

Words Frequently Confused: *Lunar, Lunate*

Some nights the moon reminds me
of a hoof print gouged in the pasture
where you taught me to ride: one glyph
of a leaden font spilled
from a typesetter's drawer, all

c-o-n-f-i-d-e-n-c-e and p-o-s-t-u-r-e
among bluestem and chicory.

Some nights the moon
takes the shape of light at vespers
currying the mare's impudent rump
as she scuffs the far meadow,
anticipating my approach.

Phillip Sterling

Decorations for the New Year

Christmas over, and I drag the tree to the dumpster
At the far end of the apartment complex
And leave it on the curb with the other trees.
None of them is very big, but enough to fill
A small apartment with the smell of evergreen.
There are still some shreds of tinsel tangled
Among the needles, a few silver
Ornament hooks scattered
Like question marks on the pavement.
If management left the trees here,
Ducks would huddle underneath
The branches where puddles cooled the grass.
Small birds would hunt for berries, disappointed.
When I was a boy, flames nested
In what we burned. We mixed the ashes
With compost for the garden.

I hope the removal company will dump all
Of the city's Christmas trees in a big pile in the landfill.
A sprawling, jagged hill of pine and fir
Ornamented with broken lampshades
And car batteries. A washer and drier
Off to the side, demure, like presents.
A scattering of old mattresses as dingy
And ragged as patches of snow.
And on particularly cold days, a grackle
Perches on top like a burned-out star
Or a black, iridescent angel unsure where to fly.

Jack Stewart

blue mo(u)rning

stumbling cheap wine drunk
through empty chapels at sun-
rise. these things i do when no

one knows my name. the poor,
like the holy, have no names.
only things they must give up.

beneath the blazing blood
moon, i forgive myself
and mistake it for control.

it isn't the end of the world,
but i can sure as hell see it
from where i stand. god

says, what do you fear most
about Death? i see no reason
to lie. i am afraid She will be
too gentle.

Shana Toor

St. John's School

Panama City, Florida, 1963

It's cliché, but the Sisters
looked like overgrown penguins,
black and white in habits, only
exposing eyes, noses, cheeks,
mouths, hands. What they
were hiding was as mysterious
as theology they emblemized:
credos in Latin, thorns of
passion, all the threatening
tenets of sin, punishment,
martyrdom. Between our
acts of contrition and recess
jump rope, they led walks
to the beach, where even
ocean detritus was likened to
Jesus—devil's purses rattled
echoing guards playing dice
below His feet on the cross.
Floating in the Gulf of Mexico
dressed in swimsuits, did nuns
dream of salvation free from
prying eyes of God and man?
Cloistered in their convent,
did they eat spaghetti, watch
TV, sigh with relief no diapers
needed folding, no child tucked
up to the chin and asked to
recite her prayers? Was it ever
out the door of the abortionist
and into the confessional?

Pauline Uchmanowicz

The Habit of Keeping

When I die, my family will receive a peace lily. People will form a line to look upon their own denial, my face a model for what happens to others. Just yesterday I saw that no birds had visited my new feeder. The wind came down the chimney, spread ashes all over the carpet. I don't believe in omens, but I was born in July and my sign is Cancer. I used to say a prayer when the clock would read 11:11 so that my crush would fall in love with me. I used to watch the yellow lights, hypothesizing that if I got through the intersection before it turned red, that I would make it to heaven. I've already got two peace lilies—one on my office desk, the other in the office lobby. One, for my dad's mom. The other, my mom's dad. They were gifts that I cannot let go, nor for the life of me let die. I don't believe in omens, but every morning I water these office plants, hoping for a better way of saying goodbye.

Austin Veldman

Ithaka

You encounter him at night, this king in rags, his peasant's hands cratered from the labor of age, of learning in senility the sun's workaday heat on his expanse of blisters, and give the soundless report of a shade on furlough: *Our son sets sail tomorrow*. He sucks his gums and looks at you without recognition, and in the future, you know, you will watch him sleep in the grove, trellises festooned above him. Once he raged, harrowed the island, pounded salt in furrows, crowned with the madness your son could not feign.

They dragged him to war. He has not returned.

As you were dying, he spoke: *I have tried to write Paradise. Let love try to forgive what I have made*. Now you watch his crescent back scything sleep, his dreams limited as a hound's. His fingers twitch. He spades tumors of fragrant earth around a stillborn fruit tree. He wears the tunic of a peasant, oxhide patches bound against brambles, remembers nothing, and survives his kingdom's disorder.

J.L. Wall

Whooshing like winded sumo wrestlers

Trussed up in zipped sleeping bags
And plopped on their bellies in the ring,
The faint outlines of their fingers
Like flippers scrabbling on a slant,
Sea-washed slab of rock, two scarred
Bull walruses sprawl and flop and chest
Butt each other with blubber-juddering wallops
Until one backs off. Driblets of blood
Oozing from gashes in its bowed head and
Neck where his rival's tusks have scored hits.

Seabirds wheel or perch on the rocks
Or bob on the chop. A bevy of hefty
Females—all love handles and big brown
Eyes—doze and sunbathe, hardly glancing
Up to see what all the chest bumping
Rumpus is about until the winsome,
Unwitting, pubescent object
Of the smitten contestants unsavory
Intentions surges out of the brine
And lands with a splat, wiggling her
Baby fat hips as she undulates up the rock
With a raw fish—not a rose—gripped in her teeth.

Marty Walsh

Watering Can

While I pulled the day's weeds from the garden's
dry furrows the sun pulled its guitar string light

through the fence posts across the garden beds
like a blues song shimmering with heat, like that dusk

we watched our neighbor shoot his wife's watering can
through his back acres pushing it further and further away.

Oh, Lonely. Oh, Slug-Heart, leaving its shiny slime
behind it, a trail of sequins from a wedding dress. Darling,

I want you to know I followed it and found it bullet-ridden
in the underbrush of thistle beside some wild onions

that I replanted in the can to carry home. Every day
a seed breaks free, the desert dusts our bodies,

and there's always something to find and repurpose.
Listen, love, I left by the front door our watering can

to warm in the summer heat, so we can, before
entering our house, wash the day's dirt from our feet.

Lindsay Wilson

Eclogue: The Limbs So Full We Thought They'd Break

If you ask about the summer heat,
I'll tell you of the cool sky of leaves

he swept with a broom, and the strange
hail of apricots I raked into piles.

It's true after the divorce apartments
we weren't used to limbs so full

beyond our own hungers they swung low
to bless us with tree-shadow.

And what did they teach you of breaking?
That it's simply a refusal to let go,

that some of us ripen so early, and some
can be plucked from August's heavy limbs.

If you pull meat away from the stone fruit
and discard the heart-pit, you'll learn

it's what makes you hungry, not your body.
We're given this brief season of flesh,

this stone seed, this hard heart's closed fist,
limbs lifting above us, holding back the sun.

Lindsay Wilson

Selective Mutism

My Nana and Zeyde lost
their voice in the war.

at the labor camps they filled their throats
with the boulders the S.S. forced them
to carry for no reason.

from then until the rest of their lives they choked
on the boulders so the shards wouldn't crumble
into their mouths

memories

to be relived

even for a moment would mean mining a place
the psyche should only traverse once, if it had to,
at all—

so, silence

when a younger me asked them about elementary
school projects, like family trees, or genogram
lessons,

silence

made my maturing mind more curious to know where
I came from—I started to wonder aloud why we never
knew Nana or Zeyde's real birthdays, or why my mother's

maiden name is one of three possible ones her parents
were given on papers to come to America, or why Nana
couldn't get out of bed sometimes, riddled with a pain

I only knew was *from before*, or why Zeyde lit six
Yartzeit candles before Yom Kippur for his family
from before, or why—

silence

except for four words I heard Nana and Zeyde mutter
twice through clenched teeth, yellowing gatekeepers,
watching that no shards passed through the gaps:

let no one forget

just five syllables—a haiku's first line—left from
an extermination

left to fill in
a family's tree.

Jennifer Wolkin

Toward the Raspberry Bush

Teasing (though serious) about the Depression-era impulse to
keep money in books, in pillowcases, how it's key to search
flour tins, pockets of laundered dresses, boxes of postcards,
be thorough before turning things over to thrift. She poured
two cups of French press and set down a book. Hot muffins in
a ceramic dish and Sunday gathered loosely around. Smoke
hovering, cresting a suspended belief in what could be such a
lucky season. Now unkind.

