

Ultrasound Odalisque

A hard to read mammogram
has brought me to this cool
almost dark room, a narrow bed
set among machines and blinking
lights, the whirl of a computer.

I am asked to take my left arm
over my head and roll slightly
to the right, a position I offer
to my lover, or to sleep,
and now to this skilled technician.

She barely looks at me, but focuses
on computer images made of
shadow, sound waves echoing
off my dense tissues that reveal
edges and outlines of concern.

At ease in this angle of repose
and languor, I rise up and embrace
the beauties of a more romantic
era, my breasts pink and shy,
offered up for the sake of art.

The wand slides easy and impersonal
over my breast, the nipple rising straight
up to the ceiling in piqued attention if not
arousal, my whole being overwhelmed
with the desire to live.

Denise Wallace

Hypothesis Concerning a Slightly Mismatched Pair of Wings above the Pulpit

The master craftsman
chiseling angels
all his life
up until

he was unluckily
crushed by one,

nudged
earthward
by his somewhat careless,
somewhat ambitious son.

Mike White

Two Meadows

Morning sun, full moon below
(Earth between them)—plovers
on hard mud, dry seaweed mats
float when tide returns high.

A Coney Island Creek heron
and egret stalk fish. A newly planted
meadow has been found by pearl crescent
butterflies whirled toward stops:
wild carrot (a weed) and local
butterfly-weed (a wildflower).

Grass grownups owe wind
seed colors mild, not notorious,
notes a million strings *barely* bowed.

A Little Blue Heron looks three ways
for fish. Dragonfly eye measures measure
the suddenly measured.

Past cottonwoods, poplars, sea
sea near, an old, not planted meadow
slopes towards waves. Guarded
by Mugwort (a needed weed),
a rut used by fishermen
reaches water, grasses and forbs
uncombed, a view towards The Narrows,
the world known bridge. Scholars from a New
Jersey school study plants ocean winds
don't measure, lift their views toward
meadows reinnovated.

Nathan Whiting





Dan Veach Young Writer's Prize

2017 Award

BRIAN CZYZYK

"A sharply-etched character sketch that grows through leisurely, seemingly casual strokes of darkness and light. The contrast of the "foolish, fond old man" and the wise but silent child creates a delightful irony, and the final stunning image evokes all the pity and terror of tragedy."

Dan Veach

Pig of Passage

My grandfather's cracked hands shield
his eyes from the shock of evening sun.

He loads his pipe
with more tobacco, cups the match

as the sun starts to fail. We sit
on the porch of his double-wide

and he tells me he'll learn Spanish
when pigs fly. He wants the mustached man

on Fourteenth who boasts fresh tomatoes
from a wooden cart to hightail it back

over the Rio Grande. Me, I'm too busy pressing
crescents into the wood with my fingernails

to tell him Lord Brabazon of Tara hitched
a pig in a wicker basket to his plane

November 4th, 1909 and took it for a spin
around Leysdown. I know my grandfather's

never excelled at manners, was raised
buck naked in the creeks of South Wisconsin,

thinks his pilot license or hearing aid should command
respect. I can't help but notice the bloat

of his scabbed knuckles, can't help
but wonder if he brought grandma

magnolias as she lay in the hospital, forgetting.
I wonder if the caress of his thumb

against her wrist felt more like it was
cocking a revolver, if he listened as the next round

spun into place with a click.

Brian Czyzyk

POETRY 2017

International Poetry Competition

GRAND PRIZE \$1,000

MARY MAKOFSKE



International Publication Prizes

**Alexandra Peñaloza Alessandri • Anna Bernstein
Debby Jo Blank • Bob A. Brown • Lucile Blunt
Carol Frith • Giles Goodland • Dana Hughes
Miriam C. Jacobs • Hannah Kimbal
Devi Laskar • Leeya Mehta
Andrea Michalowsky • Lisa Mullenneaux
Gunilla Norris • Frank Paino • Cody Pherigo
John Richard Reed • Joan Roberta Ryan
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International Merit Awards

**Annabelle Beaver • Wanda Burch
Kosrof Chantikian • Lisa Charnok
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Justin Hunt • Lucas Jacob • Kate Kingston
Steve Lautermilch • Faisal Mohyuddin
Claire Owen • Cindy St. Onge • Ken Stahl
Margaret Stawowy • S. Takatsu • Judith Terzi
Elizabeth Varadan • Francine Witte
Mariano Zano**





My first reading of this poem left me stunned; subsequent readings reaffirmed for me its power and its gracefulness. Nasreen's Story is a contemporary rendering of a ghazal—the ancient Arabic/Persian/Urdu verse form comprised of autonomous couplets and employing an intricate patterning of rhyme and repetition. Here, the form lends the poem both lyricism and a terrifying sense of inevitability; the repetition of the word collapse at the end of each couplet creates a kind of echo — we keep hearing it, hoping not to hear it, hearing it again, like a bomb going off in the distance, something shattering. Each repetition fulfills Miller Williams' caveat that the ending of a poem should seem both "surprising and inevitable." The poem seems almost to end with each couplet, and then it begins again. We can't escape this collapse, this collapsing over and over again. Governments collapse, monuments collapse, bridges and lives and order collapse, a man at a bus stop collapses when a bullet rips into him. Time collapses, and hope. We are in a room where we are "safe but shaken," asking one another what we can do. If the response is that we can do nothing, that we're powerless, there is nevertheless power in the telling, and power in the poem, itself, in its truth and beauty, its very rendering. I'm reminded of a line from a Jorie Graham poem: "Try to make of the grief a beauty that might endure." The formal qualities of Nasreen's Story, the restraint imposed by the form, make the material of the poem, its subject, all that much more devastating. This is a poem I won't soon forget. It addresses what's at stake in the world around us now, in this moment, via a lens that brings the reader intimately into that historical moment, and the human moment, and it does so without posturing. Nasreen's Story has qualities I long for, always, in poetry: substance and courage and passion and craft.

