park over  
unpaved trails for pull ups and stretches  
where dogs bark behind the bungalows called  
Barcelona and the latter-day saints  
erected a temple and Saint Gabriel sounds his  
trumpet so soon I reach the intersection  
where I decide which way to go  
on Palmilla Drive, under the golden air, the tap-tap of  
my walking sticks like a metronome to music  
turning right toward the  
pillars holding up the canyon for  
another day of luck,  
sidestepping the snails

*Georgia San Li*

## Origins

I listen to the conch shell, holding it  
to my ear in the hope of finding home.

Long ago, in the sea, we were no more than molecules.  
Now bombs, now missiles. Now sacred sanctuary gone.

Forgotten amber of prehistoric thought.  
Maybe life was always violent and unforgiving.

The drip of water in cave walls, the fire burning inside.  
Men and women with animal masks dancing, shadows dancing

stretching out before the fire.  
Along the beach, waves move against the shore.

The seashells spread out in multitudes  
a kind of heaven in the sand.

The conch shell's washed ashore  
pointed towards the night in prayer.

*Miles Liss*

# Monument Valley

*Tse Bii' Ndzisgaii*

On a cream colored horse named Halo  
I ride among  
sandstone mountain stubs  
shaped by the  
windsweep of eons.

When we crest  
into broad view we shudder  
—both of us—  
as long ago forever  
melds with the shift of now.  
He has walked these red hills  
just hundreds of years  
yet he knows the land  
as only a horse can.

My guide is a shy young Navajo  
and while we make our way  
around russet rock columns  
we shadow the story of time.  
Layer on layer stand ready to tell it  
but he is a boy  
and I am in awe  
so we are unable to listen.  
Halo, of course, could interpret  
but when you have seen  
what Halo has seen  
it is not always easy  
to translate.

After I have left them  
and dusk turns to star night

Halo will settle into his makeshift pen  
and watch over the camper where  
the boy and his dad  
make their home.



When the weather grows cold  
they will make another  
while the horse keeps their secrets  
and his own.  
For Halo speaks only in Snowfall—  
though he sometimes is heard speaking Rain.

*Ellen Malphrus*

## The Immigrant's Forgotten Apple

My mother never asked her parents where  
their home had been before they fled,  
raggedy array of small children staring  
from the deck of the booming freighter  
at the docks lined with tired officers  
who would chop the family name in half,  
too much effort to write every syllable.

My mother never asked her own mother  
about life in that small Ukrainian village,  
if the fear of seeing her children slain  
by Cossacks riding by swinging swords  
helped her mother hold back her tears  
seeing them hold hands marching off  
knowing they at least they would live  
without listening in bed for the hooves.

My mother never asked if her mother's  
father walked for days among the apple trees  
pulling down a Doneshta for one last bite  
kicking the dirt, watching the clouds run  
in blackened groups across the fading sky  
inhaling with a great tug on his lungs  
the fresh scent of fruit in his own orchard  
now outlawed for Jews by the Czar.

My mother never asked her mother if  
she was terrified, even though she knew  
the story, arranged marriage by letter,  
from uncle to father, to bring her down  
from the little town in the wilderness,  
the scrap business lean, among too many  
trees, no real factories, old sheds, pots,  
to go to the dingy streets of Philadelphia.

My mother never even asked the name  
of the small hamlet in the Ukraine  
since her mother stood at the ironing

board whipping her hand back and forth  
furiously, yelling at her husband to stop  
listening to the ballgame and clean  
the store, sell more ice cream and cigars,  
my mother knew it was wrong to ask.

My mother never asked her mother why  
it was wrong to ask for the stories  
about old times most kids see in dreams  
at night when quietly with shuffling feet  
older generations climb down from past  
places to tell tales that seep into hearts,  
except she knew without asking how  
it was naked swords who cut these ties.

My mother never asked her mother why  
she believed peppermint oil in a glass  
taken each evening would stifle bellowing  
belches that echoed through the hallway  
coming from a pain deep in the belly  
of something swallowed generations ago  
indigestible and sticking below the ribs  
like kicks from a soldier to get out.

After my grandmother's heart attack,  
I sat bedside with her in the hospital,  
home from college, my family at work,  
asking questions about eight kids  
on a lower deck of a freighter, raising themselves  
in a big city, some sent to an orphanage  
after saying goodbye to rows of apple trees  
in a Ukrainian village whose name she remembered.

*Glen A. Mazis*

## A Drive with My Mother

So much of my mother is recalled  
by a rusted marquee in upstate New York,  
where, sixty years ago, bright lights promised a double feature—  
“Sleepy Hollow” and “Wind in the Willows”—  
to a pre-TV, movie-loving mom.

And so my brother and I

first tasted fear as we huddled against the pellets of hail,  
the wind-whipped fury of an unexpected storm,  
while our '38 Chevy navigated the shoals of Route 22,  
a slippery, unplowed lane narrowed by drifting snow  
until—magically—we were safe, inside the theater,  
and memories of that blinding blizzard  
melted into

talking toads and headless horsemen.

And yet, so many years later,

I never drive Route 22

without remembering wipers, ice-clogged and useless,  
my brother's open window, the only eye in the storm,  
and my mother's hands,

clenched, white on the wheel.

*Carol Milkuhn*

## Elegy, With What Little Remains

I've been writing my father's obituary since fifteen. To kill him, maybe, or save myself some pain. Maybe it's a way of coping,

starting early. Still, it's hard for a son to put his father in the ground prematurely, have him burned,

reduced to ash and a few words—a date of birth, a handful of places he worked, and who survives;

much harder for a father to write one for a son. They gave him six months, my grandpa, to write my uncle's.

I imagine he waited, took his time, prayed, in what little faith remained, to a protestant god on whom

he'd soon give up. I imagine my father, twelve, at home with the babysitter, brother dying

down the road. My father still lives, but I'm afraid each time I press and flatten him on paper, he fades a bit.

Some details should stay between kin—how it was at the end, how his skin sagged in the sleeves of his letterman jacket,

the name of the cancer that killed him, that I'm afraid will kill me too. That's it. That's all you get. He lived, and then he didn't.

*Weston Morrow*

## Late Summer 2020

A mile down the road there's  
a rabid raccoon. At night  
an owl howls in the thin woods.  
There is the clucking sound of wild  
turkeys during cocktail hour.

I pull a caterpillar from the pool  
turning it right-side up on the concrete.  
Its yellow eyes, the color of deli mustard,  
flash from its monochromatic body.  
Deer dung on the grass by the pool.

Poisoned by nerve gas in his tea  
Navalny lies in the Charite hospital  
while throngs of people circle the squares  
in Belarus. Putin and his police  
are ready to pounce. The demonstrators  
are fearless—perhaps  
from their desperation,  
but also, from their desires.

Here, somewhere in America,  
another policeman shoots  
another unarmed Black man.  
Indefensible. Unjust,  
inconceivable except...

Another day has passed.  
Is it Tuesday or Wednesday?  
Only another hour of rage  
in a summer of rage.

*Jo-Ann Mort*

# The Stroke

*(Variation on a theme by Wallace Stevens, for Grandma)*

At dusk, in the car, potholes and thistle skeletons  
    Transform in the gloam, like pine trees  
        Transform on a cow gutted hill.

The Pocono's birch bones accelerate west.  
I remember her mottled skin, how her eyes  
Enlarged in proportion  
As she dwindled from chopped Jello and canned pears.

Thistle-eyed, insistent,  
She could not speak,  
But the birches cast their stripped stems  
Toward abandoned coal mine shafts,  
Transformed in the crepuscular light.  
The spikes in her eyes leveled the room,  
As she fidgeted with her wheelchair  
And knocked her knee, smiling,  
"I'll do it myself" and almost beat against the pane  
To the birch's nicked trunks;  
    It was action against diminishment.

She transformed in the bleached room,  
    Transformed as the snow  
        Transformed the road,

Transformed as her hand gripped her dinner tray,  
    Transformed her body's pen,  
Boisterous as the birches  
    Flooded with her hands' plea.

Or was it the mine shafts' plea?

Out the dashboard, I watch how thistles  
    pull themselves against low mists  
        like she transformed in the room.

I watch how Sacramento's lights gather from the east,

Build like the red bloom in her eyes.

And I remember the spikes,

stripped stems lashing empty shafts.

*Gabrielle Myers*



## Ekphrasis on the Cover of *Bitter Drink, Bitter Moon*

To get the sun out of the moon, first call the crows. They can  
wait in the trees, but you will need their beaks. Next, sink  
the moon halfway      into the sea while its shadow watches

from the sky, remembers its power over the tides. Now, call  
the birds down from the pines. Have them      peck the thinnest  
surface, the deepest craters until light tumbles into the yellow

sky. Then we wait. Then we watch, us and the crows, as the sun  
stretches its arms and slips the moon off like an old sweater.  
The water knows its fire, but does not      steam. It holds

the ashes of the fishes like a tincture. Drink—something  
charred on our tongues. Breathe—something bright  
to scorch the darkness living      in our lungs.

*John A. Nieves*

## Pantoum b/w Post-Dirge (7" Series #4)

If you could sleep against my shoulder, this dirt  
would have no home on our bones, no occasion  
for its darkness to seal us up as a reminder that I  
was meant to keep your tiny eyes in the light. O, you

would have no home. On our bones, no occasion  
would coax the flesh away. I could see and feel that blush  
was meant to keep. Your tiny eyes in the light O, you  
could yawn the sunlight off your face knowing it

would. Coax the flesh away. I could see, could feel that blush  
of life shed between you and your shadow and the heat  
could yawn. The sunlight of your face knowing it  
might not ever see us again. That heat made the shiver

of life shed. Between you and your shadow, the heat  
of you could sleep against my shoulder, this dirt  
might not ever see us. Again, the heat made us shiver  
for its darkness to seal us up as a reminder that died.

*John A. Nieves*

## For Horse Girls

I know how to make bread. On Fridays I mix the yeast,  
water, eggs, oil, salt. I add the flour, cup by cup.  
No need to measure. When I braided the dough,  
I think of horse girls

like this woman, at the top of a hill,  
how her dog's auburn tresses cascade over my pup's wiry black fur.  
I like how she faces me: arms down, unguarded.  
She says she learned to braid on a horse.

I nod like I know. *Horse girls know how to braid.*  
When I was young, my hair made my mother crazy.  
She called it rat's nest and tried to break its spirit. But I did not want  
to be broken.  
So I gave my one beauty to a boy with clippers.  
*No guard*, I said.

My grandmother braided my mother's hair so tight  
she could not close her eyes. Little boys on the school bus behind her  
pulled her blonde hair. My uncle put June bugs in her plaits to watch  
them writhe.  
They would tear off their own legs to break free.

When I was bald, my shaved head whispered something naughty  
to the man in Army fatigues behind me at the 24-hour diner.  
Something about rules and gender and skin—a provocation.  
I did not know this man, or why my hair  
made him glide like a green dragonfly over  
plates and coffee mugs and sugar packets,  
landing on the beautiful boy beside me

he called *Faggot*. My friend was okay—he only broke a nail.  
The soldier scuttled off into the dark Texas night,  
limping in circles like a crippled June bug in the porchlight.

I know how to make bread. On Fridays I beat the dough,  
and think of my grandmother. She baked when she was angry.  
She baked every Saturday. When I braid the dough,  
I think of horse girls, racing their anger over hillocks and streams,  
their braids flying  
like spears.

*Sarah Orman*

## Sher Darwaza, Kabul, 1962

Why should I tell you about this?

I stand in front of years of terrible war,  
remind you of the Afghan proverb:  
*when you shake a man's hand and say hello,  
you should remember him always.*

Cring cring, my bicycle bell  
scattered a small herd of goats.  
A boy, also small, chased them  
with a stick. Maybe his girlcousin  
was a student of mine. "Is this a book?"  
"Yes, it is. No, it isn't."

Every day I pedaled and pedaled  
into the wind, going and coming,  
book bag strapped to my back,  
early morning haze tinged with blue,  
late afternoon sun turning the air golden.

Why should my memory still breathe

this dust, dry earth, dust of roses. dust  
of rotting fruit in the ditches, dust  
of falling stars, dust in wavering notes  
of songs, acrid smoke from charcoal fires,  
lamb kebobs and burning fat, sweet smoke  
from tandoors all over the city baking naan.

In the news today a young woman  
carries her dead sister from the rubble  
of a school. What will she do  
with her own life now. She says, "I will  
continue the work of my sister. We will  
not stop. They cannot stop us. This is  
what we do."

Every day I pedaled through  
the ancient pass called Sher Darwaza  
where the cannon fired at noon  
and the ruins of Babur's beloved garden  
still existed on the fourteenth terrace.  
Every day, going and coming into the wind.

When two friends say goodbye in Afghanistan  
they say "Menda ne bashen." "Zenda bashen."

Every day I am saying this by heart.

But I am not saying goodbye.  
I am saying a prayer.

*May you not be tired. May you be alive.*

*Rosalind Pace*

## Blue

The April sun slants  
across the bay and turns  
the Pamet River a deeper  
color than turquoise, the color  
mountain people glaze

their bowls with, half a world  
away. They'd never seen  
the sea, yet could invent  
this deep-sea-blue, extracted  
from the ishkar plant,

going back four hundred  
years, this skill passed down  
to many sons and daughters,  
*enshallah*. I watch  
the evening and the tide.