Through the thin sleep of that afternoon: a paint-peeled door-
frame. His breath in sliding brass, a certain song. What song.
Coming up from the low-beam basement, press his hand
against the jamb. Yellowed clippings, bagged potatoes. An
empty kitchen and something steaming. Through the win-
dows branches heave like some replacement for a way (one
of many) to keep an image, even a changing one.

Anna Zumbahlen

DAN VEACH PRIZE FOR YOUNGER POETS

2019 Winners

IVY MARIE & REMA SHBAITA

This year, we saw a nearly 60% increase in submissions for the Dan Veach Prize, and as you can imagine, it gladdens our hearts to see so much poetry being written by undergraduate-age students. But that meant my decision was even more difficult—and in the end, I couldn't choose. I loved both Ivy Marie's "Where to Find Poetry" and Rema Shbaita's "Palestine Is Upsidedown." The poems' lush images and careful attention to language drew me in immediately, as did the emotional resonances of young writers experiencing and negotiating different cultures with languages that they do not natively speak.

In Ivy Marie's poem, the speaker decides that a "fuchsia-stained grin" will suffice to communicate her pleasure to the Peruvian man at eating pitaya ice cream he gives her—and of course, that is precisely where we find poetry, in those quiet, small, intense moments where we experience common ground with others. Rema Shbaita's ekphrastic poem, written after a puzzle collage artwork by Kent Rogowski, is as much about pieces from different puzzles smashed together as it is a commentary on the speaker's family's history—as Palestine's history with Israel—"Woven with/ pieces stolen" where the "wrong words" will make Palestine "fall off the edge/ of the world."

Both poems are remarkable. Enjoy them.

JC Reilly

Where to Find Poetry

A pile of pitayas in a Peruvian man's fruit stand
are soft—soft enough to bruise—
and he places a fresh-made cup of ice cream,
like an offering from Mama Pacha herself,
into the bowl of your hands.

Careful, the local guide warns,
the seeds are hard. They will break your teeth.
Concentrate on them,
and let the fruit fill in the rest of your mouth.

You know what he means when you bite:
the seeds are bitter and solid like rocks
rattling around your molars. But the fruit
melts on your tongue. It is sweet.
The fruit seller smiles at you with lips
as red as the pitayas,

and you want to tell him *thank you*
in his native tongue. The guide
thinks for a minute and says
there is no word for love in Kichwa.
So you take another delicious bite
and send a fuchsia-stained grin back to him—

the universal language of love.

Ivy Marie

Palestine is Upsidedown

After Kent Rogowski's Love=Love #7, 2006-2008

It's there, hanging, with flowers that don't belong. With borders that don't belong. Woven with pieces stolen.
I can't talk about Palestine without talking about myself, even though it's not my narrative—it's my dad's. And his dad's and my mother's dad.
There are people who wish they could travel to Jerusalem to see the history but my father is from there, gave some of it to me.
And it is upsidedown. It is upsidedown and the tile is on the ceiling and non-native flowers are breaking through, taking over, have taken over.
But if you walk out on the palm, slip between the lilac, and avoid the thorn of bougainvillea there are words that allow me to speak.
They are there on the tile, the perfectly mathematical tile in shades of blue, gold, and green, stars made out of squares, pristine—completely opposing those flowers.
The words on that tile twist and curl, flow with braided designs. They are not English. They cannot be English because they are beautiful. They are untouchable.
Someone once told me that, as a linguist, he studies how people have told him Arabic is ugly. Throaty sounds, guttural sounds.
But you cannot speak Arabic through the mouth; it comes from within, from the stomach, the throat, the heart. From the minds of those that string them together and form better poetry than I can, the kind of poetry my dad struggles to translate for me.
If I bring in the wrong words, the flowers will come with. And Palestine will fall off the edge of the world.

Rema Shbaita

POETRY 2019

International Poetry Competition

GRAND PRIZE \$1,000

KURT LUCHS

International Publication Prizes

JD Amick * Aozora Brockman * Sylvia Foley
Jennifer L. Hollis * Dana Jaye * R.J. Keeler
Kathleen Kirk * Pingmei Lan * Belle Ling
Jo-Ann Mort * Adele Ne Jame * John A. Nieves
Edward Nudelman * David Rock * Kelly Rowe
Joan Roberta Ryan * Nicole Santalucia * Heidi Seaborn
D.R. Shipp * Mary Spalding * Felicia Zamora
Kristin Camitta Zimet

International Merit Awards

Allison Adair * Julia Alter * Roy Bentley
Maria Isabelle Carlos * Sarah Carey * Roger Craik
Andrew Dimitri * Megan Gieske * Charity Gingerich
Andrew Hamilton * Max Heinegg * Kathleen Hughes
Candice Kelsey * A.D. Lauren-Abunassar
Susan Sachs Lipman * Emily Lisborg * Aurielle Lucier
Alexandra McIntosh * Julie Murphy * Cindy Ok * Tom Paine
Wanda Praisner * Laurie Robertson-Lorant
Laura Sobott Ross * Evan Smith * Mary Tanzy
Jennifer Thal * Kelly Vande Plasse
James K. Zimmerman * Maja Zmyslowski

Welcome to Poetry 2019

There's a certain satisfaction in a small poem well-wrought, one that serves as a revelation of a hidden truth or a new discovery. Jean Cocteau wrote of poetry's lasting power, how it "unveils, in the strict sense of the word."

To live with a dog is to share space with a creature who is almost always aware of their surroundings. A dog seems keenly aware of the state of things, including the moods of the humans in the room, and able to sense the swings in personality, the funks of depression and despair, the buoyancy of joy and celebration. And yet we, their human counterparts, are less aware, so wrapped up in our interior worlds of memory and future that we become unaware of so much in our midst. This is frequent confession of the dog owner: "I wish I was as present to X as my dog is present to me."

I sometimes think it is this presentness that most distinguishes us from our dogs, who as pack animals hold us at the center of their attention in a way that is rarely ever reciprocated. Somehow, we get used to the semi-domesticated wild thing's presence in our daily life. This other species lying in the chair in the next room fades into the background of most of our day, until something reminds us of its otherness and we are confronted with the truth of what we thought we understood.

It's this otherness, this strangeness of what we believe we understand that Cocteau writes of when he mentions poetry's ability to unveil and to lay bare "the surprising things which surround us and which our senses record mechanically." And that is what I most appreciated in Luchs' poem, "Suzie," a poem that describes with keen precision and little embellishment the speaker's childhood dog. Addressed to the titular subject, it first reads as a character study of a less-than-cuddly dog, which is funny because it flies in the face of the usual "sweet pooch" found in poems about pets. One's first thought is hyperbole, and then one realizes, "Oh, this is a mean dog." It does this with a darkly humorous tone that makes you appreciate—perhaps the more apt term is respect—the character in question, much as the "cave

canem" inscription warned visitors to the Roman household of the dangerous teeth of the house dog.

I appreciate how this poem, like many of my favorite poems, succeeds in a series of clever baits and switches. It makes the reader laugh, easing one into the deeper precincts of the poem before laying bare a difficult truth. It may be so readily understood to be clichéd, but humor in poetry has an uncanny ability to disarm, to allow the reader to move unguarded toward the transmission of deeper understanding. This may be understood but no less difficult to do effectively, and I believe "Suzie" accomplishes the task.

There were many solid poems in this year's final considerations, certainly many poems of merit and timely subject matter. Perhaps it's the times we are living in, but it seemed to me that the clarity and plain speech of this poem spoke most profoundly about lasting and central themes in a lot of poetry—about acknowledging and coming to terms with the difficult relationships we struggle with while we're at, away from, and years from, "home."

Most engaging, perhaps, is the character of this dog, an animal to whom we often ascribe the most genial and loyal of sentiments. The dog impresses by her viciousness and disloyalty, but still merits a grudging respect in the end, if for no other reason than consistency in a household fraught with warfare and abuse. Suzie is an unshakable, unavoidable truth, a witness-participant in a dangerous childhood, one who manages to teach lessons of vigilance and tenaciousness, the means by which many survive.