Cecilia Woloch



Nasreen's Story

In the converted barn we gather to hear Nasreen tell her version of what Iraqis call "the collapse."

Before, things were bad, very bad, but everyone knew to keep quiet, be patient awaiting Saddam's collapse.

She struggles with words to express her shock and awe, watching her city's buildings, bridges, lives, collapse.

But also jubilation, faith that the yoke of oppression had lifted, Saddam's statue yanked down, its collapse

reverberating through the land. Though soon her brother was taken, tortured, returned only to collapse

in a corner, refusing to leave the house again. How to keep teaching her students English, after the collapse

of hope? As she waited at the bus stop, a car pulled up, a bullet ripped into the man beside her, whose collapse

she knew to ignore, staring straight ahead, grateful she was not the one whose life bled out on the pavement. Collapse

time to this room, where we are safe but shaken, where someone asks, *What can we do?* And again, the collapse

of hope when Nasreen says, *You also are powerless in this collapse. Your government decides what stands, what will collapse.*

Mary Makofske

Inheritance

The crucifix fits inside my palm,
cool pewter against my cracked skin.
Christ, with His outstretched arms, looks on
imploringly. It was my father's, given to him
by his mother. A gift. I imagine her
whispering, *Well done, mijo.*
*A priest in the family to guide us
into promised lands.*

When I was young, Papi told stories of his
seven-year-old self playing priest,
offering a communion of banana slivers
with *el padre, el hijo, y el espiritu santo*
to a parish of his cousins. A calling, perhaps,
and yet decades later, he would cast it aside,
like the *sotana* crumpled on sacred ground.

Why'd you leave, Papi? I often asked,
my question settling around his wheelchair
into puddles of undisturbed dust.
Porque sí, he'd answer. The past is the past
and not worth unearthing once it's laid to rest.

When he passed, I plucked the pewter crucifix from
his room, barren except for the lingering scent of
Winston *cigarillos*. I claimed my inheritance,
as if somehow, a new home would
dislodge the mysteries of seminary school
and perturbed priesthood. But Christ
remains silent, arms outstretched, and
cool against my cracked skin.

Alexandra Peñaloza Alessandri

To a New Lover, Unfortunately

I have accepted that it floats
up to the skim: this clotting centrally in the chest
of a box or self or midwife who sees
rolled up into the child something rotten
from the very crowning of the head.
Take your hands off it and wash them
under a pump to tell the body the illness
is forgotten; unwrap yourself from
a crowded bed and flee to hot water
slapping angry and fast against tile.
My home is here, where my makeup
washes down onto my feet.
I have never loved windows
except to fly out of them; when in a box,
I want to be in a box—although you
are fine to stretch bare and pitted in front
of the whole block, you happy thing.
Nothing comes up the same way
it seems it will. The flags unfurl
their sides to a wave of dust
at the embassy down the street,
my fingers clip at my eyelashes,
the church chimes strange. My mother
bought me orchids and they won't die.
They just bloom wrongly anew
every day, so how will I know
when it is time to leave you?

Anna Bernstein

Esterilidad: Infertility or a State of Sterility

She is the postcard of Vejer de la Frontera,
this old woman leaning in her doorway on the hilltop
of bleached buildings the same color
as southern Spanish light.

The guidebook calls it a "white town."

Una descripción literal.

Out on the cobblestones our table slants
along the grade of the hill.

The best dish is the grilled artichokes.

Alcachofas a la brasa.

No breeze floats the blue and white
checked table cloths up at their corners.

In the fields of sunflowers, their heads face east.
As far as I can tell, they always face east.

At dinner this little girl slides
one foot around the other,
leans back into the arms of her older sister.
I always wanted a little girl... that one.

Exactamente como ella.

Now the pigeons fly up above the fountain.
It's so dark, I can't tell what spooked them.
It wasn't the bells, they're used to the bells.

Debby Jo Blank

The Pendulum of a Long Marriage

He says he's ready for bed, but never comes.
My hands hold onto themselves.
This happens often.

Somewhere small birds roast over coals,
lines form in front of fortune tellers.
I have never been there.

Sometimes I look at him without knowing his name,
how he moves his strong body,
palms open with optimism.
I've put optimism away with pessimism
to go to the orchard and shake out my hair.
Some blessings impervious to love.

Laws do not govern these smallest of things.
We have become ungovernable, out of orbit,
still crazy for the smell of him.

It makes no sense, inscrutable as tarot cards:
a man hangs from a tree, an owl hovers,
a woman coughs up stones.
It's not too late, I pour the last bit down
bitter against the back of my throat,
a shaman's remedy for the unsayable.

I go out on the tide, too weak to fight.
He reminds me of deer at the salt lick,
I remember not to frighten him off.
I have to well time my messages
to have a chance of reception.
We are long distance radio operators,
spies passing through in anonymity
sleeping in army beds at a safe house.

What are we creatures of vacillation?
Hopeless and then filled with hope,
sea creatures in sand, our evanescent air bubbles.