Now women in Istalif  
a few kilometers from Kabul  
dress in black, and walk  
through rubble and sweet  
smoke from dung fires, wailing.

Half a world away  
I want to echo the tern's  
cry, or be the empty  
space in the arc a gull  
makes on the updraft.

I am dressed in black  
although I'm not in mourning,  
and yet some part of me  
has gone, some urge to sing.  
The water's now a deeper

blue, then a silver sheen,  
then dark. I cannot speak

about my small complaints.  
No bombs or land mines here.  
I'm still alive. So are you.

*Rosalind Pace*



## The Physics of Fleeting

The lemon tree fills the kitchen  
with the fragrance of dream,  
if one is fortunate enough  
to have a kitchen,

indiscriminate blossoms  
a century ago outside  
the dirt floor shack  
if one was fortunate enough

to have a dirt floor shack,  
shared with chickens  
and a goat, a pair  
of shared shoes by the door

which is not a door  
but a blanket  
if one was fortunate enough  
to have a blanket

to hang on the jamb by day  
for shade and nights drift  
on the indiscriminate  
fragrance of straw dreams.

\*\*\*

The sunflowers lean east  
before dawn, following  
the sun before it rises, and  
when it arcs behind the clouds,

finches will soon fly out  
of the sun bringing yellow  
when the purple cosmos bloom  
but for now remain there,

two cardinals, red hearts  
sitting under the blue spruce,

where I put the iron lasts  
that formed those shoes

that each boy slipped on  
then off handing to his brother  
waiting for the flash,  
cracked photos black and white

gray and brown,  
aliens listing in steerage  
if one was fortunate enough  
to huddle in a dank hull

then smuggle their condition  
past the inspector's light,  
pupils tight against that small sun,  
hot lemon seed in a fist pocket.

\*\*\*

The beach roses scent the tide,  
rise and fall against the bright  
thin sky scenting the fog  
climbing the granite wall

at Grindstone Point,  
if one is fortunate enough  
to summer here, or perhaps  
stumble upon to gaze

out to Mark Island Light  
and think of one's own lost  
summers, wistful wild  
roses along the fence

bordering one life from  
the next, the way the  
neighbor's still climb  
the white lattice someone

painted every other year,  
if one is fortunate enough

to make painting  
the rose lattice priority,

until the day it is not,  
and they are carried away,  
the Realtor showing the house  
flanked by forlorn roses,

that know not everyone  
has the clarity of mind  
wild or not to tend roses,  
and day by smaller day

fragrance becomes memory,  
stray roots crossing  
under the grass  
until one day a shoot,

if one is fortunate enough  
to have a wild rose come up  
from behind,  
and turn its wild eye to you.

\*\*\*

A half-dozen colored balloons  
billow toward the clouds  
above the cemetery  
on Father's Day,

a small group looking up,  
if one is fortunate enough  
to have a small group  
miss you enough

to park three cars  
alongside your grave  
and release your soul again  
in case it did not

fly up in color on its own,  
did not free itself

from black and white,  
gray and brown

to ride the blossoms  
of colored balloons,  
a woman tying back her hair,  
then with a palm to her cheek

watching them rise,  
indiscriminate  
fragrance, next to you  
on a bus, on a train

behind you in a checkout lane,  
if one is fortunate enough  
to have fragrance pull you  
into the here, and now.

*R.A. Pavoldi*

## Small Primer on Loneliness

You spend a lot of time waiting, develop skills in the art  
of talking to yourself. You spend too long listening

to the wind lispings in the trees. You go places alone,  
searching the eyes of those gathered with others,

the lone crow exiled  
at the end of a branch.

No one looks back at you, standing out  
with your scarlet lipstick and that mood

ring on your finger, the one that says you're blue.  
In front of the cafe, you walk in the wake of a

strange woman's perfume. You're chasing  
some music no one else can hear, pining

for a someday when someone will. Without  
the architecture of people, the shapes

of days unform themselves. And nights have a way  
of expanding the face of the clock.

You go to the wall and cross off each box  
on the calendar, a prisoner grinding it out to the end

of the sentence. You climb the silence of the hours  
like an alcoholic, waiting until 5 o'clock each day

before you indulge in marking the "X."  
Later in bed, you brush the hair from your face,

wishing it was someone else's gentle gesture.  
Each night you wish mornings would stop

greeting you and your hereditary sadness. Your skin  
has a hunger for touch that could devour your heart.

You think of your late aunt, all those nights she'd sit  
alone at the top of the basement stairs and weep

into her hands, as overwhelmed by loneliness as  
the number of blue checks on her gingham skirt.

*Anne Rankin*

## Between Bites

This world isn't gentle.

Can you hear the startled, dying murmur?

The soulful coo of a mourning dove  
    beating wings against your chest,  
    feathers floating your rib cage.

Loneliness clutching telephone wires.

Storm bait waiting for a signal fire.

My anxiety curdled in a bird's breast.

Two turtle doves minus one is love grieving.

I'm not unkind. There's a bestiary of sorrow  
    belonging leaves in my mouth. A toothless  
    sucking on gummed expectations.

As the day grows old, hope grows silent on a wire  
    outside my house with the windows  
    wide open.

A milky warm November in New York.

Nothing is seasonal this year  
    besides the day's dying  
    licks of flame burning the horizon.

The wind picks up as night descends,  
    stirring and rattling leaves.

A crisp serenade pulling skin taunt.

Oh, but that autumn moon  
    glimpsed between branches;  
    Her rippled reflection as if all the dark sky  
    were a lake of drowned cares.

Did the young opossum witness her murky swim  
    before falling into the mostly empty trash can.

There's no mourning dove in this morning;  
Dragging a can bouncing, jostling across the yard  
    toward the back fence woods.

    Screeching little beastly squealing in protest.

Hush, you sea of noisy, I whisper,  
    tilting the trash can on its side.

Night will find the opossum gone before the rain.

This world still chews on pieces of me.

Kindness slips in between bites.

*Sage Ravenwood*

## Destiny

There was no love in the beginning—  
only airbrushed photos, biodata, resumé exchanged.  
Weeks later, our first meeting with family hovering,  
teacups of conversation, shy glances  
then time alone, flights of stairs to the rooftop,  
Indian night stretched over us.  
I saw you then for the first time, outlined in candlelight,  
graceful in sari, hands delicate in gesture  
tides of discussion in the tug of moonlight.  
And we divined what flowed beneath the surface—  
fire, air, water, earth to fuse two worlds.

Neither of us in search of soul mate or romance  
only blind trust in what was written in the stars—  
*marriages must be made in heaven.*  
We awaited our wedding day,  
to be showered with rice, flowers,  
blessings of Ganesha.  
knotted the auspicious thread, and together  
encircled the sacred fire seven times,  
for eternity we now belonged to one another

The universe found a way to bring us together—  
within the same sliver of rainforest, parrots  
hovering over the canopy, and in what little light  
escapes the leafy sieve,  
I glimpsed your lime green feathers.  
heard the enchanting piccolo of your voice.  
Was this serendipity or destiny?  
Children flutter around us.  
We course together through their blood,  
intertwined in their every cell,  
and in living this improbability  
of shared place, shared purpose, shared creation,  
we have learned to love.

*Sarath Reddy*



## Waiting on Water

I stumble down the slant to the beach, steep dunes unpeopled,  
beds of seagrass unmolested, gulls crying for lovers lost  
then found. The openness of sky, restless breakers, waves within waves,  
knocking rocks, of which I'm now afraid—there've been many bodies  
of water in my life: oceans, lakes, rivers, waterfalls, named and  
anonymous ones we vacationed by, always wetness rippling  
across skin, rush sliding in, play of limbs beneath, shudder of breath  
released. Should I not have forsaken the shore, not married myself  
to an inland plain, the view too predictable, a calm clearly visible, locked  
land's measure too gentle absent the pounding tide, a beating meted out  
by the moon's blinking eye? I have no theory of buoyancy but I dream  
of the sea, my return, your return to me, because I have no choice—  
caught in the eddy of this scene. Scarce are the dawns I don't wake  
to the sighing of the drowned. Ribbons of eelgrass tangle my dreams.

*Ellen Sazzman*

# The Barefoot Contessa\*

*for Dd*

My wife is a modern day barefoot  
contessa traipsing through our yard  
shoeless in green overalls,  
long gray hair tied up under a homemade  
hat for sun protection and that regal look.  
She tends the gardens. I watch  
from my office window as goldfinch,  
flickers, bluebirds and orioles  
visit feeders scattered around the field.  
Today she is working on two raised beds  
where seedlings have found a home  
they never imagined. It's a rural setting  
near a small village on the Maine coast.  
A tributary of the Harraseeket River  
rises and falls behind our house  
where herons, hawks and eagles swoop  
low over the surface hunting their prey.  
I have spent years living in major cities  
tightly wound with people and uncertainty.  
Here there is quiet and a sense of place.  
The birds understand. They flop into  
the birdbath, have a drink, take a dunk,  
wait to play catch up with others  
lined up at the feeders. In the morning  
we slice orange halves for the orioles  
who whistle their familiar tune.

*Marc Swan*

**Note:**

*The Barefoot Contessa* is a 1954 film with Ava Gardner and Humphrey Bogart.

## Love Poem to a Man I Never Met

I never called you Dad or my father-in-law but only know you from photos, smile on your face, fat cigar in fat hand, and family stories: your Depression

era joke about one hobo wiping bird shit out of his eye, telling another hobo, "For the rich, birds sing!" Or the story of family sitting in the hot car,

sweat rolling down cheeks as they wondered what fantastic toy you'd buy for your son. When you came out of the store laughing, your son Norman was jubilant, waving magic

from a fly swatter as it danced in air, his swift, shining sword. I ease into the earthiness of stories that soothe with truth from the grave. Ghost tethered to memories,

life span a few lines in stone, creation now of other mouths, you're the hero of stories you couldn't imagine. You come into this room, barely parting the air

as you move, silent as one candle, your flame floating your spirit to guide and bless us. When I first heard the fly swatter story, I thought, "How mean." Years later I saw

humor and deep love, the imagination necessary to teach a child to adore a fly swatter, qualities bathing Norman's award-winning experiments.

O unknown man, if you gave me a hug  
—o dead man alive in my life, I drink  
your winning wine to heal my heart where  
Norman and I love to serve each other.

*Marilynn Talal*

## Chagall Landscape

Geometry of towns and shapes,  
the mythical home scraped  
in paint, the immigrant's loss—  
that fleshy cavity never filled.

Mystic fiddlers and rabbis,  
always a floating woman,  
often a chicken or goat.

Bearded peddlers and pale refugees  
bearing humble brown sacks  
of loss. Rabbis lighting  
candles in the dark.

The fiddler passive, resigned,  
who plays quietly and accepts  
his fate.

The animals—chicken, horse or goat,  
existential anchors,  
persistent optimists  
impervious to loss.

Lush bouquets and breasts  
bursting forth with  
Byzantine exuberance  
of fragrance, fullness and succor.

Always a floating woman,  
often a bride aloft  
in a dreamscape of roses,  
and skies full of flying lovers  
clasped in eternal embrace—  
the antidote for loss.

*Gail Tirone*

## Poolside Tabula Scalata

*For MVT*

You say shadows gather there like panthers,  
famished claws unsheathed in laddered light.

No, I counter, they are plunging starlings  
stitching their dark reticulations.

Whatever, you transit the evening sky,  
quenching your bones under chlorine blues.

What caprice of the deep turns you to me,  
suspended weaving arms unweaving

time, gone and drawn to burning webs of gold:  
what refraction could show me as you are?

*Eric Trump*

## Ship's Cat on Noah's Ark

The voyage-long dilemma:  
telling apart the authorised rat—  
the authoritative rat—  
from all the rest  
who simply slipped on board.

*H M Truscott*

## Return Trip

The Greyhound's exhaust loitered in a cloud of humidity. Sunlight splotched sweat-stains across our shirts, brushing the trees red. You wore your frizzy hair in a tight bun. Heat lightning crackled the sky's blank canvas.

I wheezed, dragging our luggage, pointing to the church where, years ago, I was born again. We shared our lunch at Bob's Hotdogs before dipping donuts in coffee (Janie's Pastries!), and you blushed a smile I'd never seen before.

Signs directed us past Sassy-but-Sweet Boutique to the childhood home I never had, a mansion built to stand through Armageddon. We sighed. The walls slick blue, the shutters white as lies, the porch a flat yellow, the house was stuffed

with dreams I never brought to life. The door had a gold-plated knocker, a laughing sphinx posturing atop an expertly carved urn. Wind shook the great magnolia. Leaves fell onto clovers. Hydrangeas lined the picket fence.

This was not where I learned my first words, reading books like *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* and *Winnie-the-Pooh*. Clouds almost touched the roof's perfect tiles. I dropped our bags, checking my phone for texts. In the breeze, you held me close, saying, "I love it."

*Jason Gordy Walker*



## Solipsism

Because the hour of night  
can occur at different points—  
the space between you and your kite  
stretching the afternoon sky,  
blank thoughts as you stare  
at an unread newspaper,  
dreaming the wildest dream  
then a hint of familiarity about it  
the shattered lie.

Any minute you might find  
yourself surprised, waking alone  
and everyone suddenly absent. Tiny whirlwinds  
of doglessness where the dog once curled,  
and no sound in the entire place  
except your breathing. Outside, the rough cone  
of the pine tree traces  
an arrow, poised to leave the empty world.