Dan Vera

Suzie

The only true democrat in our household,
you would bite anyone
who passed too close to the couch,
darting from behind or beneath it
like a streak of auburn vengeance,
snapping at trousers, dresses, ankles,
leaving marks, breaking skin,
or most satisfying of all, drawing blood
before retreating to plot the next assault.
We lived in fear. I think you lived
for the scent of that fear,
more stimulating than the smell of fresh meat,
though with any luck you'd get a taste of meat also.
If two children were fighting
you always picked the winning side,
adding your teeth marks
to the loser's humiliation.
Whenever our father beat us
you would take his side too,
which is how some of your bites
flowered red among purple bruises.
Your mother was a Schnauzer,
your father a Dachshund
(how on earth did he manage it?),
making you a canine blitzkrieg,
a stormtrooper in fur.
Later, gray and white crept up
your orange-brown hair,
your mad eyes filled with cataracts,
you slowed down enough that sometimes
we could escape your jaws.
After you died, we cremated most of you
but kept your pale yellow skull to bake
in the crook of a tree,
a warning to trespassers,
an inspiration to the vicious and cruel.

Kurt Luchs

Mexican Tongue

I never feel more Mexican
than when I eat tongue, that is
to say that I feel more Mexican
than a Chipotle burrito bowl cardboard rice and a lie,
but less than my grandmother's guisado de puerco en chile
rojo
call it pork stew, red pork, gnash my own tongue
trying to dance against my gleaming incisors, can't
make that sound, soft airy *do*, tongue sighing, resting
between enamel, no, it just flaps wild
so I gobble that tongue, my tongue, before puerco
reaches my lips, only tongue, thick, rubbery,
unsightly bumps and tough passing privilege fat band, wait
my grandfather had a tongue
it was small, purple in the dim of the living room
where my aunt kept his hospital bed, protruding
from his chapped lips when he coughed, when
he could still cough and the memory of sweat
in the papillae, young Bracero man, California skin dew glistens
on the lip fields, stretched brown for miles,
I think grandpa's tongue remembered the taste
even if his brain couldn't remember the language
and mine couldn't be bothered to ask
but if I eat enough tongue, proclaim I eat tongue
eat my own tongue... is there enough
Mexico I can consume to be,
is that my tongue dancing?
or does it wriggle between my teeth?

JD Amick

[Letter of Love] To Ojīchan

I imagine you on the day the war ended in a black kimono,
the voice of Emperor Hirohito on the radio as you kneel
to the sound of a god reduced to static, the kami
in whose name soldiers molded their bodies into knives
flung into the faces of the Allied enemy. A poisoned kiss:
one life sacrificed for the hope of a dozen kills.
A month more & your plane might have tumbled like a kite
& yet you are alive, the world now turning, a kaleidoscope,
the room upside down & sideways, the facts you knew
flipped to lies, words all ajumble, your knuckles
white knobs clenched by your side. You: a child kidnapped
into war, brainwashed to dream of death as a kind of kindness.
Once I overheard a teenaged boy call my brother Kamikaze
as a joke. You reached out to twist my mouth into a knot.

Aozora Brockman

Self-portrait with Rubble

There's no room for me in this body. It's thick with tick-infested
grasses and dry riverbeds and the glacial rubble of memory. An
anorthosite boulder lodges in my gut, pitched forth 12,000 years
ago during the Ice Age of my mother's breathing. Sometimes I
can dangle above myself, peering into the crevasse. The blue tooth
in my ear only pretends to let me talk to people, it has stolen my
tongue and fizzled my brain. I've begged the little gods to winch
me into the Next Age or the one after that. No answer. There's
no room for me on Saturday, when the subways go haywire and
a man in his underwear stalks the platform edge at Chambers
Street. He's carrying a red pencil behind one ear, so I know he's
not crazy. He knows to ask for change. *Anything you can spare*,
he says, offering a cupped palm as if it might hold water, or a
rubber ducky. But I've got no spare change, can't he see? I'm
caught by the baling wire I strap around myself to hold my ticks
and rocks together. The anorthosite weighs eight tons, I couldn't
move it if I tried. There's no changing room here, no room with
a view. Still, everyone deserves a flat place to lie down. I can't
desert the map of my skin. I'm thinking *Check the compass*. I'm
thinking *Listen to the man, for gods' sake*. I fish in my pocket for
a pencil sharpener because maybe sharp is all he needs. If you
can find your tongue, you've got a point of departure.

Sylvia Foley

A pledge to the dead requires no proof

The arrival of the angels was something of a joke.
The harp crates were quite a bit smaller than expected.
Gaze at him when he sings. Look at him.

The only windows in a prison are on the outside wall.
Outside, there is something like sky.
You can make homemade earplugs out of toilet paper.

He will come dancing down the aisle with a flute
and we have been told to gaze. We have been told
to dance. We have been told to step up to the microphone

and make a promise. There is a pin. There is a tuning fork.
There are some missing people around here.
Those hand-written letters will only get you so far.

If someone is dying you must go to the bedside.
When you get back, there will be glass in your bed.
When you get back, there will be a bucket of glass

over the door. Glass will cover every tire.
If someone is dying, you must answer.
You must say anything they want to hear.

(It's harder than you think. True things don't come after you
like lightening in a ploughed field.
It's not like you can just see something like that.)

Jennifer L. Hollis

Corpse

The moon is doing that thing
where you can see the dark
parts of her body. Phantom.
Shadow takes spotlight. The stars,
if you unfocus, have pulses. Jupiter
rips the dark mechanism of sky.
Cornea. Light. You can tell fire
from a rock by the heartbeat. Heat

flutters. That's how to find
the planets in the night. It's hard,
to tell a meteor from a moth
against the streetlamp periphery.
Silhouettes. Still, the Perseids
persist. The crescent never
has been so slight before,

has it? The stars turn off
and on. Christmas garland
coiling the abyss. Blackness,
blackness, and then this.

The moon continues to forget herself.
Now she's all almost gone:
ash body of the cigarette.
Remainder, reminder,
I shouldn't say corpse.

I smoke everything I have to burn
today. Delete you
from the cell phone, the memory
of my kitchen.
The carpet, the window, the cats.

Dana Jaye

Meditation on a Trash Fire in My Backyard

There was a type of black there that invited roughing. The fire was the first element, a type of mist coming out of baked earth. There, I could tear off my shoes, leap at once to the center of coral-white coals. Of pyre-building and self-immolation, nothing's obvious; they are fashionable graces.

Which I did over and over one winter there at Chincoteague Island. I leased an antique cabin—clapboard, no insulation—an old Vogelzang stove for cooking, heat. Occasionally I left the grated door ajar to illuminate any sudden, basal nature of flame.

*Ponies, conditioned for ages, sense heat and smoke.
They push their dark, curvaceous noses up against
a leeward thin-glass window; tip over a
tenant's sympathy, get an apple, a scrap, a mango.*

Would you have taken my hand in yours, joined me on that pyre, suffered unctuous pains, helped us across the gulf into a pureland? At that penultimate second, I would do it for you dear—I would always turn back to look for you, sweet.

*Left-over that late evening: your ring, my ring—
gems upon a burned earth—then, a month or two,
a pink crystal tree germinates, full-
grown. That art—to reach there, pick off a sliver
of glass, take it home, worship it.*

R.J. Keeler

Quantum Heart

We were closer to the moon back then.
I was my real self, my new eternal self.

My heart broke open like quartz,
pale pink and shining. A sliver of it

landed on the moon's surface, was driven
deep by a meteor, and now I am human

and elsewhere. It's hard to explain.
Science and intuition are my parallel lives.

I am entangled with feldspar and zircon.
I am here and now and already long gone,

like any bright dead star you see in the sky.
When the astronaut recovered the shard

of my heart, I didn't know about it till
years later. And he never knew about me.

Kathleen Kirk

Waiting For Mother's Geraniums

1.

Mother's geraniums carved
by a galaxy of frost
on window panes

my name a question mark
finger-painted among the stars

Another harsh winter
of Beijing.

2.

(I'd have preferred) the fragrance of fall
Father's hands curled tin sheets
into chimney
I sealed them with two-year old newsprints

flashing a young chairman's face
his rosy eulogy and a forest
of black-armband-salutes
yellowed in flour paste

3.