In the bay up to our thighs, we find a bed
of mussels, minutes to pull them out,
hours to scrape off their beards.
Before the ocean, I hid my wedding ring
in my shoe, I've looked in every pair.
Did I outfox myself again?

The moon's moon turns away, I'm as dry as bone,
a hummingbird in flight, thirsty before the rains.
The cosmos hesitates, precise laws for galaxies,
for cells that grow old, their little centromeres
no longer ticking and how that shows up
in the body as it grays and shrinks.
Since when did it matter?
But it matters to me.

I remember when I was fullness itself,
a goddess succulent in his hands.
His tongue rolled around my tongue
huge and soft, oh, life was sweet,
the law of mutual attraction so well enforced
we couldn't help ourselves
laughing until there was nothing left to lick.

Debby Jo Blank

Now September

So here's the wind again,
escaping from its lair,
moving aside the afternoon,
hurrying past the sun's
slow transit, clearing, as if
from an end-of-class blackboard,
the sky's white scrawls,
suggesting

something absent
will reappear when
a bell sounds, calling
in the west, the north.
And,

as if seeking north,
shadows lengthen,
stretch dormant muscles,

and the gate, on oiled hinges,
opens.

Bob A. Brown

Post Card Not From Santorini

Just so you know,
this is not where I really am.
Where I am is less
picturesque—dry and barren,
with olive and almond trees
bent away from the relentless
etesian meltemi that blows
for days at a time, sending
dust through the cracks
and howling around corners.

I have learned a little
Greek, and how to harvest almonds
on the steep terraced hillside
by poking a long pole into the tree
so nuts fall onto a tarp.
Also, how to sit for long hours
at a rickety table outside a café
overlooking the hills
and the sea a half mile away.

How to drink thick coffee
slowly from a small cup
with a lot of other men
who don't know me
but accept me now
after so many months.
They pull their caps low
over their faces and stare
at whoever passes by,
the only sound
the click of worry beads
like a rosary—but different.

I know the spiky shells
of the horse chestnuts
have cracked open,
leaving the bronze nuts
with their pale faces
all over Bond Street sidewalk.
Remember how Janie kept
them until they shriveled,
how we found her stash
strewn among the toys
long after she was gone.

Just so you know,
I won't be coming home.
This wizened wind-blasted island
is as good a place as any.

Lucile Burt

Mermaid Park

A carnival, some tropic space beside
the sea. An August night. I'm sure of that.
All the usual clichés: the tide
comes in. The summer moon is huge and flat.
The midway lights that gutter in the salt-
breeze, gutter through uncertain memories
that keep resurfacing. The moon's at fault...

a common dream's uncommon urgencies:
a carousel that turns the night-time light
of music through the sky, a Ferris wheel
that cycles through the cycles of the night...
and now the sea-light tarnishes to steel
as dawn erases carnival with day,
and youth's moon-spangled mermaid swims away.

Carol Frith

Witness

The milled edge of a millipede
quicksilvers from under a
raised stone. It was coined
at point of decay. In the garden,
the bramble's blossom
the only thing almost still
visible. Cloud runs out of steam.
Through a thousand litres of fog
a moon the width of an eyelash.

Remove the clouds and we get
the lightning-print, struck
eye-vein, bare of anything
but structure. There are stairs above
the stairs and a sky partly
revealed, behind this one. But who are
the bound figures in the foreground?
Piranesi imprisoned his viewers
inside the lattice: struts
and stairwells, higher domes, towers.
Where shadows gather is an open gate
and an easy walk out, if we were
not bound by what we saw.

Let's ruin the world less. At least
replace the dead with sadness,
thought. As a ghost departing an exorcism,
the moth flows behind.

Giles Goodland

The Hussy

The ginko round the corner wears a hint of pale gold high in her branches which means that Fall is coming, and as is her custom, she'll change color in the dark while only the moon dares look, so that Monday she's green and Tuesday she's yellow, then come Friday she's bare, not loosening her leaves one by one in slow studied spirals over months of shortening days, but all at once she'll drop them and stand naked with arms outstretched inviting the stares and disapproval of oaks and poplars whose surrender to the season is methodical, predictable, and dull but seemly, though what they mutter behind her bare back whenever the wind stirs, about her being brazen and shameless and unmannered would sting if she cared to listen, but she doesn't.

dana hughes

Ravine #4

That his seed would become like the stars,
like grains of sand through his son, Isaac,
who cringes still beneath the blade, a means,
he spilled out six sons.
Look, he said, speaking in third person,
come to bed
with your father's wife, Keturah,
and make your binding as a son,
and raise up seed for your father
in his old age.

It was he who acted through the servant,
who lured me—with bracelets and a nose ring,
with the promise of abundance,
goats and camels.
the promise of flight;
brought me, veiled,
promised me to a weak man, weak as laughter,
forever trusting, forever a tool,
blind to betrayal,
blind to the dark flush of his father's face;
bought my brother, Laban,
who pats down guests, now, with every embrace,
seeking treasures in the folds of their skin,
gold in their bones,
corrupted by a wedding gift
that came to me—
to be the cutting part.

Now, there is no un-saying what I've said,
no un-doing what I've done.
My sons are driven,
as their father was driven before them from Beersheba,
one east, the other north.
Their wives are strangers. Strangers.
Alone with the servants and this bleary old man,
who loves too much and will not be consoled,

my father's generation,
I fill, I lower, I draw, I empty
and long, as ever,
with the longing of a bride
to be away,
to be anywhere else.