Then maybe you see faces,  
secret like the lost gold of noon—  
a lighted house,  
the cratered moon,  
and photos, everywhere you look,  
fading.

*Mercer Warriner*

## Chance

First thing I want to know is who's gonna pick me up off this floor of a morning when my head is packed with kitchen sinks and how I will never see Italy. I'm still in bed, trying to punch up the lure of coffee, but even that isn't working, so I pick up my phone instead and turn on a tarot reading. *This may not apply to everyone*, the reader says to the entire *YouTube* universe, but I'll take that chance. Good as any, I'm guessing, and I'm watching her movements, shuffle and flick as cards fly out of the deck in that way the future always does no matter how nicely you ask it not to. I wait for the reader to turn over the cards, I'm expecting the 5 of empty, the 3 of need though I know there isn't such a thing. *Ah*, she says, *good news, today something is going to happen*. Then, she says to the entire *YouTube* universe *remember this might not apply to everyone*, but yes, she says, *something is going to happen*, and I can't help but wonder how she knows.

*Francine Witte*

## Maybe is Such a Friendzone Word

Maybe can't commit,  
but still wants to sleep

with you. Whispers  
someday into your ear. Maybe

doesn't care that you have  
places to go. No. Maybe shakes

its bobblehead yes, then no, then yes.  
Maybe doesn't care that you wear hope

like a sweater, that it's never  
warm enough to take it off.

That you time your eggs so you don't  
miss a call. That you hide behind

a bookcase waiting for all of those  
words in all of those books to jump out

and form the sentence that will finally  
tell you, once and for all, that you are loved.

*Francine Witte*

## The Hearse

A hearse is an omen crossed with a station wagon. A hearse  
is an ambulance's understudy, unless an ambulance

is a hearse's. A hearse is the latest thing in limousines.  
I queue behind one to order my coffee. A child would love

its rear window, the curtains bunched on both sides,  
the matching valance. I can see it: below the open door, shins;

above the bumper, a muddle of puppets. I love it: a woman  
could stand at that window and wash dishes, and to be

enshrined in the minds of passersby, she would not need  
to be beautiful or even gentle. A hearse is a trailer park

diorama. Once hexagonal lanterns swung from carriages  
mourners hired. In the drive-thru, I idle behind a Lincoln,

white, with a dollhouse wall sconce on its side. A hearse  
is a pick-up truck with a fancy cap, a camper pasted

to a porch light. It carries the absence of moppets  
and kitchen sinks. Its reflectors are lightning bugs' husks.

*Jane Zwart*

*International Feature Section*

# Poland

Edited by

Cecilia Woloch

## Introduction: Navigating the Liminal

It was poetry that brought me to Poland in the first place, poets who made the path for me to get to Poland, almost thirty years ago. In those early post-Communist years, traveling to and within the countries of the former Soviet Bloc was not for the faint of heart. But I'd wanted to get behind the Iron Curtain for as long as I could remember, even as a child. This had to do, in general, with my desire to explore whatever was shadowy or hidden from me; more particularly, it had to do with my desire to get at the source of my family's secrecy about our origins, which lay somewhere in that vast, mysterious landscape. More particularly still, this desire had to do with the secrecy around my paternal grandmother, who I'd always been told I was "just like," and who seemed to have vanished, inexplicably and utterly, years after she'd emigrated to the U.S. and some years before I was born. But who was she? I only knew that she'd come from a village in "the old country," somewhere in "the Carpathians," a country I couldn't find on any map, if it was even a country at all. I'd heard that she might have been a Gypsy, a witch, a fortune-teller, a midwife, a political rebel, a Communist. From the time I began to want to write, I knew that it was her story I wanted to tell, but I didn't know where that story began. And how to cross those borders, both the external and the internal ones? It was the act of writing, particularly poetry, that taught me to navigate the liminal, to trust my intuition, to go on my nerve and luck.

Practically, it went something like this: in the early 1990's, in London, I met a British-Pakistani poet. Zahid had contacted me because he'd read an article about the work I was doing in Los Angeles as a poet-in-the schools. Almost as soon as I sat down at a café table across from Zahid, I told him that I wanted to get to the Carpathian Mountains; I wasn't exactly sure where those mountains were, but I thought they might be, at least in part, in Poland. Zahid put me in touch with another British poet, named Sarah, who was a traveler, as I was, and a frequent visitor to Poland. She and I started corresponding by letter, and she put me in touch with people she knew in Kraków, young artists and poets who could help me there, she said. Another friend of a friend put me in touch with a professor he knew in Warsaw, who agreed to meet my train in Warszawa Centralna. It was December of 1993; I traveled from Berlin with a friend from California, a man I knew through the poetry community there, who'd agreed to accompany me. "Why not," he'd said when I phoned him, "I've never been to

Poland.” Almost no one traveled in Poland then.

When we stepped off the train in Warsaw, I felt as if I were stepping through a scrim of shadows into another time, another world. Ken and I could never have found our way out of the underground maze of Centralna Station without the professor as a guide. He led us through a series of dimly lit passageways, filthy and stinking of piss, until we emerged, at last, at street level, and I stood facing the most monstrous building I’d ever seen. The Palac Kultury, Stalin’s “gift” to the Polish people. “Our great shame,” the professor said. An enormous, soot-covered wedding cake of a structure, it seemed to loom over the city like the very face of the dictator. I was terrified. I was thrilled. I’d long imagined the world that lay behind the Iron Curtain as colorless, forbidding, bleak, and I wasn’t disappointed. The Soviet-era buildings of Warsaw looked like prisons, and the older, pre-war buildings looked like the crumbling remnants of a forgotten fairytale.

A few days later, Ken and I managed (this wasn’t easy) to buy tickets and board a train to Kraków—a city less forbidding, by far, than Warsaw, but gloomy, atmospheric, mysterious, too. It was in Kraków that I first began to sense the presence of ghosts. A man in fingerless gloves selling postcards of his photographs on Florianska Street could have been my favorite uncle. Sarah’s young poet and artist friends, emerging from ancient buildings and dark alleyways into the snow-lit market square, looked and sounded familiar to me from the moment I met them. Where did I know them from? They seemed to appear and disappear in the streets of Kraków like a kind of phantom brigade. At the end of a week, one of those young Polish artists hoisted me onto a night train to Budapest – Ken, being too tall for a couchette, had chosen a seat in a different wagon. This seemed to us at the time like the easiest or the cheapest or maybe the only way to get back to what we still thought of as “the West.” (Ken could travel by train from Budapest to Berlin; I could get an inexpensive flight from Budapest to Zurich, then travel by train to southern Germany, where I was living for a few months.)

Sometime after midnight, after Ken and I had been cut off from one another by the closed dining car between our wagons, the train passed through a range of mountains that looked wild and uninhabited. I wondered if these might be the Carpathians. I would discover, later, that we’d passed within sixty miles of the village where my grandmother was born, the very destination to which I believed the randomness of my wanderlust, and my luck, would somehow lead. There seemed no other way to get there, since I didn’t know the name

or location of this village, and I half-suspected it might no longer exist, or might never have existed at all. But I sensed that night, on the train to Budapest, that I'd come close enough, almost, to reach out and touch it.

Sarah and I eventually met in person in London, a year or two later, and we continued to keep up a furious correspondence, exchanging news of our lives and our travels—neither of us stayed more than a few months in any one place in those years; I only stayed long enough in Los Angeles to earn enough money to travel again—as well as poems. Within another year, Sarah had met and married a Polish botanist and given birth to a child. They were living in a tiny Polish village—somewhere on the outskirts of Warsaw, I thought—and she was lonely. Why didn't I come and visit?

By then I had made a second trip to Poland, to Warsaw and Kraków, in late spring, when the landscape was brighter. But Poland was still a daunting place to travel, especially for a woman who hadn't yet learned how to fit her mouth around the Polish words for “Excuse me,” or “Thank you.” I planned to be back in Europe in early 1999; I could manage the train from Berlin to Warsaw. So, I wrote to Sarah and told her that I'd come to wherever it was she was, if she'd just tell me how to get there. I was at home in Los Angeles when I got her instructions; I unfolded a map on my desk and traced one finger along the route her letter had described: I'd need to take a train from Warsaw to Krakow, and from Krakow, another train further south and east to a town called Krosno, where Sarah would meet me with a car and drive me further south to a village I couldn't see on the map – so small it wasn't marked – and just there the tip of my finger touched an area that was green, part of an arc of green on the map across which was written the word *Carpathians*. Sarah was living in the *Beskid Niski*, the lower Carpathians.

And so, in the early winter of 1999, I took a creaky, drafty Polish train from Warsaw to Krosno, a journey of more than nine hours through a landscape so empty and strange and forbidding that I thought I might vanish into it forever. I was cold and hungry all the way, and more than a little afraid; no one else on the train spoke a word of English. Darkness fell and the stations got further and further apart; some consisted of only a rusted sign and a bench. I wasn't sure how I'd know where to disembark. That I managed to get off at the right station, where I spotted Sarah jumping up and down at the end of an otherwise deserted platform, trying to keep warm or excited to see me—she told me later I was the first person they'd invited who made it all



the way—still seems to me like a miracle.

I had by then acquired a single clue to the ancestral village: an old envelope given to me by an elderly cousin of my father's – probably by mistake—with a return address somewhere in “the old country.” I had done my best to decipher the handwriting and had sent the address ahead to Sarah—via letter, of course, because she had no access to email in those days, there being no phone lines in the village where she was living. Sarah had shown this address to her husband. Almost the first thing Lukasz said to me the night we met in their kitchen, the fire in the woodstove blazing, my mattress of fir branches spread on the floor, was: “I think I might know where this village is. It's just a whim I have, but would you like to go? It's not far from here.”

It still seems like a fairytale to me, that point at which my life as a poet changed—really, my whole life. I went to my grandmother's village, or what was left of it: a few scattered houses, an old wooden church, a ribbon of asphalt road that no one traveled, an eerie emptiness. I didn't understand what I was seeing, what I wasn't seeing, why it seemed as if something were missing, why there seemed to be “no there there.” But I would return to the Carpathians again and again and, over the years, with the help of Sarah and Lukasz and the village priest and a whole constellation of friends that kept expanding as I went, I began, slowly, to piece back together the history of the place. The village of Wisłok Wielki had once been inhabited by people who called themselves Rusyns or Lemkos or nothing at all or, later, Ukrainians, as well as Gypsies and Jews; it was a political hotbed for many years and came to a tragic end in the forced removals and dislocations that followed WWII. It was part of a lost world, its history all but erased and yet interwoven with my father's family's history, in that village as well as in immigrant America, and with my grandmother's path through her times, and with her fate—murdered at fifty-three in Detroit by the third of her husbands, a man also from the village, a political accomplice or foe. The discoveries I made gave rise to poems, and the writing of poems brought discoveries that could not have been made any other way. The place is a story I'm still telling myself, twenty years on.

Poets make a world—for ourselves and for one another. I've visited Poland at least once a year since 1999, writing and doing research, giving readings and teaching workshops, and watching the country transform, like a series of time-lapse photographs, from a country of shadows, haunted by history, into the kind of modern European country it's always meant itself to be. And yet, even as the land-

scape has brightened, and the overlapping circles of people I know in Poland have expanded, the questions this landscape and these people prompt me to ask myself have only deepened: What is a country, after all? What do borders have to do with our individual and collective sense of who we are, and language, and poetry? Some years ago, I was being interviewed, after a reading, for Polish radio. The interviewer asked a question that, at first, floored me: “How does it feel to write in English when you have a Polish soul?” It took me a minute. “But my soul isn’t Polish,” I said. “My soul doesn’t have a nationality. I think no one’s soul does.” The soul is borderless, I believe, and as poets we’re always navigating the liminal, no matter where we’re writing from.

The region of southeastern Poland where the lower Carpathians lie, that borderland where my father’s mother was born, still seems to me a liminal place, a threshold between worlds—even more so now, in the late summer of 2022, with war raging just across the border in Ukraine, a war that is in some ways a continuation of all the wars that have gone before it, wars that have shaped this region of Poland and my family’s history, our sense of who we are, or are not—people from nowhere, citizens of “a fictional country,” as Vladimir Putin has proclaimed. But aren’t we all citizens of fictional countries, since all borders are human made, and therefore the product of someone’s ambition or imagination, and therefore fluid and permeable?

I don’t think anything that’s happened to me in Poland has been a coincidence. Nor do I think it’s a coincidence that my visits to Poland, growing longer and longer over the years, from weeks to months, culminated in my year as a Fulbright fellow in Rzeszów, a Polish city an hour’s drive from my grandmother’s village, less than an hour’s drive from the Ukrainian border, just as the Russian invasion of Ukraine began. Perhaps the end of this war, when it comes, will be the end of the story I’ve been working for more than twenty years to tell. The response of the Polish people to this war, their solidarity with and generosity toward the people of Ukraine, the efforts of every individual I know in Rzeszów to help the women and children who’ve fled the violence in Ukraine, gives me hope that even our darkest and bloodiest histories might be healed. I’m romantic enough to believe that this is possible, and that telling our stories, our truths about ourselves, however complex, matters, that language matters, and poetry, that transcendence is possible, and transformation.

Certainly, in Poland, poetry matters deeply. Poetry has long held an elevated place in Polish literature, and even in Polish history. So many Polish poets are heroes, having risked so much to resist op-

pression that they've become cultural icons. When Poland, as an independent nation-state, disappeared from the map—partitioned into nonexistence, between 1795 and 1918, by the Russian and Austro-Hungarian and German Empires—Polish language and culture persisted, and Polish poetry. Adam Mickiewicz, the Polish poet, dramatist, scholar, and political activist, is to this day considered a national hero—but of which nation? There are monuments to him not only in Poland, but in western Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania.