Pink on Father's cowshed
prison floor when his ulcers
burst
black ice scooping up curious
eyes shinning across the hall,
left, right, and center

I didn't know why
I didn't know where
I didn't know when
he was taken, gone

4.

an army of ants raged
through cracked winter earth,
wilted geranium leaves
turned and turned
in search for the missing

that map of veins
blooming down Mother's back
made me quiet

let a basin of shattered
mirrors do the talking
instead

5.

I buried her geraniums
behind the house on top
of the goldfish the Red Guards
killed for their imperial
names and coloring. Pale young faces

blooming part soldier, part fervor,
part revolutionary ghosts under
lonely red stars
pale sickled moon

6.

A month, and two. Then rain.
rivulets bellowed on roofs
courtyards and fortresses
dissipating sky's gray silts

my ears seashell hollow
then filled.
the sound of cherries creeping
awake from long winter's sleep
Father's steps on Cobblestone lanes

7.

Mother's geraniums starred
Over wrinkled soil, her indigo
eyes blooming two puddles
Of blues joining their mouths—Father's & hers

I washed the winter mud
caking his shoes
ready to split
ready to be born.

Pingmei Lan

One Intimate Morning

The first goldfish breeds lights.

The second watches the tuft of lights
as a thoughtful gift.

The third goldfish mindful of the water—
carries itself as a sanctuary.

I brush the first ray on the water,
and a quick morning scurries at my fingertips.
My fish a little more tenuous than snow.

Rising to their cheeks, the seaweed coils,
reticent in a tussock. Hours curling eons—
I can't stop admiring the tapering greens.

Reflections as slow seconds,
shallow sleep leaks in white glints,

millions of suns at the centre
of *now*, the present brushes off their gazes,
and the fish look at me as if I were their dream,
mouthing for intimacy—

a flicker of my small, new heart.

I scatter more pellets,
I can't give more than a little inaudible rain.

Belle Ling

Nighttime in Jericho

Sometimes an evening with friends
begins as simply that, when the geopolitics
disappear at least through cocktails.
On this winter night in Jericho—eight days
into the new year, a still and temperate dark night—
we gather outside near the backyard pool
with blankets and hookahs, wine goblets stained
in a deep red.

There are no checkpoints to enter Jericho,
just two tired Palestinian guards
seated on the side of the road;
the casino, with its gigantic promise
of cross-border commerce and hijinks
on one side, and a Palestinian
prison on the other. The quiet coffee shops
line up as we drive to the end of town
where the vacation villas are—
to eat and drink, amid ouds and tiny drums.

But by dessert, when the Arak flows
and the dinner that began near midnight becomes
a sleepy pre-dawn offering, the storytelling
and laughter mutate into a fury not found
elsewhere on this vast globe.

We look around the room.
pick out the fortunate ones:
a Spanish journalist, me—the American Jew from Brooklyn,
a Tel Avivi musician and then, the rest,
who return home to Beit Hannina,
the neighborhood without passports.

There is that time in the evening, always
when the toasts are finished and the light touch
on the knee, friend to friend, snaps apart

like the broken head of a doll;
when the wine stops flowing and the motors
start up. Everyone returns to their corners
in this endless fight, not simply for survival,
but for its gilded lining.

Jo-Ann Mort

Note

Beit Hanina is a neighborhood in East Jerusalem, where Palestinians live under Israeli control.

Stones without People and the Art of the Mulberry

*I was a piece broken off a rock . . . the only one
in exile with no relatives left.*

—Hanna Mina

Silk worms love the Black Mulberry,
devour its tender leaves and spin
their golden cocoons that hang from the branches
in the wind. It's a fast-growing tree,
they say, ten feet in one year—imagine: 43 million,
most in the mountains of Greater Lebanon—
Then there's Ovid who made
the tree famous when Pyramus and Thisbe,
star-crossed lovers, took their lives under one.
Says their blood turned the white fruit passion-red.
Ancient fighters enflamed their combat elephants
by letting them just smell the wild berries.

Now in the flame of these waning summer days,
I imagine those trees years ago in our
backyard grove, Mother working in the sun
picking the delicate fruit, eating some,
her hands stained purple-red, as she filled her basket
to make *sharab el toot*, for guests, she would say,
should any pass by unannounced.

The fruiting season is short, she would say,
allowing us to long for them the rest of the year—
which is to say she blessed the fermenting desire
that blazes up in us during a long absence.

Keep the red berries with the black
for their sharp flavor, she would say,
sliding them into a muslin bag and
pressing the juice into an earthenware pot.

Strain, add sugar and boil.
Don't stop stirring or you will have a mess,
then cool and store.

Add one tablespoon of syrup to a tumbler
of ice and water and serve to your guests
on hot summer days under shade trees.

Remember: listen to their stories. This is a gift.
Hold your mother-words, you think to yourself,
a voice, an apparition you will run after
when your days become a broken, stony field.

Now your artist daughter, here in the middle of
the Pacific Ocean, orders mulberry paper
from the old world—and sheets of silk to
transform her wedding dress into
a flame of memory. She burns Arabic names
and phrases from old passports and
the backs of photos to applique onto her gown,
mulberry black and blood red—
a museum piece, igniting the fire of retrieval
in our hearts. We know *bayt*
means both home and family in Arabic.

Abandoned homes are spoken of as stones
without people. Which is to say departure and
perpetual flight are like the hot windstorms
that sweep over us from the Egyptian desert,
the oppressive *khamsin*, a requiem of wind,
a wind that can break nails, they say,
a wind, like a blade wiped clean
leaving only a wall of dust behind.

Yet during our last slow days
when the work of grieving—that song
follows a waning moon, in the cool breeze of
our dark nights, we hold on as best we can
to those still glowing, here or not.

Adele Ne Jame

Consumption as Black Hole Photograph and Sweat Bees

How you can only see absence by what it eats, the hot wreckage pressed into a glow we can only almost be sure of, no matter how bright. How the first image

of universal loss looks just like a map of corneal damage—the crazed scrapings of tiny bees living

in your eye, eating your tears. You got them in a cemetery, their old home, like the singularity, a place where things sink and if they ever come out again, they never

come out the same. How crying can call the hungry to dinner. How any of us can be dinner. How the world

can be a midnight snack. How sometimes a shred of song gets stuck in your head. How you look up the lyrics, but there is no record. How you think it is lost and you sing

it more often to call it back into the world until years later you hear it and it has the wrong words, it fails your

memory just as you failed to understand it the first time. And you itch to call someone because you are sure

you got their chorus wrong. How you clear your throat to try again.

John A. Nieves

Thin Places

The ferry rumbles its prosaic way across the windswept bay, arriving as the early mist begins to dissipate, and the sun finds every tuft of heather about to bloom.

The island's lack of trees belies its wealth of moss and lichen adorning stone; and the palest green on hills alloys to gray, a masterwork of subtlety.

The landscape wails harsh and spare. Jagged, protruding rock, sculpted once by hand, but now only by wind, conveys sound from crack and crevice.

Stones, on end, decorate the landscape, from sea and edifice, beaten beautiful. The island's lone Abbey looms solitary, its wattle and timber still buttressed with rock, infused with the film of ages.

No stone's as dormant as it seems—humming like harps whispering holy odes, thinning the margins of heaven and earth—where breathing becomes prayer, and prayer, an unharnessed chariot.

Edward Nudelman

Thought Experiment

I never met Schrodinger's cat,
but I'm sure I would have liked him,
for his ability to thwart Dr. X,
his magic bag turning from escalator
to canoe, and finally to bouncing ball—
not to mention his talent for being
simultaneously alive and dead—
a free cat left to dawdle in a field
rife with mice, with no dogs in sight.
It embarrasses me to say, I once
confused Schrodinger's Cat
with Felix the Cat, whose names
both suggest obtuse importance.
To most, quantum mechanics
doesn't provide much more insight
than a surrealistic cartoon show,
though we admire pure mechanics
and game theory, the X's and O's
of power football, the impalpable
delineation of things indeterminate.
But my team either wins or loses,
light is either a wave or a particle,
Schrodinger's cat either dies,
or he never was in harm's way.
Bottom line, the apparent incongruity
of natural phenomena, in the face of eons,
compels us to at least consider the Cat.
Some bugs can remain dormant,
almost dead, for years, only to awaken
and suddenly multiply and flourish.
Even a blade of grass, heliotroping
toward the sun, astonishes—its last
dew-flecked particle subliming to air,
its supple stalk seemingly unbreakable.
There's no tackling the mystery of it,
no ascent to mountain or star,

without a humble cry of gratitude.
Like Schrodinger's cat, in his box
lined with felt, at once vaporized
and materialized—we, too, must find
our place of balance and accord
on this wild macroscopic blue planet.