Miriam C. Jacobs

Final Decree

If this kitchen is the court,
I judge each defendant guilty.
I punish the peppers,
incarcerate garlic,
impose restitution on parsley.
For onions, who seek
dissolution of marriage,
I draw two halves asunder,
my knife sharp
as a gavel's strike—
divorce, divorce!
It's been twenty-two
months since my own
bonds of marriage
were severed.
This evening I slice
yellow onions for soup;
the papery skin comes away
and the stinging fumes
assail my eyes.
I've never figured out
how to hold back tears,
though I've tried every
trick for cutting onions—
lit a candle, held my tongue
to the roof of my mouth,
touched them with the
cold hands of Midas.
Still nothing has
transmuted into gold.
The onions, now neatly
divorced, sliced thin,
sizzling sweet in oil,
melt to translucence
then caramelize,
radiant transfiguration.

Hannah Kimbal

Half Past Midnight /

after Lynda Hull

Let's talk about mockingbirds, then.

Let's talk, our voices swinging car tire
on gravel low, our voices slingshot
orbit from accepting Lady
Marmalade's invitation—a sax
metering the groundswell. Hades

taking Persephone dancing

one last time before Demeter insists
on entering the room, escorting
her out. Let's discuss how to let
the loons. Not just the yard bird, the one
who died too soon, before the owls

prophesized in the bloom of the June

moon. Let's talk, you and I, about the ones
who leave their young, after the egg-crack
hatch. Earlier and earlier
every year the orange groves in bird-
land moaning under the weight of

its own tangerine ecstasies.

Every measure has consequences,
even a joy ride on a Sunday
night, rain coming down like an express
blue train, roads slick with purpled rain,
a soundtrack playing on the radio

poisoning memory's veins. Let's talk

about those last birds, the couriers,
the peacemakers, the mynahs who've grown
accustomed to their brassy cages,
the ones who secretly like knowing
their place in the world. I've let those birds,

I've let them. They've flown – none have come
back to rearrange the stars for me
so I could get a better view.
Sometimes I can hear their last long notes
lingering on the postcard edge
of night sky. In its bell-shaped horn

I can hear those sinuous wings flap,
fly across the spires and scrapers,
into threaded-needle eyes of blue flame.

Devi Laskar

Refugees, *circa* 926

The boat is too small for so many
and only the twin babies sleep,
drunk on milk and swaddled tight
rocking against their mother
as the men row hard into familiar waters
of the Gulf of Hormuz for the last time,
the starlight on the receding mountains
dimming fast until what is left
of this new moon night is the abiding
light from their holy fire, fed carefully
by their priest with sticks of sandalwood
pulled from deep in his white robes, as he looks east
into the black Arabian sea.

All the joy and blood that had come before already turning to myth,
he counts how many generations it takes to go
from conqueror to refugee.

Gold bangles ring out as the baby girls are given
to their grandmother, then great grandmother,
and passed back to their mother, seventeen,
back erect, hair like molten copper
fawn brown eyes flecked with green,
hiding tiger, quick to anger,
as quick to forgive the every day abuses girls
seem not to know they carry.

The father, twenty-five, son of a farmer
named after his father's father, and he his,
the same names reaching back into old Persian towns
winding up a river into orchards,
where they planned this winter voyage,
had four boats in sight ahead,
and six behind him,

but now they are hidden by night
as they row with speed, the wind still,
the vessels arrows through the air.

So, when tired eyes stir with the new dawn
and the babies tug with little hands to drink,
steam from their breath against her chest,
their mother lifts her head as the men cry "Land!"
she does not expect rose petal beach, like silk shivering before her.

She pulls herself to her knees to look
at this land at the waters edge that shifts and stirs
as if it is made of wings disturbed by the coming of her people
only to gasp, as flocks of long limbed flamingos
rise up into the sky and scatter,
revealing a sanctuary of white beach.

Leeya Mehta

Supermoon 2016

The moon has grown large
this year, feasting on
our darkneses, slipping in
as Sunday's cat through the flap
in our back door. I saw it
just the other night, hung
between the neighbors' homes; in slits
it fell down through our blinds
to where I sat alone. Upstairs
the water ran till cold, your two
flat feet on porcelain, the click
of shower door, just closed. I washed
those towels last night. And if
the window opened then, and he
within the moon leaned out, I
would, fearless, follow him
into black-lit sky. He could grow
yet fatter, then, and you
could fold your own
clean clothes. Instead,
I grow yet thinner; put
the kettle on the stove.

Andrea Michalowsky

Love Song

*But all is to be dared, because even a person of poverty...
Sappho, fragment 31*

It's someplace to be, he thinks,
after the public library's lights go dark.
He can get cookies and coffee and stay till 10,
maybe later if the church's security guard
is in a charitable mood or too tired
to drive him out. Then he'll sleep well
on a cushioned pew surrounded by saints.

He misses his bag of toiletries, his clothes,
the old sheet music set out on the curb
while he was working at the soup kitchen, now
dispersed to some outer borough landfill.
Sal the manager was sorry. Fuck Sal.

A cold night in a cold season.
He meanders across Lincoln Center Plaza,
an island in a swift current of opera-goers
sweeping past the fountain's diamond points
of light towards the doors of the Met.