When the Polish Republic came into being, or back into being, after WWI, Polish poetry flourished, along with art and culture. The interwar period gave us the Polish-Jewish poet, Julian Tuwim, who co-founded a group of experimental poets as well as a cabaret comedy troupe wrote lyrics and satires for literary and leftist political journals, and created a body of work for children that's still much beloved in Poland. There's a sculpture of Tuwim, seated casually on a park bench, in his native Łódź today.

Zuzanna Gincburg, one of the most fiercely independent Polish poets of the interwar period, is more celebrated for her feminist poetry now than even when she was alive, although she was a darling of Polish literary circles in her time. Born in Kiev, she died in Kraków in 1944, killed by the Gestapo after more than two years spent in hiding. Today, she's revered as the daring and exotically beautiful Ginczanka, the dark-eyed Jewess whose most beloved and well-known poem insists, "Not all of me will die."

During WWII, Polish poets like Anna Swir, Tadeusz Różewicz, and Zbigniew Herbert joined the underground resistance to the Nazi occupation. Swir's work as a nurse during the Warsaw Uprising features in her poetry, along with her meditations on the female body, motherhood, and sensuality. Poet and translator Jerzy Ficowski joined the Polish Home Army as a young man, was arrested by the Nazis and detained in Pawiak prison, got out of prison before the start of the Warsaw Uprising and, when it broke out, fought in Mokotów, for which he was awarded the Polish Cross of Valour. After WWII, when Poland came under Soviet dominance, its poets—Herbert and Ficowski among them—played a central role in resisting the oppression of the Communist powers. Ficowski traveled with the Roma (Gypsy) people, making it harder for the Communist Department of Security to keep track of him; he wrote about Romani culture, introduced the Polish-Roma poet Papusza to the world, and was active in the attempt to preserve Jewish culture in post-war Poland. His narrative poem "Letter for Marc Chagall," was published in 1957; he wrote the definitive biog-

raphy of Jewish writer Bruno Schulz in 1967. In December of 1975, he signed the famous Memoriał 59 (Memorandum of 59), a letter signed by Polish intellectuals protesting post-war changes to the Polish constitution.

Even the poets who produced a large part of their work in exile kept Poland central to their poetry, and thus made it central to the poetry of the world. Both Czesław Miłosz and Adam Zagajewski spent many years in the U.S. and became American literary icons, as well as Polish literary and political heroes. As a translator, Miłosz introduced Western literature to a Polish audience, and as a scholar and editor, he brought a greater awareness of Slavic literature to the West. The anthology he edited, *Postwar Polish Poetry*, is on the bookshelf of almost every poet I know in the U.S. In Krakow, the café once frequented by Nobel laureate Wisława Szymborska is still frequented by poets from around the world, who continue to imbibe her presence there, years after her death. Polish poetry has played a part in keeping the Polish language and national identity from dying, even as identity and language, as they must, have remained in flux.

The complexity and difficulty and beauty of the Polish language, and the fact that it's not spoken much outside of Poland, make translation central to its continued vitality and impact. The deeper I dig into the translation process—although my grasp of the Polish language is still very limited—the more fascinating and magical I find it, and the more in awe I am of the translators whose work is represented here, all poets themselves, as well. If writing a poem is itself an act of translation, an attempt at a kind of transcendence through language, the attempt to translate that translation, that transcendence, takes us ever deeper into the act of language, and into the liminal.

I don't feel qualified to assess the whole landscape of contemporary poetry in Polish, which is neither monolithic nor homogeneous, and certainly it's not stagnant. But I can say that there's something essential in this poetry—essential, perhaps, to the life of the soul. It doesn't shy away from engagement with politics and history, and yet it retains a hermetic quality—mysterious, inward-looking—that reaches always for the spiritual. There seems to me also a heightened awareness of the past in the poems gathered here, an engagement with memory and with the gaps in memory, with absences and silences and the slipperiness of the present, an acknowledgement of how suddenly the world can change, and how unforeseeably. What you won't find here is grandiosity or sentimentality; instead, you'll find subtlety and irony and tenderness toward an often-brutal world, and a door always

left ajar into another world. When Boleslaw Leśmian, in Sarah Luczaj's incandescent translation of his poem "The Girl," rails against reality, "What a world! Bad world! Why is there no other world?" he speaks from the dream of the poem, a dream we're dreaming still.

*Cecilia Woloch*

## The Girl

Twelve brothers, believing in dreams, investigated a wall from the  
dream-side,  
And from beyond the wall a voice was crying, a girlish, ruined voice.  
And they fell in love with the sound of the voice and imagined the  
girl,  
Discussed the shape of her mouth from the way her singing vanished  
into grief ...  
They said of her, "She weeps, so she is there!" and they said nothing  
more,  
And they left the whole world, crossing themselves—  
and the world lost itself in thought at that moment ...  
They grabbed hammers in their hard hands and started smashing into  
the wall, clattering!  
And the blind night did not know who was human and who hammer?  
"Oh, let's crush this cold rock before death rusts the girl over!"  
So, pounding into the wall, said the twelfth brother to the others.  
But their hardship was in vain, in vain their arms' union and effort!  
They gave up their bodies to the waste of the dream that tempted them!  
They broke their chests, split their bones, rotted their palms and their  
faces whitened ...  
And they died in one day and night, their one perpetual day and night!  
But the shadows of the dead—my God!—didn't let the hammers fall  
from their hands!  
Only time passed differently—and only the hammers rang out  
differently...  
And rang ahead! And rang behind! And upwards after each repeating  
thunder!  
And the blind night did not know who was shadow, and who hammer?  
"Oh, let's crush this cold rock before death rusts the girl over!"  
So, pounding into the wall, said the twelfth shadow to the others.  
But suddenly the shadows lost strength, as shadows do not oppose the  
dusk!  
And they died once more, because you never can die enough ...  
And never enough, and never as you want to, in your death throes!  
And outlines disappeared—and all trace—and their story finished!  
But the skillful hammers—my God!—did not give themselves to  
mourning!  
And they hit the wall themselves, their own bronze resounded!

They stormed in the dusk, stormed in the shine and dripped human  
sweat!  
And the blind night did not know, what a hammer is when there is no  
hammer.  
"Oh, let's crush this cold rock before death rusts the girl over!"  
So, pounding into the wall, said the twelfth hammer to the others.  
And the wall collapsed, a thousand echoes shaking the mountains  
and valleys!  
But beyond the wall—nothing and nothing! No living soul, no girl!  
Nobody's eyes or mouth! And nobody's fate in the flowers!  
Because it had been a voice and only a voice, and nothing but a voice!  
Nothing—only crying and grief and dusk and not knowing and loss!  
What a world! Bad world! Why is there no other world?  
Against treacherous daydreams, against miracles wasted into  
nothingness,  
Powerful hammers lay in a row, a sign of a hard job accomplished.  
And there was the sudden silence of terror! And there was emptiness  
in all the skies!  
And why do you deride this emptiness, when the emptiness does not  
deride you?

*Boleslaw Leśmian*  
*Trans. by Sarah Luczaj*

(Untitled)

Since I met you, I carry lipstick in my pocket; it is very stupid to carry lipstick in my pocket, when you look at me as seriously as if you saw a gothic cathedral in my eyes. And I am no temple, only forest and meadow — the trembling of the leaves that gather themselves in your hands. Back there the stream trickles, that's time escaping, and you let it flow through your fingers and you don't want to catch time. And when I take my leave from you, my painted lips stay untouched, and I have carried lipstick in my pocket anyway, since first I knew that you have a very beautiful mouth.

*Halina Poswiatowska*  
*Trans. by Sarah Luczaj*



(Untitled)

and I want life — low  
I don't want deep  
I don't want across  
or alongside

I want it to be coiled  
around the jutting wall  
the texture of wild vine  
I want it to climb the windows  
doors —  
its smell  
overrun the house  
to circle with the earth  
with my heart stuck inside

I want to be wet grass  
in your mouth  
in your hands  
I only want to be wet grass  
till I'm out of breath  
I just want to be stupid grass  
at your feet  
to grow by the roadside

*Halina Poswiatowska*  
*Trans. by Sarah Luczaj*

*from Dear Ms. Schubert. . .*

*Language*

Dear Ms. Schubert, I'm writing you in  
Polish. A strange tongue. It sticks to the palate.  
It has to be translated, constantly,  
into foreign languages. Sometimes it gives off  
a dull smell and tastes like apathetic mustard.  
Sometimes though, it relaxes in love.  
Do you remember how dizzy our words were  
when we ran along the beach, and rain  
                  washed from our mouths the remnants of speech?

*Stupidity*

Dear Ms. Schubert, I've been observing  
stupidity for quite some time now. It's a hit worldwide.  
It flexes its muscles in a toxic gym. StairMaster.  
Barbells. Weights. A confident fitness.  
Apparently from even before birth. A holy icon  
of rippling flesh. Rattling on like a plume of words  
chronically doped.

*Sudden Brightness*

Dear Ms. Schubert, do you remember that night when you  
stripped me of words? Carefully, slowly, so as not to  
damage the edges of the dark. Everything wooed us: the  
murky laboratories of happiness, the damp underground of  
Edgar Allan Poe, the secret service of the Illuminati. And we  
were only afraid of one thing: acute inflammation of light,  
a disease in which sudden brightness could kill us.

*Ewa Lipska*  
*Trans. by Robin Davidson*  
*& Ewa Elżbieta Nowakowska*

## God May Prefer Donuts

God may prefer donuts.  
What are our sins to him.

Still the same comedy dell'arte.  
Shameless banality. Unpaired love.  
Incestuous dreams.

God may prefer donuts.

What's it to him, one more betrayal  
worthy of sin?  
A burning paraffin sea?

God may prefer donuts.

Unbelieving sleds  
stall for time  
on innocent snow.

*Ewa Lipska*  
*Trans. by Robin Davidson*  
*& Ewa Elżbieta Nowakowska*

## Cornflowers and Poppies

Mr Andrzej

takes me through the forest to the sawmill tells me  
about the streams that multiply in the thickets  
suddenly he stands on the little bridge and asks if i am not afraid  
if the lady is not scared of that current beneath us

we are coming out of the wild undergrowth, the fields  
he picks a head of wheat, offers it like a rose and asks  
if you can pick flowers if you can  
pick poppy heads from the lady's mouth to make wreaths

Mr Andrzej

looks into your eyes as if he wanted with this skyblue  
to make your head spin and to mow the whole field  
of cornflowers down with his eyelashes then reach his hand out for all  
the surrounding flowers for bouquets, wreaths, stoops

we stop in the forest he takes my  
hand places it on the trunk of a great tree  
and asks if i feel if the lady feels how  
wet it is—it's the morning dew in the forest

cornflowers and poppies remained in the fields

Mr Andrzej

asks me to remember the tree please  
remember that when wet, it buds and groans  
since then any old rain can keep me from sleeping

*Grazyna Wojcieszko*  
*Trans. by Sarah Luczaj*

## *from* Incantation

### Viking

#### II

Viking after his stay in the primeval forest  
his long exile ending in my eye looks in a bad state to me  
the grass tells me it rustles as if in warning  
he has an urgent request not to come too close

he asks how you can sit in front of the television like that  
while he wanders from stoop to stoop in the hope  
that he'll find a human hand in the haystack he searches for  
the gentleness of empathy and tact sniffing for goodness

those in cars  
are asked to take their feet  
from the gas pedals  
so he can cross  
the road

### The London Theatre—Final

soldiers lie like puppets in their  
places because the show has not yet  
started motionless they fight their nerves

meanwhile

pomp and splendour are winding  
through the halls in the salons pearls  
wink at the sight of me glance  
sideways do not speak of  
the clattering old cart or its  
barefoot four wheel drive  
don't pass comment on the splintered wood  
don't gossip about the birch twigs  
my vehicle parked alongside the limousines

covered in resin and pine needles still smells  
smells of eternally green wild forest

meanwhile

pomp and splendour are winding  
through the halls diamonds  
choke in the bars when they should be  
delicately coughing off their embarrassment  
because they just can't find it  
salon after salon they search for the stage  
corridor after corridor and rooms  
full of armchairs red armchairs

evergreen with a loose crown of branches  
growing in spreading circles  
I sit down in the spacious box on the upper floor

meanwhile

the curtain goes up and puppets  
hurl bombs at each other  
tear each other's clothes off cut each other's  
throats with knives cut off  
their little arms and legs rip their guts out

the audience delighted  
await the end of the first act

behind the fallen curtain they put the bits of puppet  
into a bucket then the gilded hall and the rubbish heap  
new soldiers wait anxiously in the wings for the second act

meanwhile

the commentaries of bleached  
collars the choking of pearls  
and diamonds the delicate appeal  
in the direction of the one who  
hisses and squeals and snorts and

sticks needles in the armchairs with branches  
in her mouth and whistles like a hooligan  
Scotland Yard appears helpless faced with  
the present circumstances and fears that this  
day will go down in history as the day when  
  
the hissing of the pine spread out beyond the capital

*Grazyna Wojcieszko*  
*Trans. by Sarah Luczaj*

*from* Amplified Insides—A Soundtrack

And if. Bow of the wheel. Cross-sections. Parabolas. Big birds circling singly or in flocks. The moraine chain stretches. So far. No less freely. Old women fall asleep. With crossed legs. So high. What's needed? For it to be? And to be how? Do the sandy shoals remain (so) the same? After rain. Where is the secret circle? What, then, do they carry in the freezers? Loose peas? Powder? Pow! Nothing will come of it. White whitens when it becomes spirit. Does god stroke your head, when everything is in order? So where do infections come from? Usually viruses. At the inter (and) national airports. The image is scanned. The weight is weighed up.