Edward Nudelman

Apples, Crabapples

Apples, crabapples, those waxy-blue juniper berries (if that's what they are)—the way we threw them at passing cars, because we were kids.

What roster of dogs, of prodigal momma's dogmas, those color-coded chore charts, and it wasn't me. But I'm sure I did something fusible, infallibly infantile: shticks and stones and ribs with quite a bit of meat still on them, so eat what you've got and then ask for more, so I did, I swear, I did my best, at times.

Carousel horses charging to glory and back again. Frivolous revolutions of one. Born too late for 'Nam, too early for what's on TV these days (to which all fears aspire). And look at me, all red-faced and wise: I'm a lion; I'm up to the rolled-over whites of my eyes in the fourth-grade photo.

Fast forward to fifteen when my *atman* tried to rise, but I wasn't quite dead. And who among us knew what that was before anyone had ever even heard of The Cloud? Yet still the mist rises in my mind off the marshes near Lake Lowell, till payday and beyond at the sucker factory,

unloading bags of sugar all by myself because I was the new guy; I didn't know my rights—what my right hand was doing—my frozen hands, from decoys strung along and from there to cracked blackwood and "Barren Rocks" and "My Lodging's on the Cold, Cold Ground." See: He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.

Maybe there really were fairies in the garden, with pollen or slug salt on their wings. And me, with my pill bug perseverance, these fading eyes to re-blink where I've been, on the brink, my hip-shot hope. The road to Rexburg, El Dorado, Cuiabá on outskirts of a dead *jabiru*, so almost majestic . . .

I love the pies, the magpies—the way they proliferate like unbearable babies (my brother's boon) like pallbearers summoned on short notice: teamsters to carry Brian's crimes and a few of my own on a flat-bed trailer to Ladies Night,

down I-84 towards Bliss and beyond to Boise—nowhere near Howe, but somehow it just so happens I grew up there. Like those accident crosses, those feisty flowers sprouting up for no good reason along I-15 from Hamer en route to Missoula for a better banjo.

David Rock

Sometimes, Briefly

You called from jail
and with your new sense
of humor told me you were writing
an article about the food.
Months later, I received three letters
from your cell-mate,
one before, two after your death.
In each, he said you were a special dude
the way you listened,
it made him feel
human. It scared me
that he knew where I lived,
but he was never getting out;
I kept the letters,
sure they meant something,
that you had held on
to the gold watch, all that was left
of the fortune you had run through,

that is, that you kept the gift
of drawing out the dreams
of even the worst men:
murderers, rapists, this one,
who didn't mean
to kill the old woman
when he broke in to her house,
then something she said or did
reminded him of someone else,
who had dragged him out
from under the table
where he was hiding,
held him down and beat him
with a two-by-four until
the ceiling of his head opened,
and his soft bones were pinned
under the timbers
of what could have been a life.

The guard passing
on the midnight check
heard only a whimper,
but I think you, lying awake
on the hard cot, took it all in,
the beating on the bars,
the howls, the rage.
Anyway, when you left, you gave
him half your cigarettes,
and the gold watch; I guess
you finally found someone worse,
and worse off than yourself.

Plus, it wasn't worth much,
having stopped ticking
thirty years ago. Still,
if you held it to your ear,
and gave it a good
sharp shake,
sometimes, briefly, it would go.

Kelly Rowe

Spring Freeze

after "Late in October" by Linda Pastan

Three weeks into
April, I wake to see
spring's first buddings
on the brink
of unfolding,
sheathed in clear ice—
transformed in an hour
to glistening beads
of Murano glass,
those miniscule flame-
forged worlds.

Perhaps our fire-
born earth is heading
back to an ice age.
Perhaps this warming
is brief. Looking
out on my crystal-
cased lilacs and plum
blossoms, I wonder
if man's reign
on our planet might
end in such splendor
as this garden unflowered
by untimely frost.

Joan Roberta Ryan

Unscrolling

i

I am the solitary
traveler in a Southern
Sung handscroll
unrolling before me
this sepia-
toned morning,
as I wind my way
down through rising
mist—between
rockwall shadow
and vertiginous
rift, past the lone
pine over-
hanging the gorge
and the herd of big-
horned sheep
leaping impossibly
up the opposite
cliff—to the banks
of the amber-
green Rio Pueblo.
Or is it the River Xiao?

ii

This autumn handscroll
is not a painting
to hang on a wall
for guests to admire,
but an intimate
journey to keep
tightly rolled,
and swathed in the silk
of dreams, revisit
from time to time,
and, perhaps,

after unscrolling
its final scene,
add a few lines
in the space
the artist has left you.

Joan Roberta Ryan

Dead Woman's Hollow Road

—*Cumberland County, PA*

You watch the news to find out that lesbians don't wash away
after drinking dirt, that the dirt didn't absorb all the rain last week,
that there's everything to name and no voice to repair the rainbow,
that the history of queer was murdered in the Michaux State Forest.
I heard about the woman who ran from the echo of hate—one shot at a time.
I mean, I went to the grocery store, bought mushrooms covered in dirt,
rinsed their white heads, poured olive oil on them, the news in the background.
There's a storm coming, a flood warning, maybe a murderer on the loose. I cooked
and swallowed dirt. Eleven miles away a tree named Rebecca sank into the land.

I am on the other side of the rainbow in the dirt
that doesn't make the news: lesbians sprout like wild onions,
their root systems tangle with murder. In Pennsylvania, crushed bones
cut into the land and daughters collapse before they are auctioned off
every Sunday morning. This ritual is for sale in the church parking lot
where blessings smell like gunfire and fingers break the sound barrier
as they dig for life.

The dirt under the dead woman's fingernails: sacred.
The yeast in her throat: scooped out, melted down,
and served as communion.

Nicole Santalucia

What White Lies Beneath

Like a compliment,
a white lie, we brush the scant snow aside.
Even the dog scents the truth, nose
dusted, sniffing the air.
No blizzard. Yet.

We light a fire for it, smoke signal to the weather gods.
It misses dinner, arrives late, the fire a whimper.

Morning wakes blue, wearing nothing
but a cloak. We readdress
what we know. Hello camellia. Hello car.
Only the muffled response of the past.

The forgotten chores forgotten.
A mid-winter palette cleanse.
Snow accumulating over accumulated guilt.
We are children again, sledding.

When the sun surprises,
we will gather the wool of ourselves,
wonder what to make of it.

Heidi Seaborn

Prelude to a Resurrection

after "Prelude to a Revolution," by Traci Brimhall

We look into church windows and pass prayers,
blood wafers and bank notes. Anything

we think could raise a god. The widows hand out butterscotch,
judgment. Children sing about the whole world

perched in a plastic globe. The good among us
hum a jingle from a commercial

about white teeth. The priest speaks. Some days
it sounds like an augury of birds. Or static.

Some days we put our hands in our laps and our laps
in warm butter. We sit closer than knives. This is a ritual

for those who know the weight of remembering.
To lighten the days, we divide stars into stories

about a man who stole an aubergine, and about pigeons
who carried cameras. We wonder whether we know,

whether we should leave the night ajar, whether forgiveness
is a word that sounds like what light brings.