He passes a poster for *Tosca* but doesn't
recognize the names. Not his, not hers.
"Fragrant, she entered and fell into my arms,"
the notes of "E lucevan le stelle" rising
in his throat before he can stop them,
candling the old lust. His tenor still strong,
he grasps at a phantom as cruel as the night
while the crowd, thinking he sings for money,
looks for a hat, then moves inside to
a warmer stage where the stars will be shining.

Lisa Mullenneaux

Dreaming the She Bear

The archaic being teaches me to be the same as myself.
—Gaston Bachelard

One night in my sleep I was out walking deep, wooded hills.
It was October. The maple leaves glowed yellow under my feet,

and for once I was not in a hurry. I left the path
and meandered. It was late morning when I heard snuffling,

saw her suddenly and hid in a hurry.
The wind was right so she couldn't smell me.

It took her all day to go to ground, digging the lair,
pushing out stone. She licked at needles and pitch,

plugged her anus at the last. Glancing around just once
she climbed in, pulling earth down and over. Inside

the floor was padded with moss. Silence thickened like fur.
The temperature dropped. Cold layered upon cold.

I pulled up the covers, smelled both the cotton and
her breath, wild and rank. Her face was so close

I could see transparent crystals glaze her dark lips.
The nose flared. Below the upper lip her yellow teeth

curved back into the cavern of her mouth.
Was it a smile I wondered and how long

would we be here? It seemed eternal.
She was heavy with child. We lay in the deep

darkness of the ground. Her breath like a bellows
came and went. Warmed by her I lost myself

and can't remember the rest. But when I woke
I was spanking new and the sheets were covered with fur.

Gunilla Norris

Litany of "The Most Beautiful Suicide"*

(Empire State Building, NYC)

Let her awaken unafraid
on the first of May, 1947.
Let her put on her rose dress & makeup—
her double-strand of pearls.
Let her check out of the
Hotel Governor Clinton
& walk east on 34th Street.
Let her enter the Empire's lobby
with its stratum of gold.
Let the ticket vendor take the coins
from her white-gloved hand.
Let the elevator rise to the open deck
on the 86th floor.
Let her lay down her purse & family
photos.
Let her fold her long tan coat just so.
Let her offer her alabaster scarf
to the mild mid-morning breeze.
Let her close her shadowed eyes.
Let her step off the ledge as if
beneath each scapula
she feels the itch of wings.
Let the sky that cannot hold her
take her shoes but
nothing more.
Let mercy turn each pedestrian gaze
toward the swizzle of white
that precedes her.
Let glass & steel become
her catafalque.
Let her rest like a beautiful lie.

Let we who did not know her
be absolved for finding beauty
in such broken truth—
for, having looked upon her,
being powerless to turn away.

**Based on Robert C. Wiles' iconic photograph of Evelyn McHale*

Frank Paino

A Swinging God

I'm not in love but I'll write.

Let dribble something sweet but not fine. Be coated
in molasses or fruit. Turn the knob of my conception.

I have an OK Cupid profile.

I'm not in love but three degrees past flaming.

WARNING: Pressure-cooking.

Not in love but my guts are rapt.

I like the saying: "We are children (of) god."

I'm a feast for the ready.

The outdoors plays me.

I'm not in love but the witch hazel!

I marry a field of calendula.

Carve the letter "Q" from the mountain.

I'm not only. I go to church for free (with Hafiz)
and swallow the organ. I'm not in love but
there's something about butts.

Cody Pherigo

Lessons in Perspective

In Hieronymous Bosch's *Death and the Miser*,
an old man reaches for a bag of gold,
the point of view so skewed his bedroom walls
threaten to fall around his unheeding head.

In Raphael's *Marriage of the Virgin*,
the parallel lines of pavement stones appear
to meet somewhere beyond the picture plane.
Note how the witnesses have been arranged
before this temple on a Palladian plan.
Parallel lines, of course, don't intersect.
That they seem to do so is a trick
played on a credulous brain seeking a way
to reconcile faith and reality.

The work of one last painter whose palette
draws on the colors of dusk. In this landscape,
heaven and earth converge on the heart's horizon,
and here, at the vanishing point of your dreams,
someone is standing. Perhaps it is someone you loved.
How easy it is to achieve the illusion of distance.
Take one step backward, look, and he will be gone.

John Richard Reed

Cecelia Gallerani

After "The Lady with the Ermine" by Leonardo da Vinci

Beautiful, he calls her, *as a flower*
and wants her with him all ways,
finds gifts to delight her—
French *passamenterie* for her gown,
the velvet mantle with red-slashed sleeves,
a new *viola da mano*, perhaps, from Brescia—
confines her lightly as the net
holding the hair to her temples,
sheathing the luster
only he may unbraid.

He is Ludovico Sforza, *Il Moro*.
Look how she wears him about her neck—
a string of polished jet. And he is called
L'Ermilio, too—see the ermine
she caresses, fierce and priapic,
he strength of her (oversized
you think?) hands. Does she boast
she holds him, owns him, carries
his child? Who does she see in the distance?
And why does she look so sad?

Long after the indolent hours of posing,
after Sforza leaves her (before the portrait
is dry) to marry Ferrara's
pale daughter, and after Leonardo
is reassigned to engineer
the nuptial celebrations,
and after the bride dies
in childbirth and Cecilia confides in her letter,
you would not recognize me today,
the painting—long forgotten—
is sent to Cracow, where Delacroix
(who knows *pourquoi?*) blackens
the background, covering the window
over her shoulder, so we'll never know
what she and Leonardo saw.