I see. Summer bundles in the chapped garden. Summer rags in the burning wardrobes. Shoes gummed to the teeth. We set out in lost barques. Light falls from the escaping lamps. I bend the edge to the rest. I walk under the boughs. From hand to hand. In the depths away from the resettled houses, I dig. I scrape around. I raise an eyebrow. I hammer splinters into the wooden sleep. Since when? We have black pupils. We sleep like living snakes. Is there room in the skeleton for pulp from hollowed out bodies? And in fish for unswallowed mercury? Birds plunge their beaks. Song flows out. I close the evening tightly. In a bow made of legs. The fire's unguarded.

You need to stand. Up. Amongst other things. For instance. The forest base. Slightly moist must. Wind breaks in the branches. The river's cut off. The nailed bridge hangs. Children fall asleep like truck drivers. At the edge of the road. The train goes on. Someone's hair touches the bars. How high is freezing? How low does god go? A woman holds a watering can in an abandoned hand. Long dusk soaks all the way along the stem. The sacks are probably hidden. The murdered don't remember. Those who kill would rather not. I rip the tiny fishbones



from the meat, it takes years. Wilted nooses go pale. Daybreak's skint,  
smokes a roll-up. Flu winter. February snow. A crushed huddle of  
people  
walk into the glassed cabin. There is no smoke. It moves.

*Ida Sieciechowicz*

*Trans. by Sarah Luczaj*

## Chronology

Seven years old,  
he went down with meningitis,  
then told of how children would be taken from his ward  
covered over with bedsheets.

At the age of eighteen—the year 1970—  
he poured buckets of petrol  
all over the District Council Offices.

Twenty-two when he met mother  
beneath a tall birch tree in Jelitkowski Park.

Twenty-six when they married,  
thirty when he became a father.

He discovered a passion for sailing shortly after.

A yachting club in Stogi, countless sea miles  
all over the Gulf of Gdansk,  
West Germany, Denmark, Sweden.

This one time, I lent him a baseball cap  
and a passing boom knocked it from his head into the water.

He then jumped into the Dead Vistula,  
because I liked that cap,  
and it was already autumn.

Sixty years old when he flew to Tunisia with mum,  
then a few years later I talked them into Greece.

A young Dad, the nurse says  
when I visit the hospital  
the day after.

*Kamil Kaczmarek*  
*Trans. by Marek Kazmierski*

## On a bus from Rumelange

I remember that time in Berlin  
when you took me to Checkpoint Charlie.  
On the way back,  
you let me drive the Benz  
all the way home.  
In Szczecin, we stopped at  
Chrobry Embankment.

Or that Christmas when  
I flew in from Spain.  
The winter was severe,  
Sopot and Jelitkowo snowed in.  
We sipped some mulled beer on the beach.  
We even have a photo from that day  
wearing jackets identical in colour.

And that November day  
we went to the cinema in Przymorze  
to see the new Bond movie,  
to the library by the town square  
and to Zaspas for pizza.  
The streets wrapped in misty  
dampness at the tail end of the year.  
Inside, our eyes stung with smoke  
from the wood-fired stove.

In between, there were hundreds of ordinary others,  
when you just called up  
asking how my day was,  
to sort out repairs  
or announce that  
you had just picked up  
another Kapuscinski for me.  
Now, two years have gone by  
and I am reading your diary.

A grey, hardbound cover,  
the checkered paper well worn,  
absorbing the green ink  
of seventeen year old thoughts.

You write about girls,  
relationships with your parents,  
your mother's love.  
About Volunteer Labour Camps  
in Frydman,  
struggles with your studies.

Carefully, with real effort,  
you split the text into chapters.  
Addressing your reader,  
who now, fifty years on,  
happens to be your son.

*Kamil Kaczmarek*  
*Trans. by Marek Kazmierski*

## Circles

Before now, only the flood, impassable roads; signs in the sky,  
marks in snow as black as tar. You remember the ash,  
though the fire was only imaginary—perhaps this is why the courtyard  
has turned into fog; the rails overgrown. The walls fallen.

It all returns like hunger. We are swallowed up by all that  
which cannot be filled, made of glued together pieces;  
open like veins, to the bone.

You will forget about this when winter returns. Circles will remain,  
tremors; a stick poked under an ice floe, the empty lake  
covered with ice as if with thin foil.

*Joanna Lech*

*Trans. by Marek Kazmierski*

## Signs

Swelter smouldering in the hand, infecting the grasses. Choking the earth,  
as we run across the fields; collecting clams, chewing leaves  
like sugar. Winds tossing sparks about, smoke stinging the eyes.

Over the woods, a sky, in it: fire. This image—the river taking on water  
and swallowing suns. Children moulding nests and sucking thumbs at  
bedtime.

August pours ash into their hair, etching signs in the heavens.  
Dives the waters with a stone in its throat.

This image, Anna, cannot be swallowed. As if it were swelling within me;  
a mark in the bend of the arm. A scratch on the eye. A dream which cuts  
the skin

deeper than knives and stuffs moss into arteries, feathers into mouths.

*Joanna Lech*

*Trans. by Marek Kazmierski*

## Weaving

You will forever remain a foreign tongue. A river torn from its bed,  
that scratch in the eyelid. Skeletal disfigurement, I know it off  
[by heart,  
through dreams touching the components of your flesh. There is no cure  
[for this;  
December must be swallowed whole, the taste of salt follows it,  
[waters will recede,  
snow will melt. Only noises, scabs, thaws will remain; as if they were  
light diseases, carried on a stifling wind.

Everything weaving within you: in that place where silence  
will fall, only shiver remaining; a tree growing, river springing up.  
[Look,  
we are there already, in fields, where hay is drying and the earth  
rots.  
Perhaps I am still that shore, that trampled rye.  
A crack; now I have within me all that sowing, whole seeds.  
*Like traces sprinkled across skin. Like rust seeds. Bitter harvest*

*Joanna Lech*  
*Trans. by Marek Kazmierski*

## The Sea Departed—Part 1

The sea departed. It departed in a flurry, a hurry, having first summoned its mounds with a sudden chatter; followed by nothing more than fragmentary, unevenly peaking waves flowing over the grey tablecloth of sands, not unlike bubbly wine, its bright pearls bursting and dying down with a hiss.

It is already far off, dragging its heels, sighing, returning, running up, scrunching gravel, grabbing handfuls of it and returning again, and running off again, and again, and again once more, and then again...

Meanwhile, the sands build up. Each move, each splashing wave covers them with smaller doses; each recession adding to their shores.

And they lay there, so squashed and cast down, drying with tiny surfaces, regularly carbonated, crumpled up like a great, broadly spread out sheet of gold-ashen mortar, its trails trimmed with the sea's silver tasseled piping.

And the sea is ever further off, ever more quiet, focused in ever shorter whispers, withdrawing, absorbing and imbibing scattered waves, until they have all been turned back towards the highlands of their own assertions, swaying ever so slowly, heavy across the abyss, as full as an eye, and as fathomless, almost motionless.

Large fishing vessels, the tide having carried them away from the jetty, are stuck in the amassed depths, also motionless, as if one by one, in sequence they formed a most odd arabesque in the distant background.

By the shoreline, at the same time, bluish clouds begin to swirl and smoke, which in the pearly brightness of a matt morning sip on a whole range of amethyst tonalities.

The sky is low, whitish here and there, drizzling for a moment with pale light exhaled across in fumes, for the world to then silence, dull down, extinguish, all in a dreamy lilac shade.

Deep shoals emerged with sands slightly sparkling with gravel, stretched out, blossomed, suddenly darkened like long, long rows of hyacinths, towards Villers, towards Beuzeval, towards Houllgate, towards Cabourg, as far as the ocean's rocky edges.



To the right, a delicate lace of the bindings and arcades of the Great dam at Roches Noires, tossed to the violet transparencies; to the left, a jetty looming in the deep mists, its masts and moorings become a vision of ginormous irises swaying over a muddy abyss.

And there, far off, as far as the eye can wander, a patch of angular fog is turning blue, shivering with inner transparency. That is the sea.

Something musical flows through this moment, something symphonic. Some vast, mono-tonally vibrating sonority of flowing lines and muted colours, all dreamy. Some infinitely soft, wavily arising and descending sonority of intangible, fleeting, most ghoulis shapes.

Some closeness of all and also distance at once.

Some subtle scale of diffused tones and semitones, from a silvery bolt of the lightning of seagull wings striking the faint lilyness of the air, to a deep violet of wildly growing, ragged hills which sit there like giant nests of dark amethysts.

Some immeasurable immersion, colours overflowing, lights, shadows, some absorption of light into the background so odd, ghostly, blurred contours and fading apparitions barely visible across it.

And then a song.

A simple song, quiet, rather spoken than sang, flowing together harmoniously with the music of the moment.

*...Ils ont choisi la mer,  
Ils ne reviendront plus...  
Et puis, s'ils vous reviennent,  
Les resonnaitrez vous?*

*...Or, ils n'ont plus leur âme,  
Elle est restée en mer,  
Ils ne vous reviendront plus,  
Ils ont choisi la mer...*

*Maria Konopnicka  
Trans. by Marek Kazmierski*

## Dust

cold evenings would draw them to our house in the gantry they'd  
leave their heavy boots drink their strong teas utter hoarse words  
slowly squinting as they did so as if the light caused chaos  
consternation they spoke about death as if we were in need  
(seems they had brought back an especially pure form of it back  
from sweltering libya around the gulf of sidra) their hardworking  
hands dropping ash into flowerpots eternal ashes leaving  
suddenly  
wringing their hands like thieves go with god they would utter on  
the doorstep which made us sleep uneasy disturbed by creaking  
floorboards breathlessness and a thirst which chokes us still

*Malgorzata Lebda*  
*Trans. by Marek Kazmierski*

## bright lights

ice floes cracking light fails the bottom feeding her mud the  
milkman riding down the main village street but it is not he who  
pulls her out from the depths she is five and doesn't yet believe in  
death although sometimes space gives the illusion and the signs  
dark bruises rough scabs on sunday mornings in a cold church  
she stares into the bright lights of the chandeliers squinting her  
eyes who art in heaven she sings this for weeks on end

*Malgorzata Lebda*  
*Trans. by Marek Kazmierski*

## surface waters\*

*for weronika*

when I recall the surface I am reminded of her long dark hair and her back covered in freckles and the crisscrossing of beams of light scattering off all imaginings and asparagus needles I can't yet write about her illness about the plants fading once more I turn my gaze in search of an exit from this cold

*Malgorzata Lebda*

*Trans. by Marek Kazmierski*

## praise be to water

those children had to feed on panic and common rue we knew all about their hiding places their dark attics of the roofs of their barns facing westwards of the fragile crowns of their trees they spent days hunting birds so that come evenings by candlelight they could study the smooth anatomies and textures

of wings ultimately they belonged to the waters which is why when the first of them surrendered his body to the cold lake they stayed without asking questions together returning the sign of the cross although if they did believe it was in chaos and not in dust in the autumn they could be seen in nearby fields from which they extracted edible tubers their faces swollen with sun their lips ready for snow

*Malgorzata Lebda*

*Trans. by Marek Kazmierski*

## mice and death

I kill  
what is my limit?  
the bed is peppered with mouse droppings  
I've laid out blue jelly beans on plates  
and then there are the mouse corpses behind the cupboard, in the drawer  
after the harvest the mice race like mad from the fields to houses  
climb the curtains, scratch in the cupboards  
one mouse shut in the wardrobe devoured half a dressing gown  
one mouse kindly drowned itself in a potty  
one mouse jumped onto my head at night  
probably for fun  
how can you live without killing the mice that won't let you live in peace?  
get a cat?  
a cat to do the dirty work for you?  
to kill for you, in your name?  
so you can wash your hands?  
praise it and say *kitty kitty*?  
happy that it gifted you with a mouse not a bird?  
because cats also hunt for birds

*Irena Wiszniewska*  
*Trans. by Nasim Luczaj*

## hunger

I eat  
not in order to live  
I eat  
to drown out the hunger  
nothing can kill  
the fridge is my friend  
always at an arm's reach  
at night, when silence hurts  
and thoughts are like rabbits on their way to slaughter  
I open the fridge and there I find  
pulp of love, sausage of hope, minced  
leftovers of a beloved blanket  
please help yourself, take it!  
eat though you don't need to  
though you're not hungry  
devour out of habit  
for fashion  
out of powerlessness to change  
yourself or the world

Irena Wiszniewska  
Trans. by Nasim Luczaj

## maiden poseidon

suddenly all her friends are summoning the powers of saturn  
but for her it's enough to kick the scales over—no more maddening  
weights  
to wrap the scarf round her neck—pack the stones for the beach and  
disperse  
all those beautiful stories in the rising sun  
to say thanks for the good advice and reply that clearly I will need  
fewer pebbles in the pockets for my pilgrimage  
in the prints of newborn turtles into the womb of *poseidon*

*Łukasz Kaźmierczak / Łucja Kuttig*  
*Trans. by Nasim Luczaj*

## the format of memory

I put a new day down in the sun it dries up in crowded trams  
soaks up the onion from floury rolls  
with opium you tell me about your star  
sign that it's libra while I was simply born under a super-star  
and my feet step on the scales at the start  
of each season in fashion and of every working day

I am constructing a work on the engineering of the body  
you open the balcony window and take out some  
juice and a cigarette from a new packet I give you  
the title of “engineer of letters” I wait on  
the made bed—*come give and clean up*—that's how you like it  
that's what you say about me about changing  
sheets and crying rivers out in jazz notes

you've heard all the tunes before you take me out of the room  
like a floppy disk with an inconceivably small memory of touch

*Łukasz Kaźmierczak / Łucja Kuttig*  
*Trans. by Nasim Luczaj*

## More Slowly

The same. Heaps of discarded clothes,  
of time. I look at you, think of the country  
where I live. It too knows us thoroughly.