D.R. Shipp

She Zuo Bin's Rite of Spring

Above the Yangtze
above the Five Dragons
clad only in sunlight
I summon the bees
our species to commune
before theirs disappears
before the river
or man Who knows
how to remain
calm facing
a dark cloud
low one-note drone

Let them swarm
let the black tide rise
search every cave
navel lips nostrils ears
Eyes bat them away
like the past
or future pain

Don't move Breathe
Don't think of them
Nerves wear only sunlight
as I grow a second skin
and the bees human form
shimmering
sculpture

I shake them off
walk
down
wind

Mary Spalding

Where We Call to Nest

In the brittle scrape of branch upon the pane,
in lift for crack of breeze, a sparrow flies
straight into my chest & mistakes my ribs
for eyes. Her nesting instinct draws her
to the wake of empty, potential for a new
occupant, new residency. She begins to stake
her claim. In peck, my lungs, my liver, my arteries,
my tissues winnow through a pointy warbler's
beak to cast my impure gait, my impure blood,
my impure tongue, my impure cerebrum
to hungry wind. After shuck & caw, light
slats between each vertebra, bone illuminate
to meteorite particles of dust, as some day
returns to dust. After shuck & caw, the sparrow
makes room for twigs & fibers & slivers of metal
& scraps of nylon, a hair pin, bits of plastic:
a collection to furnish, to decorate after the strip
& bare; rawness of me. She makes her plans
with thoughts of hatching: tiny beaks in me. She makes
her plans in renovation, in upheaval, in a faith
of her return to what she has sown. When she shutters
& expands wings for flight, she leaves a frail, thump,
thump, thump—heart in suspension—tether of sinew,
tether of shadow, a cavity left unattended, in expose
how papery this organ; how the sun dries cells, salts
down muscles to sand & sea song; how I become
a vessel constructed from other vessels; how my
interments miss the mark, circulate, & deceive
me in thinking, return remains possible, absent of belief.

Felicia Zamora

Turbulence: Night Flight to Cairo

Dice in a meaty palm, our edges
chafe. Side by side we rock,
squeezed in the narrow row.
Clamped in our seats, we let
elbows and knees creep up to
checkpoints. Our bulks slide
against communal barricades.

Aleph / alif, our arms and legs
shape silent alphabets. We are
Shiite and Jew, sharing one ritual
salaam and dovening. Dreams seep
out between us, surely as bacteria
stream from a sealed cartouche.
We breathe each other in.

Eleven hours before we shudder
to a stop. Unforgiving light will bear
down on us, our separate lots shake
from the jar. We'll claim our effects.
But for now, *habiba*, *chavera sheli*,
your burka laps across my jeans.
Almost I have you in my arms.

Kristin Camitta Zimet

Notes:

habiba (Arabic)—beloved one (feminine)

chavera sheli (Hebrew)—dear friend (feminine)

Contributors

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Tobi Alfier is a multiple Pushcart nominee and multiple Best of the Net nominee. Both *Slices of Alice & Other Character Studies* and a reprint of *Sanity Among the Wildflowers* were published by Cholla Needles Press. She is co-editor of San Pedro River Review (www.bluehorsepress.com).

JD Amick is a born and raised Chicagoan and graduate of Northwestern University where he studied Creative Writing and Biology. He competed in the Louder Than a Bomb Slam Poetry Competition in Chicago, where his team won in 2012. He is currently earning his MFA in Poetry at Butler University.

KB Ballentine's sixth collection, *The Light Tears Loose*, was published in 2019 by Blue Light Press. Published in *Crab Orchard Review* and *Haight-Ashbury Literary Journal*, among others, her work also appears in anthologies including *In Plein Air* (2017) and *Carrying the Branch: Poets in Search of Peace* (2017). Learn more about KB Ballentine at www.kballentine.com.

Daisy Bassen is practicing psychiatrist and poet. She has been published in *Oberon*, *The Sow's Ear*, *AMWA Literary Review*, *The Opiate*, *SUSAN*, *The Journal*, *Arcturus*, and *Adelaide Literary Review*. A semi-finalist in the 2016 Vassar Miller Prize in Poetry, she lives in Rhode Island with her husband and children.

Aozora Brockman was raised on an organic vegetable farm in Central Illinois, and is the author of the chapbooks *The Happiness of Dirt* and *Memory of a Girl*. Her creative work has appeared in *PANK*, the *Cortland Review*, and *Catapult*. She is an MFA candidate at the University of Michigan.

Mark Burke's work has appeared or is forthcoming in the *North American Review*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Sugar House Review*, *Nimrod International Journal*, and others. His work has recently been nominated for a Pushcart prize. See: markanthonyburkesongsandpoems.com.

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Cathy Carlisi's poetry has appeared in *The Atlanta Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Mid-American Review*, *Southern Review*, *The Greensboro Review*, and many others. Although poetry is her passion, her profession is creative consulting. She works for BrightHouse, a firm focused on helping large corporations focus on their Purpose and the positive impact they can have in the world.

Douglas Cole has published four poetry collections and a novella. His work has appeared in *The Chicago Quarterly Review*, *The Galway Review*, *Chiron*, *The Pinyon Review*, and others. He has been nominated twice for a Pushcart and Best of the Net, and has received the Leslie Hunt Memorial Prize in Poetry. His website is douglastcole.com.

Robert Cooperman's latest collection is *Their Wars* (Kelsay Books). His chapbook *Saved By the Dead* has just out from Liquid Light Press. Forthcoming from Lithic Press is *The Devil Who Raised Me*.

Pat Daneman's recent work appears in *I-70 Review* and *American Journal of Poetry*. Her poetry is anthologized in *Best of the Net* and *New Poetry from the Midwest*. *After All*, her second collection, was first runner-up for the Thorpe Menn award and finalist for the Hefner-Heitz Book Award. Website: patdaneman.com.

Christine Darragh is a hand-bookbinder and aspiring architect working and writing from her home studio in Ann Arbor, MI. Her poetry has previously appeared in *Structo*, *Twyckenham Notes*, *Typishly*, *Cloud Women's Quarterly*, and is forthcoming in *Cagibi*.

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Louis Faber is a poet residing in Port St. Lucie, FL. His work has previously appeared in, among others: *Exquisite Corpse*, *Rattle*, *Eureka Literary Magazine*, *Borderlands: the Texas Poetry Review*, *Midnight Mind*, *Pearl*, *Midstream*, *European Judaism*, *The South Carolina Review*, and *Worcester Review*, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Sylvia Foley is the author of *Life in the Air Ocean* (Knopf, 1999), a collection of linked stories. Her poetry has appeared in various journals, including *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *The Cincinnati Review*, and *The Literary Review*. She has been a fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and Yaddo.

David Galloway is a writer and college professor of Russian. Born and raised in Maryland, he has lived in upstate New York for the past twenty-five years. His poetry and essays have most recently appeared in *The Finger*, *Manorborn*, and *The Remembered Arts Journal*.

Abigail Goodhart is currently pursuing her MFA at Western Michigan University. She has published poems in previous or forthcoming issues of *Passages North*, *Dunes Review*, and *Sugar House Review*. She draws inspiration from the culture of the Midwest, the absurdism of the web, and the frenzy of playing roller derby.

Caroline Goodwin's books are *Trapline* (2013), *Peregrine* (2015) and *The Paper Tree* (2017). A former Wallace Stegner Fellow in poetry at Stanford, she teaches at California College of the Arts and Stanford Continuing Studies. From 2013-2015 she served as the first Poet Laureate of San Mateo County, CA.

Carrie Heimer's work has appeared in *Rock & Sling*, *Relief*, *The Comstock Review*, *Dappled Things*, and *The Windhover*. Her advent collection, *The Other Stars Hover & Wait*, is available through her website: poetryissalt.com.

AE Hines is a poet, and a recent Pushcart nominee, and a practicing financial advisor who lives in Portland, Oregon. His work has appeared in *Atlanta Review*, *California Quarterly*, *SLAB*, *Pinyon*, *I-70 Review*, *Crosswinds*, and other publications.

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Patricia Hooper's fourth book of poetry, *Separate Flights*, was awarded the 2017 Anita Claire Sharf Award from the University of Tampa Press. A new collection, *Wild Persistence*, will be published in 2019. Her poems have appeared in *The Southern Review*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Poetry*, *The Kenyon Review*, and other magazines.

Rebecca Irene holds an MFA from VCFA. Her work is published in *Carve*, *Juked*, *Type-house*, and elsewhere. She received residencies from SAFTA, Hewnoaks, and Monson Arts. Poetry Editor for *The Maine Review*, she lives in Portland, Maine, where she supports her word-addiction by waitressing. She can be found online at rebeccairene.com.

Dan Jacoby is a graduate of St. Louis University, Chicago State University, and Governors State University. He has published poetry in *Anchor and Plume* (Kindred), *Arkansas Review*, *Belle Reve Literary Journal*, and *Bombay Gin*, to name a few. He is a former educator, steel worker, and army spook.