Joan Roberta Ryan

Third Viewing of *Two Fridas*

You worked with organs
because your frames were all cracked. Look,
how a vein sweeps over your shoulder
like a shawl, the heart exists outside
yourself like a cloud you could watch float by.
You hold your own hand,
your organs inside out and
flushed, red, wet and beating.
What use are bones anyway, but to house
life that beats within the bars?
Your bars were broken so you create your own.
A woman, alone, in pain, paints herself.
Frida Kahlo, even as your body raged,
your small hinges collapsed into blood rivers,
even after the tenth plague visited your womb,
you painted for yourself a dress of stained linen,
next to a more innocent you. She offered and you took
your own open hand.

Jessica Genia Simon

Contributors

Alexandra Peñaloza Alessandri is a Colombian-American poet, children's author, and professor at Broward College, where she teaches composition, creative writing, and U.S. Hispanic/Latino Literature. Her work has appeared recently in *The Acentos Review*, *Rio Grande Review*, and *YARN*.

Kathleen Balma is a teacher, librarian, translator, and veteran of the US Navy. Her poetry has appeared in *Atlanta Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Hotel Amerika*, *The Journal*, *Rattle*, and other magazines. Her awards include a Fulbright year in Spain, a Pushcart Prize, and a fellowship from Rivendell Writers' Colony. In 2015 she was a finalist for the Montreal International Poetry Prize, and in 2016 she was a Tennessee Williams scholar at Sewanee Writers' Conference. She lives in New Orleans.

Grace Bauer's latest book of poems is *MEAN/TIME* (University of New Mexico Press). Previous books include: *The Women at the Well*, *Nowhere All At Once*, *Retreats & Recognitions*, and *Beholding Eye*. Grace is also co-editor of *Nasty Women Poets: An Unapologetic Anthology of Subversive Verse* (forthcoming from Lost Horse Press).

Anna Bernstein is a recently-graduated research assistant specializing in women's history, living in Brooklyn. She has had fiction published in *Litro NY* and *decomp magazine*, as well as poetry published in *Inch*, *Concho River Review*, and others. Some of the things she likes to write about are animals, plants, Jewishness, and disability.

Michèle Betty is the poetry editor of *New Contrast: The South African Literary Journal* and founder of *Dryad Press (Pty) Ltd*, a micro-press dedicated to the promotion and publication of poetry in South Africa. She has an MA in Creative Writing from the University of Cape Town. Her debut collection, *Metaphysical Balm* was published in March 2017.

Debby Jo Blank is a retired physician. She won the Faulkner Prize, a W.D. Snodgrass Fellowship, and was shortlisted for these prizes: Joy Harjo, Black Lawrence, Hippocrates (twice). Her work has been published in a variety of print and on-line journals. Her book, *The Explosion of Binary Stars*, was published by Shearsman Books.

Jonathan Blake has been following the gospel of his heart for as long as he can remember. Writer, educator, arts organizer, he makes his home in central Massachusetts.

Mark Brazaitis is the author of seven books, including *The River of Lost Voices: Stories from Guatemala*, winner of the 1998 Iowa Short Fiction Award, and *The Incurables: Stories*, winner of the 2012 Richard Sullivan Prize and the 2013 Devil's Kitchen Reading Award in Prose.

Bob A. Brown is a retired Wyoming cattle rancher, Humanities Scholar with the Wyoming Humanities Council, and Jungian psychotherapist. He has studied with poets Veronica Patterson, David Romtvedt, and James Galvin, and holds degrees from Yale University and the University of Denver.

Sean Brendan-Brown, a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, has published in the *Notre Dame Review*, *Wisconsin Review*, *Indiana Review*, *Texas Review*, *Poetry East*, *Southampton Review*, and the University of Iowa Press anthologies *American Diaspora* and *Like Thunder*. He received a 1997 NEA Poetry Fellowship and a 2010 NEA Fiction Fellowship.

Gaylord Brewer is a professor at Middle Tennessee State University, where he founded and for more than 20 years edited the journal *Poems & Plays*. His most recent book is the cookbook-memoir *The Poet's Guide to Food, Drink, & Desire* (Stephen F. Austin, 2015). His tenth collection of poetry, *The Feral Condition*, is forthcoming from Negative Capability Press.

Chris Bullard is a native of Jacksonville, FL. Finishing Line Press published his poetry chapbook, *Leviathan*, in 2016 and Kattywompus Press published *High Pulp*, a collection of his flash fiction, in 2017. His work has appeared in publications such as *32 Poems*, *Rattle*, *Pleiades*, *River Styx*, and *Nimrod*. He has been previously published by *Atlanta Review*.

Mark Burke's work has appeared or is forthcoming in the *North American Review*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Sugar House Review*, *Nimrod International Journal*, and many other publications. He is a graduate of the Pacific University MFA program and his work has recently been nominated for a Pushcart prize.

Lucile Burt is a retired high school English and creative writing teacher, currently living in Wellfleet, MA. Her poems have appeared in various small press journals and in the anthology *Teaching with Fire*. Her chapbook *Neither Created Nor Destroyed* won the 2012 Philbrick Poetry Prize from the Providence Athenaeum.

Peter Neil Carroll is author of *The Truth Lies on Earth: A Year by Dark*, by Bright (Turning Point); *Fracking Dakota*; *Riverborne*; and *A Child Turns Back to Wave*, which won the Prize Americana. His poems have appeared in *Southern Humanities Review*, *Southern Quarterly*, *Tar River Poetry Review*, and *Spillway*.