Sad months approach. Loud light  
runs up from behind.

To rub the wind and sun into my bones, to forget  
in order to once again begin a day  
a dozen years before.

As if I didn't have a tongue,  
as if my tongue queried its identity,  
as if all the above at once.

*Julia Szychowiak*  
*Trans. by Elżbieta Wójcik-Leese*

## A Child Slides Across the Broad Shoulders of the River

It will ponder what it has glimpsed. With its  
head between pillow and dawn, the dawn  
on the playground like a bucket of sand.

Morning sky will be a plank where one can  
hear the knocking of the pulse. As if a song  
peeping inside could be heard.

*Julia Szychowiak*  
*Trans. by Elżbieta Wójcik-Leese*

## Grandmother's Voice

Even when she could no longer see or hear,  
her voice saw and heard.  
She couldn't tell day from night,  
but there was light in her voice.

In it you could hear the frail sixth child,  
daughter of a clerk for Warsaw's streetcars.  
Girl asking for a bagel from a market vendor,  
a Jewish woman who scratched under her wig.

And also the voice of the young adult  
who had more luck than sense,  
as she catalogued her wartime escapades in old age.  
Escapades—times she escaped with her life.  
Her home, just before the Gestapo  
swept up her mother and brother.  
The courtyard, where a moment earlier her friend,  
surrounded, had leapt from a window.  
(She ran in to identify the body,  
but the watchman said, "Young lady, get out of here.")  
The court on Leszno Street, where she brought cash  
to Mr. Henryk in the Ghetto.  
The round-up on New World Street.  
The Warsaw Uprising.

In her voice, you could also hear a woman in love.  
The one who slammed the door on her way out.  
Either break up with him, her mother said,  
or don't show up at my funeral.  
He: twenty years older and divorced,  
a schoolteacher.  
She slammed the door. And elsewhere in the city,  
her sister fell into a trap.  
The next day the door was sealed shut.



And, later, the voice of the postwar period:  
she had two small daughters, a husband  
beloved by his students, schoolmaster  
with a meager salary, my grandfather  
whom I never met; her mother  
and sister rescued from Auschwitz,  
who lived with them under one roof;  
she kept books for the Union of Writers  
and Stage Composers, and worked another job  
to make ends meet. Once when cleaning house,  
she hauled a rickety bench with a drawer to the trash.  
Wads of banknotes spilled out—  
grandfather's secret stash.

Grandmother's voice—calm as when with a trembling hand  
she gripped her sick husband's buttock  
to give him a shot in the outer, upper part.

Grandmother's voice from my early childhood:  
resting after the operation  
she let me look at the stitches on her belly

*because you always wanted to know everything.*

The voice of a practicing Catholic  
laced with doubt.

And that of a woman astonished  
at reaching eighty,  
ninety, and then  
a hundred.  
She recalled going with her friend  
to the Writers' Union guesthouse in Konstancin.  
Walking into the dining room,  
Tadeusz Różewicz glanced at them:  
"We're not getting any younger, are we?"  
And the three of them burst out laughing.

My grandmother's voice full of silence  
when it came to pain, fear, rickety benches.  
I was tempted to break through her reticence.

But near the end of her life  
when she started to speak on her own,  
it was I who clammed up in response.

*Krystyna Dąbrowska*  
*Trans. by Karen Kovacik*

## Words in the Air

In the square stands a booth with a sheaf of blank paper.  
On a string hang sheets with writing, attached with clips,  
like freshly developed photos, drying.  
A bearded guy hovers by a sign  
I'M COLLECTING YOUR STORIES  
He doesn't approach anyone. Doesn't have to.  
They come to him to read and sit and write.

A child about dinosaurs. A young woman  
who survived several suicide attempts  
about how she no longer covers the scars on her wrists.  
Another on how she walks about with music in her headphones,  
and everything is pantomime.  
A black man writes about oppression.  
Someone else about his illness. That's in remission. For now.  
A Hindu woman, that she had an arranged marriage,  
and loves her husband a lot: though they grew up in separate worlds,  
they've managed to forge their own.

Some write for the first time about themselves  
as if they suddenly opened up  
to a stranger while traveling.  
They write anonymously:  
their stories are their signatures.  
The guy will collect them in a book,  
but before he reviews and sifts through them, before  
they're shut between covers, they sway in the air—

*Krystyna Dąbrowska*  
*Trans. by Mira Rosenthal*

## The Noise of a Broom Wakes Me

The noise of a broom wakes me from the courtyard  
a moment ago still my beating heart  
and now it seems that someone's brushing out the entire world.  
A breath comes whistling, opens the balcony door  
slicing through the rooms like a scythe  
pulling out from under me all the building's floors.  
Brooms come to mind from that city where I was yesterday  
small green brooms wading in ditches at dawn  
I could never make out what they fished from the swift water.  
A broom comes to mind that, at three in the morning  
between the old temple and a stand of mountain ash,  
lashed the sidewalk softly.  
Meanwhile the broom in my courtyard bustles louder and louder  
louder than the sun, alert as a dog.

*Krystyna Dąbrowska*  
*Trans. by Mira Rosenthal*

## Replacing Windows

The slim, brown-eyed guy  
who is installing my windows  
tells of a time he replaced  
those at an old woman's house:  
the old-fashioned kind, box sash  
—no longer able to fasten—  
for the new, super tight type  
with adjustable tilt,  
a gift from her grandchildren  
for the approaching cold.  
She watched them take the two  
wings of worn-out windows  
from her dusty rooms.  
When her husband was alive,  
he would paint them, see to upkeep,  
oil them once a year.  
And now—set free,  
undressed from curtains,  
so light in other hands.  
I picture her, how she came  
out of the house, waited  
till they loaded everything and left,  
and as they moved,  
the glass flashed in the sun  
just for a minute, unclear.

*Krystyna Dąbrowska*  
*Trans. by Mira Rosenthal*

## Rescue

*for my Father*

or it's a wild tree  
you feel sorry for  
and jealous of at the same time

as when the light of twilight  
shines in the spokes of a wheelchair

or like that silver broccoli shaped cloud  
which one night will finally save us  
turning us into surprised oxygen

*Tomasz Wojewoda  
Trans. by Cecilia Woloch*

## Tsantsa

I dreamed a solar system  
where your medicines circulated instead of the planets  
and in place of the sun, your head  
with its rays of hair

one day, drained of blood  
that sun will shrink  
as in a jungle  
taking with it all the planets

*Tomasz Wojewoda  
Trans. by Cecilia Woloch*

## *from* Parallel Lives

Jacek Dehnel's series "Parallel Lives" imagines alternate fates for famous writers. Horace, the writer of odes, has died in battle. Miłosz is a rural squire in his native Lithuania, Szymborska a botany teacher. The remains of Zbigniew Herbert, who presumably did not survive World War II, are exhumed in what is now Kazakhstan. And, Tadeusz Borowski, author of *This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*, who survived Auschwitz only to die a suicide after the war, escapes into Romania, thus evading the muse of tragedy.

### Quintus H.F. [Horace] dies in the battle of Philippi

Eyes obscured by sand and blood and grass,  
he lies face to the earth, spear's blade in his back.  
The lather of battle's now passed. His crown canted toward the heavens.

He hears throngs of receding steps,  
thinks now  
the gods have abandoned him.  
But it's the rhythm of unwritten odes,  
slanting,  
that moves over the plain,  
skirting the dead strewn to the horizon's edge.

### Squire Czesław M. inspects his lands in Szetejnie

From spurs to riding crop, he's vigilant:  
meadows, fields and ponds he sees as from the air,  
sketched on some map of property lines,  
the windmills, lumber saws, and stills.

The dark is coming  
but he doesn't grasp it,  
and only at the forest's edge  
does he see the sun whirl faster  
than usual across the sky,  
not as it should.

He rubs his eyes and gives the horse a lash.  
Far off, a lamp sways over a table,  
casting light on columns of gains and losses.

Tadeusz B. evades Melpomene, muse  
of tragedy, while crossing  
the Polish-Romanian border on a bicycle

He's gotten used to passing: people with bundles,  
horse-drawn carts with children, chairs, and eiderdowns,  
parched roadsides, horses' swollen corpses,  
abandoned pots, signs of an army in retreat—  
so many he passes unawares.

Yet there she stands,  
strumming a lyre made from flaming oak,  
her wings now smashed, a graft of cloud and stone  
resembling the goddess of victory,  
she who stands on other bridges and frontiers,  
her helmet bronze, topped with a bloody plume.

He travels on past the river to another life  
with some children, chairs, and eiderdown and wife.



## Wisława S. teaches botany in a middle school in Piła

When she takes Proletariat Street from school  
with her permed hair and dowdy crocheted sweater,  
she's the delight of all the old ladies in town.  
They glance in long mirrors in their tiny foyers,  
cock heads, pat chests, and smooth their hair,  
content that things have not progressed so far.  
Her very being could be cast in doubt  
if not for the sixteen-tome herbarium,  
laconic notes scrawled in its margins,  
as if she'd strewn black sand in its pages.

*Jacek Dehnel*

*Trans. by Karen Kovacik*

## A Woman of Fifty Running to Catch the Tram

while she's running  
and there's nothing sublime in her movements  
though by the magic of her effort she'd like to  
anchor down the tram

I almost forget  
that she could be my mother  
who came into the world  
barely in time to beat  
the outbreak of the war

faster faster

*Jerzy Jarniewicz*  
*Trans. by Piotr Florczyk*

## Outdoor Fun & Games

It was the day he ran to her—platform  
No. 3, track No. 6, a city in  
the south—with a water for the trip, but  
she chose a trip without water. Sky  
without clouds. Stream without  
stones.

And a window with the view  
of fields golden with wheat,  
all aflame from the sun,  
infinite, up to the borders of Warsaw.

*Jerzy Jarniewicz*  
*Trans. by Piotr Florczyk*

## A Simple Poem About Love

We dropped our clothes  
and started making love so revolutionarily  
that the edifice of the national bank shook,  
the stock market hit the bottom  
and the brokers howled at the fire consuming  
their guts and wallets.

We crashed into each other until the walls of  
reform schools collapsed,  
and the avengers with baseball bats came out and marched  
towards the ministry of internal peace.  
The battalions of riot police scattered,  
dropping their shields, helmets, and notebooks,  
their black crown victorias their only remains.

You saddled me so defiantly that the investors  
panicked and began packing their bags  
and returned home on budget airlines,  
hastily transferring out Sasnal's oil paintings,  
all the acquisitions of their Vistula mission  
(a tenfold increase in price  
within five years).

I swallowed you like an anarchist, until the gothic galleries  
of Target and Costco fell into ruin,  
the cast-iron ATMs melted in the walls  
of Chase, Citi,  
Wells Fargo, PNC, U.S. Bank,  
Bank of America, State Street, TD, OneWest,  
HSBC, Deutsche Bank, SunTrust,  
Bank of the West, Umpqua, ING and Schwab.

I love you—our naked bodies orbit around Europe, haunting it  
like unfledged, innocent Communism.

*Jerzy Jarniewicz*  
*Trans. by Piotr Florczyk*

## Whenever I Hear

Whenever I hear the names of Russian rivers,  
an echo breaks through layers of memory,  
bounced off the bottom of an invisible current:  
the water stands still, thick, and freezes over.

*Jacek Gutorow*  
*Trans. by Piotr Florczyk*

## Madame Cézanne

She sits in a chair, silent. Doesn't have to  
say anything, it's the objects speaking  
in a separate language so familiar to her.  
The silence of the water in the jug. Paper on the wall.  
The painted wind messes up her hair.  
She sits smiling at the edge of a glance:  
reality, she says, that's reality.

*Jacek Gutorow*  
*Trans. by Piotr Florczyk*

## Two Poems from Rapallo

1.

Three steep paths, the quern of waves.  
Moon over a *salita*.  
To memorize this place.  
The voice, the shattered vase.

2.

An outgoing wave. Anchored rocks.  
In the evening the bay illuminates the depth  
and silently convenes all  
reflected, scattered lights.

*Jacek Gutorow*

*Trans. by Piotr Florczyk*

## At the Pond

The end of June. We're going out of Dante  
and into Virgil. Dragonflies skim  
the water surface, a stork plods in the nearby rushes.

I want to walk along the bank, but suddenly feel  
that in this weather the blue pond is intransitive.  
I can only watch how things change:

a cloud lights into the next frame,  
a flaky bark of birch carries  
a knotty message.