Dana Jaye (Cadman) is a poet and visual artist. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *New England Review*, *North American Review*, and *The Literary Review*. She is currently acting Editor in Chief for *Shrew Magazine*, and as illustrator on the libretto for upcoming opera *Sensorium Ex*.

PMF Johnson has placed poems with *The Evansville Review*, *Measure*, *Nimrod International Journal*, *The Threepenny Review*, and many others. He has won a Plainsongs Award and had his poems selected for several "Best of..." anthologies. He lives in Minnesota with his wife, the writer Sandra Rector. His web site is at PMFJohnson.com

R.J. Keeler was born St. Paul, Minnesota and lived in jungles of Colombia, S.A., up to age twelve. He was an Honorman, U.S. Naval Submarine School, "SS" (Submarine Service) qualified, and earned a Vietnam Service Medal. His poetry collection *Detonation* was published in January, 2019.

Robert Lee Kendrick lives in Clemson, SC. He has previously published in *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, and *Louisiana Literature*. His first full collection, *What Once Burst With Brilliance*, was released in 2018 by Iris Press. His chapbook, *Winter Skin*, was released in 2016 by Main Street Rag.

Richard Kenefic's poems have appeared in *New Orleans Review*, *Seattle Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, and other magazines.

Kathleen Kirk is the author of several poetry chapbooks, including *The Towns* (Unicorn Press, 2018) and *Spiritual Midwifery* (Red Bird, 2019). She is the poetry editor for the online magazine *Escape Into Life*. She is married to the Cuban artist Tony Rio, and they have two children.

Kurt Luchs has poems published in *Into the Void*, *Right Hand Pointing*, and *The Sun Magazine*. He has written humor for the *New Yorker*, the *Onion*, and *McSweeney's*.

His chapbook, *One of These Things Is Not Like the Other*, was just issued. More of his work can be found at kurtluuchs.com.

Louise Labé (c. 1524-1566) born in Lyon, was the pre-eminent woman writer of the French Renaissance, best known now for her passionate sonnets, but in her own time not only for prose and skill at the “manly” arts of archer and horse-riding. She hosted a literary salon and has been linked with the poets of La Pléiade. **J. Kates** is a poet and literary translator who lives in Fitzwilliam, NH.

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Belle Ling received her PhD in Creative Writing at The University of Queensland, Australia. Her first poetry collection, *A Seed and a Plant*, was shortlisted for The HKU International Poetry Prize 2010. Her poems have appeared in *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, *Barnwood International Poetry Magazine*, *Overland*, *Meanjin*, and more.

John Mancini's poetry and fiction have recently appeared or are forthcoming in *New England Review*, *SmokeLong Quarterly*, *New World Writing*, *New Flash Fiction Review*, *Main Street Rag*, and elsewhere. He earned an MFA from San Francisco State University. He makes music as John Mancini Band and blogs about writing at JohnManciniWrites.com.

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Born and raised in San Francisco, CA, **Thea Matthews** earned her BA in Sociology from U.C. Berkeley where she studied and taught June Jordan's Poetry for the People. She is a published poet, scholar, activist who writes on the complexities of humanity, grief, and resiliency. More info at www.theamatthews.com.

Chicago native **Barbara J. Mayer** has been writing poetry since moving to North Carolina in 1982. Her work has appeared in *Plainsongs*, *Main Street Rag*, and *Atlanta Review*. Her poetry collection, *Peacock*, was published by Mount Olive College Press. She lives in Mooresville with her husband Don and dog Gracie.

Reagan McNamee-King is a communications professional by day, MBA student by night, and freelance musician at will. She holds degrees in comparative literature and viola performance from the University of Rochester and Eastman School of Music, respectively. Originally from New Hampshire, Reagan is currently based in Rochester, New York.

A Seattle native, **Gary Mesick** spent some time as an infantry officer, and he now

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Ann E. Michael is the author of four chapbooks of poetry and the full-length collection, *Water-Rites*. She blogs on poetry, books, nature & philosophy at www.annemichael.wordpress.com.

Jory Mickelson's work has appeared in *Sixth Finch*, *Jubilat*, *Mid-American Review*, *Diode Poetry Journal*, *The Rumpus*, *Ninth Letter*, *Vinyl Poetry*, and other journals. He received an Academy of American Poets Prize and a Lambda Literary Fellowship. His first book, *WILDERNESS// KINGDOM*, is forthcoming from Floating Bridge Press.

James Miller is a native of Houston, though he has spent time in the American Midwest, Europe, China, South America and India. Recent poems have appeared in *Cold Mountain Review*, *The Tishman Review*, *The Maine Review*, *2River*, *After the Pause*, *Main Street Rag*, *Lunch Ticket*, *Across the Margin*, and *Gravel*.

Devon Miller-Duggan has published poems in *Rattle*, *Margie*, *Christianity and Literature*, *Gargoyle*, *Massachusetts Review*, and *Spillway*. She teaches Poetry Writing at the University of Delaware. Her books include *Pinning the Bird to the Wall* (Tres Chicas Books, 2008), *Alphabet Year* (Wipf & Stock, 2017), and *The Slow Salute* (Lithic Press Chaboook Competition, 2018).

Born in Russia, **A. Molotkov** moved to the US in 1990 and switched to writing in English in 1993. His poetry collections include *The Catalog of Broken Things* (2016), *Application of Shadows* (Main Street Rag, September 2018) and *Synonyms for Silence* (Acre Books/Cincinnati Review, 2019). He co-edits *The Inflectionist Review*. Please visit him at AMolotkov.com.

Returning to poetry after 22 years, **Jo-Ann Mort** has recently published work in *Plume*, *Plume Anthology #6*, *Stand* (UK), and *ArLiJo Review*. A journalist and analyst, she is on *Dissent* magazine's editorial board, and writes about Israel, Poland, progressive politics, culture. She lives in Brooklyn and graduated from Sarah Lawrence College.

Elisabeth Murawski is the author of *Zorba's Daughter*, which won the May Swenson Poetry Award, *Moon and Mercury*, and two chapbooks. *Heiress* will be published by Texas Review Press in the fall. A native of Chicago, she currently lives in Alexandria, Virginia.

Shannon Nakai's work appears in *The Cincinnati Review*, *Cream City Review*, *Gulf Stream*, *Midwest Review*, *Image Journal*, *Porkbelly Press*, and *35 Tips for Writing Powerful Prose Poems* (CreateSpace 2017), among others. A Wichita State University MFA and Fulbright Scholar, she is also the Senior Reviews Editor at *Tupelo Quarterly*.

Adele Ne Jame, Lebanese American, serves as professor emeritus at Hawai'i Pacific University. Her collections include *Field Work*, *Poetry, Land and Spirit*, and *The South Wind*. Her honors include a Pablo Neruda prize, an NEA fellowship, a 2015 Eliot Cades Award for Literature, and a Robinson Jeffers Tor House Poetry Prize.

John A. Nieves' poems appear in journals such as *Crazyhorse*, *Southern Review*, *32 Poems*, and *Copper Nickel*. He won the Indiana Review Poetry Prize. His first book, *Curio*, came out in 2014. He is an Associate Professor of English at Salisbury University in Maryland and an editor of *The Shore Poetry*.

Edward Nudelman's poetry collections include *Out of Time, Running* (2014); *What Looks Like an Elephant* (2011); and *Night Fires* (2009). His latest collection is forthcoming from Salmon Poetry. A native Seattleite, Nudelman is a recently retired cancer research scientist, and owns and operates a rare bookshop in Seattle, since 1980.

Donna O'Connell-Gilmore, poet and psychotherapist, moved to Cape Cod in 2000 to focus more seriously on poetry. She published the chapbook, *Africa Is the Mother Who Lies in the Grass* in 2015 (Sandheap Press). Donna's poetry has appeared in *Willow Springs, BlueLine, The Hopper, Off the Coast, and Glassworks*.

Donna Pucciani, a Chicago-based writer, has published poetry worldwide in such diverse journals as *Poetry Salzburg, Istanbul Literary Review, Shi Chao Poetry, Journal of Italian Translation, and Acumen*. Her work has been translated into Italian, Chinese, Japanese and German. Her seventh and most recent collection of poems is *Edges* (Purple Flag Press).

Michele Parker Randall is the author of *Museum of Everyday Life* (Kelsay Books). Her poetry has been a finalist for the Peter Meinke Poetry Prize, the Beulah Rose Poetry Prize, and the Joy Bale Boone Poetry Prize. She teaches at Stetson University.