Brad Clompus's poetry and essays have appeared in such journals as *Cimarron Review*, *Willow Springs*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Sugar House Review*, *Sonora Review*, and *Tampa Review*.

Brian Czyzyk is a poet from Northern Lower Michigan. He was a finalist for *The Gateway Review's* 2016 Fabulist Flash Fiction Contest, and has work published in and forthcoming from *Dunes Review*, *Indiana Review Online*, *Assaracus*, *Harpur Palate*, and *Crab Orchard Review*, among others. He wishes you the best.

Robert Daselar is the author of a book of sonnets, *Levering Avenue* (University of Evansville Press, 1998), which won the first annual Richard Wilbur Award. South Coast Repertory in Costa Mesa has produced two of his full-length plays, *Dragon Lady* and *Alekhine's Defense*.

Sean Denmark, a native of Alabama, lives and teaches in New York City. His poetry has appeared in *Bellevue Literary Review* and *The Chattahoochee Review*, among other publications. He is working on a longer manuscript of poems first written on pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago.

Gregory Djanikian has published six collections of poetry with Carnegie Mellon, the latest of which is *Dear Gravity* (2014). His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Cortland Review*, *Crazyhorse*, *The Florida Review*, *The New Criterion*, *Nimrod*, and *Poet Lore*. He teaches in the creative writing program at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Giles Goodland was born in Taunton, was educated at the universities of Wales and California, took a D. Phil. at Oxford, has published a several books of poetry including *A Spy in the House of Years* (Leviathan, 2001), *Capital* (Salt, 2006), and *Dumb Messengers* (Salt, 2012). Another book is forthcoming from Shearsman later in 2017.

Jan C. Grossman's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Poetry East*, *Plainsongs*, *Poet Lore*, *American Arts Quarterly*, and *Atlanta Review*, among other journals. She is the recipient of a 2017 Plainsongs award. She lives in New York City.

Lukas Ray Hall, born and raised near the Twin Cities, holds an MFA from Pacific University. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Midway Journal*, *Moon City Review*, & *Souvenir Lit*, among others. He won the Patsy Lea Core Memorial Award in Creative Writing, for his poetry. He currently lives in St. Paul, MN.

Danielle Hanson is the author of *Ambushing Water* (Brick Road Poetry Press, 2017). Her work has appeared in over 50 journals and anthologies, including *Hubbub*, *Iodine*, *Rosebud*, *Poet Lore*, *Asheville Poetry Review*, and *Blackbird*. Her work has been nominated for two Pushcart Prizes and Best of the Net. daniellejhanson.com.

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Alexis Ivy's most recent poems have appeared in *Spare Change News*, *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*, *J Journal* and *The Worcester Review*. Her first poetry collection, *Romance with Small-Time Crooks* was published in 2013 by BlazeVOX [books]. She is a Street Outreach Advocate in her hometown, Boston.

Miriam C. Jacobs is a University of Chicago alumnus and teaches writing, literature, and humanities. "Ravine #4" is part of a poem series exploring Torah from non-traditional perspectives. Jacobs' work placed in *Poetica Magazine's* Anna David Rosenberg Award competition, 2017, and appears in *Reform Jewish Quarterly*, *Calliope*, and various other publications.

Brad Johnson's full-length poetry collection *The Happiness Theory* (Main Street, 2013) is available at <http://mainstreetrag.com/bookstore/product-tag/brad-johnson/>. His work has also been accepted by *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *J Journal*, *New Madrid*, *Meridian*, *Poet Lore*, *Salamander*, *Southern Indiana Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, and others.

Robert Lee Kendrick lives in Clemson, SC. He has previously published, or has work forthcoming, in *Tar River Poetry*, *Xavier Review*, *Louisiana Literature*, *South Carolina Review*, *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, and a chapbook, *Winter Skin* (Main Street Rag Publishing, 2016). He can be found online at robertleekendrick.net.

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Mary Makofske's books are *World Enough*, and *Time* (Kelsay, 2017); *Traction* (Ashland, 2011), winner of the Richard Snyder Prize, *Eating Nasturtiums*, winner of a Flume Press chapbook prize, and *The Disappearance of Gargoyles*. Her poems have appeared recently in *Poetry East*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Briar Cliff Review*, *Antiphon*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *Crosswinds*, *The Stillwater Review*, and *Whale Road Review*. She received second prize in the 2015 Allen Ginsberg Awards. www.marymakofske.com

Autumn McClintock lives in Philadelphia and works at the public library. Her first chapbook, *After the Creek*, was published in 2016. Poems of hers have recently appeared or are forthcoming in *Poetry Daily*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, and others. She is a staff reader for *Ploughshares*.

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Lisa Mullenneaux has published the chapbook "Painters and Poets" (2012) and maintains the ekphrastic art gallery www.paintersandpoets.com. Her poems have appeared in *American Arts Quarterly*, *Stone Canoe*, *The Fourth River*, and others. When she's not writing, she teaches writing for the University of Maryland UC.

Amanda Murphy has written two collections of poetry, *The Lost Lines* and *Portland*. She enjoys writing about mythology and small-town folklore, cyclic patterns, and loss. She and her husband live in Indiana. They have a baby and a Maine Coon cat. The cat is the larger of the two.

Steve Myers has published a full-length collection, *Memory's Dog*, and two chapbooks. A Pushcart Prize winner, he has had poems previously appear in journals such as *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *Poetry East*, *The Southern Review*, and *Tar River Poetry*. His manuscript entitled *Last Look at Joburg* won The Tusculum Review's 2015 Poetry Chapbook Prize.