*Jacek Gutorow*

*Trans. by Piotr Florczyk*

## Transitivity

so this is the exodus the exit  
toward straight ahead behind a baby walker  
the pistachio delinquent speaks dada  
the shadows under the metallic sconce reply  
things can no longer be this clear  
they must converge into one larger darkness  
she loves the frolicking day-breaking  
without her the days are unloved

*Krzysztof Siwczyk*  
*Trans. by Piotr Florczyk*

## Kolbuszowa, Documentary Shot in 1929

laughing lads  
knocking off each other's caps,  
navy blue policemen  
saluting for show,  
peasant women at a market  
wearing white shawls  
tasting fresh pickles,  
elders gazing off  
beyond the frame with 19th century eyes  
helplessly looking  
for the past in the future

dozens of Jewish children  
wearing funny hats  
marching along main street  
turning slowly  
into hunted game

in thirteen years' time  
they might have been all of twenty

marching soundlessly  
hand in hand,  
leaving school now walking  
down main street, like trees they breathe  
in this August heat

yes, I see precisely

as they march past without a sound

watching them go  
dark-eyed adolescent girls  
wearing flowing dresses  
applying lipstick before the camera.  
adjusting their hair seductively  
imperceptibly turning  
into hunted game

yes, I see it clearly  
small boys and girls  
strolling down the town's main street,  
singingly and invisibly  
turning into a cloud  
of black birds

they are being watched  
by laughing adolescent girls  
circling over them,  
I hear their torn dresses swishing,  
the chattering of broken wings

down the dusty sidewalk  
soundlessly marching  
thirty little girls  
and thirty likely lads

from townhouse windows  
shorn girls wave to them  
painting their lips  
with damp soil

rains washing their sweetness away,  
wind blowing their dreams away

a screeching magpie with a gold band in its beak  
is tidying up in the thicket

yes, I see it clearly

children marching  
through the heart of town

girls in black swarms flying away

*Jacek Napiórkowski*  
*Trans. by Marek Kazmierski*



## Forces

*R.R.*

In each and every town there live at least three  
of those I would like to join, at dawn,  
waxing the river.

In every city beautiful girls weep  
and when you return at night  
you hear them killing their young, cursing the storms.

In every town there is a village a hundred times worse  
than pre-war villages, where they put sacks on the heads of the sick  
and let them bark from the bottom of the lake.

In every town there is an invisible town, the capital of the heart,  
a shelter from the rain and your smile, children and animals  
graze there for light.

In every town there is a purple tower from which  
the most talented and precious leap  
with songs upon their lips.

In every town two roads diverge, if they came together  
there might be an end to wars, sickness, hunger  
and hollow laughter.

There are in each city places which cannot be described  
And yet, if they were gone, the cities would become pitiful banners.

In every city a man and a woman pass each other by,  
going to school, living on neighboring streets,  
gazing up at the same sky and longing, dying unaware of one another's  
existence.

In every city there are beings needed and justified by no one,  
the antennae of mutated gods, hawkers, cultists, and peddlers,  
still, they change the world.

The fate of every town depends on the severed waters of nearby rivers,  
where boys seek evidence of the existence of something more  
important.

Every city has its own tyrant and savior, but only  
in one did you always want to lead a revolution.

Every town sways like smoke in the mirror of your eyes,  
and gives you the only option.

Every city worships itself and trusts only itself.

In every town you can turn yourself into a nation.

*Jacek Napiórkowski*

*Trans. by Marek Kazmierski*

## Bucha 2022

Ola and Olena  
ran away from home  
in an unidentified  
windowless vehicle  
sprinkled with alien blood

in the basement they left behind  
two old books  
the smell of their insomnia  
and new corpses of neighbors  
the sight of which  
they were spared.

*Krystyna Lenkowska*  
*Trans. by Krystyna Lenkowska*  
*& Cecilia Woloch*

## When I Was a Fish

When I was a fish  
or a bird  
I didn't need reputation  
nor the safe tomorrow

nor a solid bed  
with a soft pillow  
for the body

I wasn't looking for reasons and answers  
I wasn't carving holes in the table with my elbows  
nor in the mattress

I was keeping silent or singing

when I was a fish  
or a bird.

*Krystyna Lenkowska*  
*Trans. by Krystyna Lenkowska*  
*& Cecilia Woloch*

## Via Giulia

The very first watchmaker here was the sun,  
winding the local clocks and mechanism  
of clouds and wind. Also the spinning  
dial of streets, fountains, squares, and the thrum

of irksome scooters, the dancing of plastic  
seized by the Tiber's carousel. At noon,  
the body yearns for its own shadow, refuge  
of outline where it may lie down, just as

this city did at the same age. But this time,  
the silhouette has hips too narrow, shaky  
like flame, the shadow fast so breath can't catch  
its shade: body of air, not yet filled with lime.

Life: scraps of paper, numbers, words and cries,  
a trace of touch inscribed on skin, a warmth  
that's still dispersing, a scent. What went before,  
and what it is that's fleeing toward the sky.

*Tomasz Różycki*  
*Trans. by Mira Rosenthal*

## At Day's End

So much light! And I, a man of the North,  
go promptly to the center of the square  
and soak my skin as in the sea's saltwater.  
Rinse out my eyes. There's so much light, my brother!

At least take some of it. Fill up the corners  
of the room, every inch of basement and  
the drawers, then all the way up to the attic.  
From time to time, make use of it in winter,

gather your friends around and serve it up.  
Lock it in bottles, to be uncorked on  
New Year's or a birthday, some occasion  
of sadness, or a wedding, or for nothing

at all. Clean light, without bad additives—  
not our daily fair. This light dissolves in coffee  
like a lump of sugar, like blurring dusk,  
not yet, not quite, just wait a second, now.

*Tomasz Różycki*  
*Trans. by Mira Rosenthal*

## Epoch

I've said goodbye to the twentieth century,  
its porches choked with bindweed, its wild weeping  
and wild grapevines. When, finally, the black  
patrol car leaves, then you can hear the panting

of the train, the horses snorting, sweat steaming  
in icy air. Nervous, you wonder what is worth  
taking for good: a useless notebook, minor  
snapshots, cheap religious medals? The cities

and forest on the road sleep like huge darkened  
churches. I'll not come back here, windows draped  
with dirty towels, signs of widespread plague.  
I've hidden a handful of words not yet infected

below the sand. For you. The rest, the still warm body  
I left outside, in order to see how the epoch  
will take care of it at night. What shape will be carved  
in the flesh, what will be waiting when morning arrives.

*Tomasz Różycki*  
*Trans. by Mira Rosenthal*

## Contributors

**rose auslander** has written the book *Wild Water Child*, winner of the 2016 Bass River Press Poetry Prize; chapbooks *Folding Water*, *Hints*, and *The Dolphin in the Gowanus*; and poems in the *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Baltimore Review*, *New American Writing*, *New Ohio Review*, *RHINO*, *Roanoke Review*, *Tinderbox*, and *Tupelo Quarterly*.

**Rebecca Baggett** is the author of *The Woman Who Lives Without Money* (Regal House Publications, 2022) and four chapbooks. Recent work appears or is forthcoming in *The Sun*, *The Southern Review*, *Asheville Poetry Review*, *Salt*, and *Tar River Poetry*. She lives in Athens, GA.

The most recent of **Gaylord Brewer's** 16 books of poetry, fiction, criticism, and cookery are two collections of poems, *The Feral Condition* (Negative Capability, 2018) and *Worship the Pig* (Red Hen, 2020). A volume of creative nonfiction, *Before the Storm Takes It Away*, is forthcoming from Red Hen.

**Ronda Pizsk Broatch's** latest poetry collection is *Chaos Theory for Beginners*, (MoonPath Press). Ronda's journal publications include *Fugue*, *Blackbird*, *2River*, *Sycamore Review*, *Missouri Review*, *Palette Poetry*, and NPR News / KUOW's *All Things Considered*. She is a graduate student working toward her MFA at Pacific Lutheran University's Rainier Writing Workshop.

**Brian Bulta** lives in Arlington, Texas, and works at Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth. His work has been recently published or is forthcoming in *Jabberwock Review*, *Juke Joint Magazine*, *South Florida Poetry Journal*, *New Ohio Review*, and *TriQuarterly*.

**Rachel Aviva Burns** is a writer and artist living and working in New York City. Her poems have appeared in publications including the *Bluestem Magazine*, *Eclectica*, *Sand Hills Literary Magazine*, and *Vallum*, as well as previously in the *Atlanta Review*.

**Johnny Cordova's** poetry is forthcoming this year in *Salt Hill Journal*, *Slipstream*, *San Pedro River Review*, and *New York Quarterly*. He recently returned from ten years in Southeast Asia and lives on Triveni Ashram in the high desert of Arizona, where he and his wife co-edit *Shō Poetry Journal*.

**Krystyna Dąbrowska** is a poet, essayist, and translator. She is the author of four books, including *Białe krzesła* (White Chairs, WBPiCAK, 2012), which received two of the most prestigious Polish literary prizes: the Wisława Szymborska Award and the Kościelski Prize. Translated into multiple languages, she lives in Warsaw.

**Robin Davidson**, poet and translator, is the author of two poetry chapbooks and the collection *Luminous Other*. She is the recipient of a Fulbright professorship at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland and a National Endowment for the Arts translation fellowship

**Jacek Dehnel**, born in 1980, is a poet, novelist, and translator. He has published ten



volumes of poetry and numerous works of prose. As a translator, he has brought into Polish Larkin's *Complete Poems*, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, and Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*. Dehnel lives in Warsaw.

**Shaheen Dil's** poems have been published or are forthcoming in over two dozen journals and have appeared in numerous anthologies. Her first poetry collection, *Acts of Deference*, was published in 2016 by Fakel Publishing House in Sofia, Bulgaria. She is a long-term member of the Pittsburgh Poetry Exchange.

**Linda M. Fischer's** poems have appeared in *Atlanta Review*, *Aurorean*, *Ibbetson Street*, *Iodine Poetry Journal*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Poetry East*, *Potomac Review*, *Roanoke Review*, *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, *Valparaiso Review*, *The Worcester Review*, and elsewhere. She has published three chapbooks, was nominated twice for a Pushcart, and won the 2019 Philadelphia Writers' Conference poetry contest.

**Piotr Florczyk**, translator. His most recent books are *East & West*, poems, and several volumes of translations, including *Building the Barricade* by Anna Świrszczyńska, which won the 2017 Found in Translation Award. His new volume of poems, *From the Annals of Kraków*, is based on Holocaust testimonies.

**Margaret Guilbert** is an award-winning writer from Alabama who lives in New York City. She has published two chapbooks of poems with Finishing Line Press, *My Grandmother's Engagement Ring* (2015) and *Blue Electrode* (2021). Her play, *A Scene of Captivity with Waltzes and Mirrors*, was staged twice at Harvard's Agassiz Theatre.

**Jacek Gutorow** (b. 1970) is a Polish poet, critic, scholar and translator, and a professor of British and American literatures at University of Opole. His first collection of poems translated into English, *The Folding Star and Other Poems*, appeared in 2012 from BOA Editions, as a Lannan Translations Series Selection.

**Audrey Hall** is a poet, literature scholar, and marine biology enthusiast from Mississippi. Her poems appear in *Okay Donkey*, *Hunger Mountain*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, and others. She reads for *Black Warrior Review*. Her poetry has been nominated for a Best of the Net Award.

**Susan Harvey** was a professional harpsichordist and musicologist for many years, but now lives and works on a ranch in Northern California. Her poems appear in reviews nationally, and she has been a Pushcart nominee. Her chapbook *Colloquies* was published by Red Bird Press in spring of 2022.

**Aiden Heung** (He/They) is a Chinese poet born in a Tibetan Autonomous Town, currently living in Shanghai. A Tongji University graduate, his poems written in English have appeared in *The Australian Poetry Journal*, *The Missouri Review*, *Orison Anthology*, *Parentheses*, *Crazyhorse*, *Black Warrior Review*, among other places. He's on Twitter @aidenheung.

**Joanne Holdridge** lives in Devens, MA, but spends as much of the winter as she can skiing the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Before she was able to devote her winters to skiing, she taught poetry and literature courses to ESL students at Bunker Hill Community College for three decades.

**Jerzy Jarniewicz** is a poet, translator and critic who lectures in English at the University of Łódź. He has published twelve volumes of poetry, thirteen books on contemporary Irish, British and American literature, and has translated the work of James Joyce, Seamus Heaney, Raymond Carver, Philip Roth and Derek Walcott.

**Kamil Kaczmariski** is a blogger, writer of travelogues, short stories, and reports from running events, currently based in and writing about Luxembourg. Following the publication of his book of poems *Aita* (2018), his essay on a journey to Rwanda, “Imana’s deep sleep,” was featured in the Polish travel magazine *Poznaj świat*.

**Marek Kazmierski**, translator: Born in Poland, raised in England. Writer, actor, author, translator, filmmaker, and visual artist. Winner of the Penguin Decibel Prize and Bike Philosopher of the Year Award in the UK, trustee of the Griffin Trust for Excellence in Poetry in Canada.

**Lukasz Kaźmierczak / Lucja Kuttig** is the author of the prose poetry collection *Kokosty*, with collages by Marta Motyl, and Agresty, winner of the Klemens Janicki Poetry Competition. They are currently working on a pamphlet, *Orzechnia*. Orzechnini - Orzechnica - Orzechniczka, thanks to support from the A. Włodek Prize.