Claudia M. Reder's book *How to Disappear* (Blue Light Press, 2019) won a Pinnacle Award. She is the author of *Uncertain Earth* (Finishing Line Press) and *My Father & Miro* (Bright Hill Press). She teaches at California State University at Channel Islands. Poems recently published in *Healing Muse* and *Spillway*.

Paul Reynolds is a poet from New Hampshire who enjoys skiing, birdwatching, and other outdoor activities.

David Rock has work appearing in *The Carolina Quarterly, The Laurel Review, The Bitter Oleander, The Chattahoochee Review, Image, Painted Bride Quarterly, Poetry East*, and other journals. An Idaho native, he teaches Spanish and international studies at Brigham Young University-Idaho in Rexburg.

Kelly Rowe received her MFA in English from the University of Iowa, and has published poems in *Iowa Review, Virginia Quarterly Review, Poetry Northwest, Seneca Review, Southern Poetry Review*, and others. Her chapbook, *Flying South on the Back of a Dove*, was published by the Texas Review Press in January, 2019.

Anele Rubin's poetry has appeared in *Cutthroat, New Ohio Review, Chariton Review, Rattle, December, Mudfish, Chattahoochee Review, The Madison Review* (web), and elsewhere. Her poetry collection, *Trying to Speak*, was published by Kent State University Press. She currently lives in upstate New York.

Joan Roberta Ryan lives in Taos, NM, where she indulges her passions for writing poetry, skiing, and Mediterranean cooking. Her poetry collection *Dark Ladies & Other Avatars* was published in 2017. Recent works have appeared in many journals including *Nimrod, Spillways, Sow's Ear, Naugatuck River Review, Ekphrasis, Calyx, and Crab Orchard Review*.

Kelly R. Samuels is a Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee. She is the author of two chapbooks: *Words Some of Us Rarely Use* (Unsolicited Press) and *Zeena/Zenobia Speaks* (Finishing Line Press). Her poems have recently appeared in *RHINO, Cold Mountain Review, DMQ Review, the Pinch, and Quiddity*.

Nicole Santalucia is the author of *Spoiled Meat* (Headmistress Press) and *Because I Did Not Die* (Bordighera Press). Santalucia teaches at Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania and brings poetry workshops in the Cumberland County Prison.

Cliff Saunders has an MFA from The University of Arizona. His poems have appeared recently in *The Wayne Literary Review, Pedestal Magazine, Wilderness House Literary Review, Pinyon, San Pedro River Review, North of Oxford, and Cardinal Sins*. He lives in Myrtle Beach, where he serves as co-coordinator of The Litchfield Tea & Poetry Series.

Heidi Seaborn is the author of a book of poetry *Give a Girl Chaos {see what she can do}* (C&R Press/Mastodon Books, March 2019), the Editorial Director for *The Adroit Journal*, and a New York University MFA candidate. She graduated from Stanford University and is on the board of Tupelo Press. heidiseabornpoet.com

Rema Shbaita is a graduate of UC Riverside and a former Co-Editor in Chief of *The Mosaic Art & Literary Journal* est. 1959. They don't consider dandelions weeds and they are allergic to grass. They enjoy media about found families and slap-dash friendship groups. They're working on getting into a PhD program for educational research.

Felicity Sheehy's poems are featured in *The Yale Review, The New Republic, The Kenyon Review, The Adroit Journal, Southern Humanities Review, Southern Indiana Review, Shenandoah, Narrative, and The Greensboro Review*. Originally from New York's Hudson Valley, she is a PhD student in English Literature at Cambridge University.

D.R. Shipp, originally from Texas, is an observer finding his way. His work can be found in *JuxtaProse, Chaleur, Cleaver Magazine, HCE Review, Silver Needle Press, Waxing & Waning*. He splits his time between now and then, traveling. He has a curious online following, instagram [@shippwreckage](https://www.instagram.com/shippwreckage).

Andrew Slugantz is a teacher & writer from Louisville, Kentucky. He received his MFA in Creative Writing from Spalding University in 2018. His work has also appeared in *Panoply Literary Magazine* and *The Louisville Review*.

William Snyder, Jr. has published poems in *The Southern Review, Poet Lore, and Southern Humanities Review*, among others. He was the winner of the 2002 Kinloch Rivers Chapbook competition; The CONSEQUENCE Prize in Poetry, 2013; and the 2015 Claire Keyes Poetry Prize. He teaches writing and literature at Concordia College.

Mary Spalding is a Virginian currently living in Rockland County, New York, where she practices psychotherapy. Her poems have been published in *Potomac Review, New Orleans Review, Cumberland Review, and Podium*. Others are forthcoming in *Greensboro Review* and *Plume*. She was awarded the 2015 Rachel Wetzsteon Poetry Prize by the Unterberg Poetry Center.

Gary Stein's full-length collection, *Touring The Shadow Factory* (Brick Road Poetry Press, 2019) won first prize in their 2017 national contest. He is the author of the chapbook, *Between Worlds* and has published in *Poetry, Prairie Schooner, Poet Lore, Folio, JAMA, Gargoyles, Little Patuxent Review*, and others.

Phillip Sterling's most recent collection of poetry is *And Then Snow* (Main Street Rag 2017).

Jack Stewart was educated at the University of Alabama and Emory University. His work has appeared in *Poetry, Image, The American Literary Review, The Dark Horse*

Review, *The Southern Humanities Review*, and other journals and anthologies. He lives in Coconut Creek, Florida, and teaches at Pine Crest School.

Shana Toor was born in Toronto and grew up between Canada and Michigan. She is passionate about young adult fiction and professional wrestling. Shana's poetry has been published in the *Atlanta Review*, *Wisconsin Review*, *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*, and *East Lansing Art Festival Poetry Press*.

Pauline Uchmanowicz is the author of the poetry collection *Starfish* (2016), and her work has appeared widely. She directs the Creative Writing Program at SUNY New Paltz. www.paulineuchmanowicz.com.

Austin Veldman is the founding editor of *Twyckenham Notes*, a 2020 Pushcart recipient and a Firecracker Finalist. He holds a MA in English from Indiana University South Bend where he is an Adjunct Professor of English teaching poetry. He lives in Granger, Indiana.

J.L. Wall is a writer and educator whose work has appeared or is forthcoming in *America*, *Kenyon Review Online*, *Jewish Fiction .Net*, *Frontier Poetry*, and the websites of the National Yiddish Book Center and *Baseball Prospectus*. He is at work on a book of criticism, *Situating Poetry: Performance and Covenant in American Literature*.

Marty Walsh lives in Winterport, Maine. His poems has appeared in numerous poetry journals and reviews. Among them, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *California Quarterly*, *Poem*, *Hiram Poetry Review*, and many others. He is the author of *Furniture Out in the Woods* and is currently working on a second poetry collection.

Lindsay Wilson is the Poet Laureate of Reno, Nevada, and edits the literary journal, *The Meadow*, and has published five chapbooks. His first collection, *No Elegies*, won the Quercus Review Press Spring Book Award. His poetry has appeared in *The Bellevue Literary Review*, *Pank*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, *Verse Daily*, and *The Missouri Review Online*.

Jennifer Wolkin is currently pursuing an MFA in creative writing and literary translation at Queens College. She has work published/forthcoming in *Third Point Press*, *Streetlight Press*, *Sooth Swarm Journal*, *A Beautiful Space*, *British Journal of Medical Practitioners*, *Black Fox Literary Magazine*, *Ink & Voices*, and *Rhythm&Bones Lit*, among others.

Felicia Zamora is the author of *Body of Render*, winner of the 2018 Benjamin Saltman Award from Red Hen Press (2020), *Quotient* (Tinderbox Editions 2021), *Instrument of Gaps* (Slope Editions 2018), and *Of Form & Gather* (University of Notre Dame Press 2017). She lives in Arizona.

Kristin Camitta Zimet is the author of *Take in My Arms the Dark*, a full length collection of poems, and has work in countless journals including *Natural Bridge*, *Salamander*, and *Poet Lore*. She is the editor of *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*.

Anna Zumbahlen is the editor-in-chief of *Carve* and a member of the poetry cohort in the PhD program at the University of Denver.



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