Gunilla Norris is best known for her nine books on the spirituality of everyday, beginning with *Being Home*. She's published eleven children's books and two books of poetry, the most recent of which is *Joy is the Thinnest Layer*, also a Haiku book of days, *On the Wing*, released 2016.

Frank Paino has had poems have appear in a variety of publications, including: *Gettysburg Review*, *North American Review*, and *Catamaran*. Cleveland State University Press published his first two books: *The Rapture of Matter* and *Out of Eden*. He received a 2016 Individual Excellence Award from the Ohio Arts Council.

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Paulann Petersen, Oregon Poet Laureate Emerita, has six books of poetry, most recently *Understory*, from Lost Horse Press. The Latvian composer Eriks Esenvalds chose one of her poems as the lyric for a new choral composition that's now part of the repertoire of the Choir at Trinity College Cambridge.

Hope Hart Petrie lives and writes in Youngstown, Ohio. A recipient of the Mary Lonnberg Smith Poetry Award and The Jovanovich Imaginative Writing Award, her poetry was recently included in the anthology *Adobe Walls*, and has appeared in *The Porter Gulch Review* and *The Santa Cruz Sentinel*, among other publications.

Cody Pherigo is a queer, woo-woo writing animal originally from Kalamazoo. His studies at Bent Writing Institute and Goddard College convinced him that poets are true politicians—lovers of humanity. Cody has self-published two chapbooks. In 2016 he was awarded a 4Culture Artists Grant for a project on transgender resilience.

John Richard Reed chases the numinous through poetry, songwriting, and acting. He has earned an MFA from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and an M.Div. from San Francisco Theological Seminary. His work has appeared in journals such as *River Styx*, *Poetry*, and *The Paris Review* and in two anthologies.

Donna Reis's debut poetry collection, *No Passing Zone*, published by Deerbrook Editions (December, 2012) was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She is also the author of three poetry chapbooks: *Certain* (Finishing Line Press, 2012); *Dog Shows and Church: A Sequence of Poems* (2000) and *Incantations* (1995) both published by Eurydice Press.

Susan Rich is the author of four poetry collections including *Cloud Pharmacy*, *The Alchemist's Kitchen*, *Cures Include Travel*, and *The Cartographer's Tongue*, winner of the PEN Award for Poetry and the Peace Corps Writers Award (White Pine Press). Rich's poems have appeared in all 50 States and one district including *The Gettysburg Review*, *New England Review*, and *Poetry Ireland*.

Andy Roberts, a four time Pushcart Prize nominee, is the author of seven collections of poetry. His most recent chapbook is *You Know the Type* (NightBallet Press 2017.) He lives in Columbus, Ohio where he handles finances for disabled veterans.

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Joan Roberta Ryan has had poems appear in the *Atlanta Review*, *Nimrod*, *The Sow's Ear Review*, *Spillway*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Ekphrasis*, *Euphony*, *Roanoke Review*, *Calyx*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Off The Coast*, *Cape Rock*, *Crab Orchard Review*, and other journals. Her book, *Dark Ladies and Other Avatars*, will be published in 2017.

Leona Sevick's work appears in *Little Patuxent Review*, *North American Review*, *The Journal*, *The Florida Review*, *Quiddity*, and *The Golden Shovel Anthology: New Poems Honoring Gwendolyn Brooks* (Univ. of Arkansas Press, 2017). She is the 2017 Press 53 Poetry Award Winner for her first full-length book of poems, *Lion Brothers*. Leona is provost at Bridgewater College in Virginia.

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Joanna Solfrian has had poems published/forthcoming in journals such as *The Harvard Review*, *The Southern Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Margie*, *Rattapallax*, and *Pleiades*. She received the Wick First Book Poetry Prize out of Kent State, judged by Naomi Shihab Nye, for *Visible Heavens* (2010).

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Alan Sugar shares his poetry and performance art in Decatur, Georgia, where he currently resides. He is also a puppeteer, and he has worked as a special education teacher in the public schools of Atlanta. Currently, Alan works as a writing tutor at Georgia State University Perimeter College, Clarkston Campus.

Adam Tavel's third poetry collection, *Catafalque*, recently won the 2017 Richard Wilbur Award and is forthcoming with the University of Evansville Press. He is also the author of *The Fawn Abyss* (Salmon Poetry, 2017) and *Plash & Levitation* (University of Alaska Press, 2015), winner of the Permafrost Book Prize in Poetry. You can find him online at adamtavel.com.

Denise Wallace grew up in a large family in Twin Falls, Idaho, but thinks of herself as a true Oregonian since she has lived in Eugene, OR for over 30 years now. She has been writing poems since she was a teenager, and has been published in several literary journals and anthologies. She has worked as an editor and event coordinator, and currently makes a living in the wholesale wine trade. In addition to writing, she loves water and teaches water aerobics, and finds great joy in gardening and cooking.

Mike White is the author of *How to Make a Bird with Two Hands* (Word Works) and the just-released *Addendum to a Miracle* (Waywiser), winner of the Anthony Hecht Poetry Prize. He lives in Salt Lake City and teaches at the University of Utah.

Nathan Whiting ran more than a hundred races longer than the Marathon, has performed dances in New York City and Japan, and practices meditation. His work has appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *Antioch Review*, *Best American Poetry*, *Blueline*, *Skidrow Penthouse*, and *others*.



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