**Alexander Komives** teaches physics and a bit of astronomy at DePauw University. In his spare moments he strolls, reads, wonders, and watches the world. He has been writing poetry his entire life, but not until recently has he started using words. This is his first piece published in a literary journal.

**Maria Konopnicka** was a Polish poet, novelist, children’s writer, translator, journalist, critic, and activist for women’s rights and for Polish independence. Born May 23, 1842, in Suwalki. Died October 8, 1910 in Lviv, Ukraine, she was one of the most important poets of Poland’s Positivist period.

**Karen Kovacik** is a translator of contemporary Polish poetry and has been awarded fellowships in translation from the National Endowment for the Arts. She’s the editor of *Scattering the Dark*, an anthology of Polish women poets, and author of the poetry collections *Metropolis Burning* and *Beyond the Velvet Curtain*.

**Malgorzata Lebda** (b.1985) grew up in Żelaźnikowa Wielka, a village in the Beskid Mountains. Ultra marathon runner, mountaineer, and photographer, she holds a PhD in Literary Theory and Audiovisual Arts and works as an academic lecturer in Kraków. She has published five volumes of poetry and been awarded multiple prizes.

**Joanna Lech**, born in 1984 in Rzeszów. Author of the novel *Tricks* and three poetry books: *Collapse*, *Relapses* and *Trans*. Winner of many literature awards: R. M. Rilke, Polish Society of Book Publishers, Creative Scholarship of the City of Krakow and the Grazella Foundation award. Compulsive traveler, photographer, and reader.

**Krystyna Lenkowska** is a poet, translator, and essayist; she has published 14 volumes of poetry, one novel and a volume of translations into Polish of poems by Emily Dickinson. She is a member of the Polish Writers' Association (SPP), the Association of Literary Translators (STL) and ZAiKS.

**Bolesław Leśmian** was born into a Jewish family and educated in Kiev. He developed a unique literary style, combining elements of the fantastic with folklore, the grotesque with realistic observations, the symbolic with the visionary. A marginal figure during his lifetime, Leśmian is now considered one of Poland's greatest poets.

**Georgia San Li** is at work on a novel, poetry and other writings. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in *Litro Magazine*, *Eclectica*, *California Quarterly*, and elsewhere. She has worked in cities including London, Tunis, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Paris, Wilhelmshaven and Tokyo.

**Ewa Lipska** (b. 1945 in Kraków, Poland), is associated with the Polish New Wave, along with poets Adam Zagajewski and Stanisław Barańczak. The author of over thirty volumes of poetry, she has received numerous prestigious literary prizes, including the Robert Graves PEN-Club Award for lifetime achievement in poetry.

**Miles Liss** earned his MFA in Writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts. A winner of the 2021 AWP Kurt Brown Poetry, Miles lives in the DC area with his wife, the poet Zakia Ahmadzai. A collection is forthcoming from Death of Workers Whilst Building Skyscrapers Press.

**Nasim Luczaj** is a Carpathian-born, Glasgow-based writer, translator, and multidisciplinary artist. She is the author of *Hind Mouth*—a pamphlet in the Earthbound Poetry Series—and her poems are forthcoming in the weird folds: *everyday poems from the anthropocene*, an anthology published by Dostoyevky Wannabe. More at nasimluczaj.com.

**Sarah Luczaj** is a writer, translator and counselor based in Glasgow, Scotland. She is the author of the poetry collection *An Urgent Request*, as well as *Creative Regeneration*, and *The Chi Book: Reiki from the Roots*, both from Wayward Publications, and the co-founder of the terrealuma healing refuge ([www.terrealuma.com](http://www.terrealuma.com)).

**Ellen Malphrus** is the author of *Untying the Moon* (foreword by Pat Conroy). Other publications include *Chariton*, *Weber*, *Southern Literary Journal*, *William & Mary Review*, *Natural Bridge*, *James Dickey Review*, *Yemassee*, *Fall Lines*, and *Our Prince of Scribes*. She is Writer-in-Residence at USC Beaufort and divides her time between Montana and South Carolina.

**Glen A. Mazis** taught philosophy for decades at Penn State Harrisburg, retiring in 2020. He has published more than 90 poems in literary journals, a collection, *The River Bends in Time* (Anaphora Literary Press, 2012), a chapbook, *The Body Is a Dancing Star* (Orchard Street Press, 2020), and recently *Bodies of Space and Time* (Kelsay Books, 2022).

A former English teacher, **Carol Milkuhn** has spent her retirement exploring her interest in creative writing. In addition to being published in several journals, she is the author of two poetry chapbooks, *In the Company of Queens* and *Modern Tapestries, Medieval Looms*. She lives in upstate New York with her mini schnauzer, Atticus.

**Weston Morrow** is a poet and former print journalist. His recent writing has appeared in *Meridian*, *Lake Effect*, *The Journal*, *Poetry Northwest*, and elsewhere. His visual art has appeared in *Ninth Letter*. He lives in Columbus, Ohio, and can be found online at [www.westonmorrow.com](http://www.westonmorrow.com).

**Jo-Ann Mort** is a poet and journalist, having returned to writing poetry after a 22 year hiatus. Her poetry is informed by her activism and her travels. Her poems have recently appeared in *Plume*, *Atlanta Review*, *Upstreet*, *Stand*, and *The Women's Review of Books*. She lives in Brooklyn, NY.

**Gabrielle Myers** is a writer, professor, and chef. Gabrielle's memoir, *Hive-Mind* (2015), first poetry book, *Too Many Seeds* (2021), and forthcoming poetry collection *Break Self: Feed* (2023) explore food production and nourishment through ecopoetics. Access links to her memoir, poetry book, published poems, essays, articles, interviews, YouTube channel, and seasonal recipe blog through her website: [www.gabriellemyers.com](http://www.gabriellemyers.com)

**Jacek Napiórkowski** is a Polish poet, writer and translator. For many years he was editor-in-chief of the quarterly *Nowa Okolica Poetów*. A graduate of The City University of New York (USA) and The University of Hull (Great Britain), his work has been translated into English, Italian, Croatian, Spanish, and Serbian.

**John A. Nieves'** poems appear in journals such as *Copper Nickel*, *American Poetry Review*, *American Literary Review*, *North American Review*, and *Southern Review*. His first book, *Curio*, won the Elixir Press Annual Judges Prize. He's an Associate Professor at Salisbury University and an editor of *The Shore Poetry*.

**Ewa Elżbieta Nowakowska** is a poet, essayist, and translator, the author of eight poetry volumes, a book of essays, and a collection of short stories. She is the recipient of several prestigious literary awards in Poland. She lives in Kraków and teaches at the AGH University of Science and Technology.

**Sarah Orman** is a writer and lawyer in Austin, Texas. Her personal essays and poetry have appeared in *Narrative*, *Stonecrop*, *BuffaloX8*, and *Choosing Judaism: 36 Stories*. She also writes on *Medium* @sarahsorman.

**Rosalind Pace** is an award-winning poet with a long history of working as a poet-in-the-schools. She mentors a memoirs group, teaches a poetry seminar and lives on a quiet road near the sea. Her poems have appeared in many journals.

Self-trained poet **R. A. Pavoldi** has published in *The Hudson Review*, *North American Review*, *Italian Americana*, *FIELD*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Hanging Loose*, *ARS MEDICA*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Margie: The American Journal of Poetry*, and others. The Napolitano-American dialect and school of hard knocks gave him his voice.

**Halina Poswiatowaka** (1935-1967) was a lyric poet from Czestochowa, Poland, author of four poetry collections, and a doctoral student of philosophy, before her early death of a heart condition which she had suffered since she was a child.

**Anne Rankin** won first prize in Sixfold's Summer 2014 Poetry contest. Her poems have appeared in *The Healing Muse*, *The Poeming Pigeon*, *The Awakenings Review*, *Hole in the Head Review*, and *Passager Journal*. Her poem, "left unsaid," was a finalist at the Belfast Poetry Festival 2022.

**Sage Ravenwood** is a deaf Cherokee woman residing in upstate NY with her two rescue dogs, Bjarki and Yazhi. She is an outspoken advocate against animal cruelty and domestic violence. Her book *Everything That Hurt Us Becomes a Ghost* is forthcoming fall 2023 from Gallaudet University Press.

**Sarath Reddy's** poetry explores the world beneath the superficial layers of experience, searching for deeper meaning in his experiences as an Indian-American, a physician, and a father. Sarath's poetry is forthcoming or has appeared in *JAMA*, *Off the Coast*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, *Poetry East*, *Hunger Mountain*, and *Cold Mountain Review*.

**Mira Rosenthal** is a past fellow of the National Endowment for the Arts and Stanford University's Stegner Fellowship. Her honors include a PEN/Heim Translation Fund Award, a Fulbright Fellowship, a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies, and residencies at Hedgebrook and The MacDowell Colony.

**Tomasz Różycki** is the author of eleven volumes of poetry and prose. He has garnered almost every prize Poland has to offer. His volume *Colonies* (translated by Mira Rosenthal) won the Northern California Book Award. He teaches French Language, Culture, and Literature at the University of Opole.

**Ellen Sazzman** is a Pushcart-nominated poet whose work has recently appeared in *Peregrine*, *Delmarva Review*, *Another Chicago*, *Paterson Review*, *Ekphrastic Review*, *Sow's Ear*, and *Common Ground*. Her collection *The Shomer* was a finalist for the Blue Lynx Prize and a semifinalist for the Elixir Antivenom Award and Codhill Press Award.

**Ida Sieciechowicz** won the Anna Swierszczynska Poetry Competition for the best poetry debut in 2019 for *AMPLIFIED INSIDES. A soundtrack, Swing, baby, swing!* (Krakow 2019), translated into English by Sarah Luczaj. She is a lecturer English language consultant in the National Securities Market Commission.

**Krzysztof Siwczyk** is an award-winning Polish poet, critic, and essayist. His work has been translated into numerous languages, including Italian, French, and German. He lives in Gliwice and works at the Rafał Wojaczek Institute in Mikołów.

**Julia Szychowiak** (b. 1986) is a poet. Her debut collection *Po sobie (After myself)*, 2007) received the Silesius Poetry Award and the Prize of the Polish Society of Book Publishers. Her work has been translated into English, Spanish, German, Bulgarian, and Slovak. She lives in Księżyce and Warsaw.

**Marc Swan** lives in coastal Maine. Poems have recently been published in *Gargoyle*, *Crannóg*, *The Nashwaak Review*, *Speckled Trout Review*, among others. His fifth collection, *all it would take*, was published in 2020 by tall-lighthouse (UK).

**Marilynn Talal** won a Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Stella Earhart Memorial Award from the University of Houston where she earned the Ph.D. Her two chapbooks, *The Blue Road* and *Burden Sparked with Eternity*, were published by Presa Press. Her poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *The New Republic*, *Paris Review*, *Rattle*, and elsewhere.

**Gail Tirone** lives in Houston. She's a Best of the Net nominee and a finalist for the Red Mountain Poetry Prize, 2020. Her poetry has appeared in *NDQ*, *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *The Hong Kong Review*, *Mediterranean Poetry*, *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, *The Weight of Addition Anthology*, and elsewhere.

**Eric Trump** is a writer and translator who currently lives in Dunedin, New Zealand, where he teaches at the University of Otago.

**H M Truscott** is a reader and a poet.

**Jason Gordy Walker** is an MFA candidate at the University of Florida. He has received scholarships from The New York State Summer Writers Institute and Poetry by the Sea: A Global Conference. His poems have been published in *Broad River Review*, *Confrontation*, *Hawai'i Pacific Review*, *Measure*, and *Poetry South*.

**Mercer Warriner's** poems have appeared in *Jabberwock Review* and *The Penn Review*. She is also a children's book author whose novels include the *Spell Casters* series and numerous *Nancy Drew* and *Hardy Boys* books. She has degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University and lives in Brooklyn, NY.

**Irena Wiszniewska** is the author of the interview collection *My, Żydzi z Polski [Us, Jews from Poland]*, as well as other books on Jewish life in Poland. She makes street art by storytelling in the marketplaces of Provence, Odessa, and Madagascar. Poetry is her form of dialogue with the world.

**Francine Witte's** poetry collections include *Café Crazy* and *The Theory of Flesh* (Kelsay Books) and *Some Distant Pin of Light* (forthcoming from Cervená Barva Press,) as well as chapbooks *Not All Fires Burn the Same* (2016 first prize winner, Slipstream,) and *First Rain* (Pecan Grove Press.) She lives in NYC.

**Grażyna Wojcieszko**, born 1957 in Bydgoszcz. She lived for many years between Cracow and Brussels, where she worked for the European Union; she now lives in Bory Tucholskie in rural Poland, where she has built a retreat for artists and writers. She is among the foremost emerging poets in Poland.

**Tomasz Wojewoda** (b. 1988) is a Polish poet, translator and literary critic, the author of three collections of poems. He lives in Rzeszów, in southeastern Poland.

**Cecilia Woloch** (editor) is an American poet, essayist, and educator, based in Poland as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Rzeszów during 2021-2022. She has published six collections of poems and a novel-in-prose poems. When she isn't traveling, she lives in Los Angeles.

**Jane Zwart** teaches at Calvin University, where she also co-directs the Calvin Center for Faith & Writing. Her poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *The Southern Review*, *Threepenny Review*, *TriQuarterly*, and *Ploughshares*, as well as other journals and magazines.



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