



# **The Big Windows Review**

**Issue 15 Spring 2019**

*The Big Windows Review* is a publication of the Writing Center at Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor, MI, USA. We publish poems and short (500 words or less) prose.

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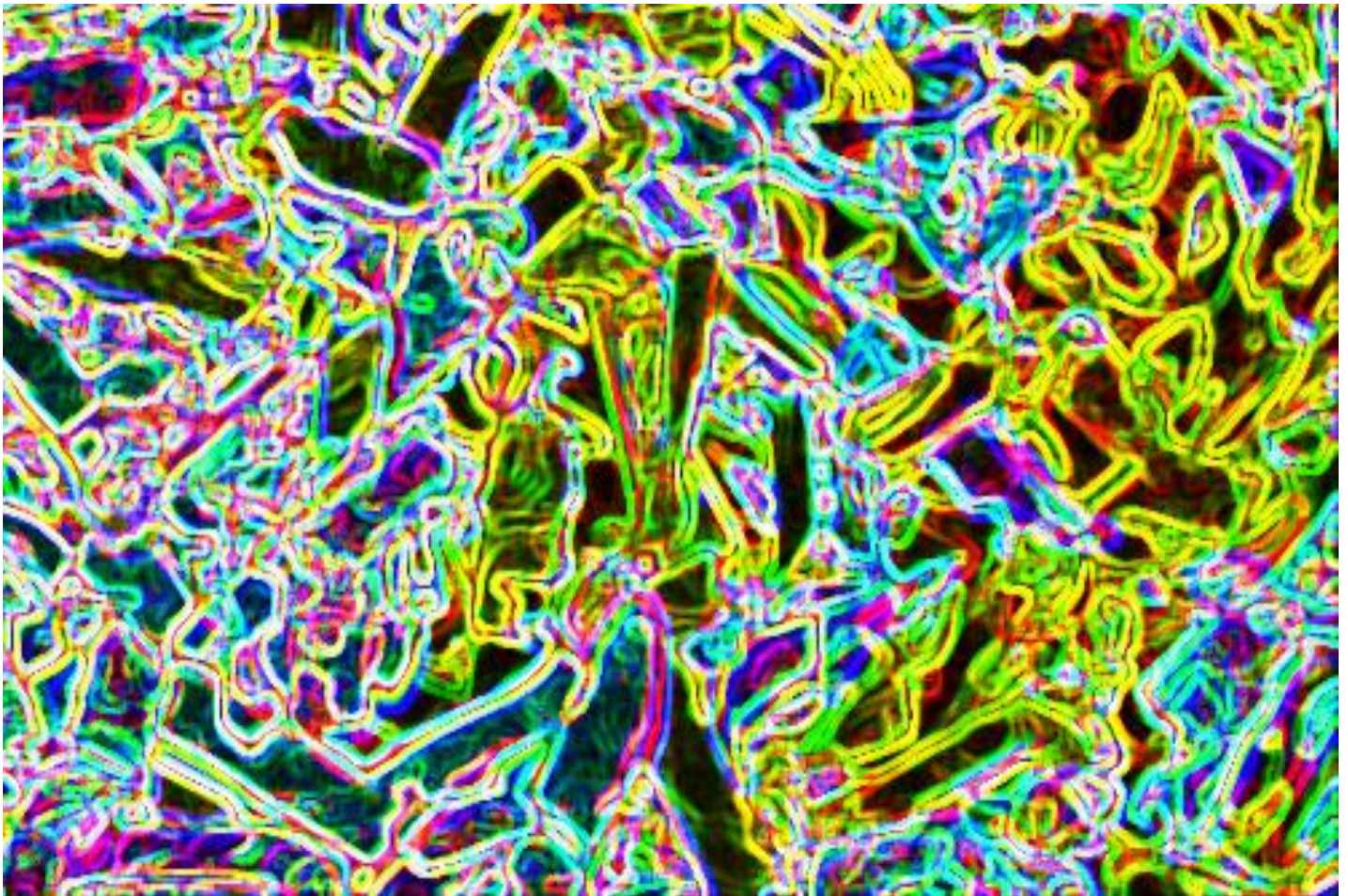
*The Big Windows Review*

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## Contents

Michael H. Brownstein	After the Night Ended	4
Dan A. Cardoza	My Red Tailed Hawk Revisited	5
Alan Catlin	How We Live Now	6
Genelle Chaconas	Catch	7
Eric Chiles	Empty head	8
Serjevah Davis	Oleander	9
Nora E. Derrington	Apologies to Zelda	11
Howie Good	Five Poems	12
Tim Hawkins	Improvisation in Autumn	14
Kyle Heger	Predecessor	16
David James	Experiment in Theater #17	17
Stacey Z Lawrence	Spared	18
Peter Leight	Sometimes I Think the Uncertainty Brings Us Together	19
Desdemona Moore	after meeting in the park I & II	20
ayaz daryl nielsen	Four Poems	22
Timothy Robbins	Interior	24
David Anthony Sam	The Orphan	25
Chelsea Sieg	bryan	26
Judson Simmons	Everything Becomes Silence	27
Tim Suermondt	Two Poems	28
John Sweet	cage	29
Lily Tierney	Stars	30
Ran Walker	A Closed Lid	31
Diane Webster	Potato Harvest	33
Gary Charles Wilkens	Forest	34
Contributors		35

**After the Night Ended**

A tide of weather and early hair  
Morning splinters into shoal reefs  
We waken to graves  
Mountainous islands windowed in purple blue mist  
A hoarse seal cackling near a large piece of driftwood  
Awe is the loudest silence  
Let's go home, get a good grasp of water,  
And then head out to the factory of souls

## **My Red Tailed Hawk Revisited**

I have only glimpsed him  
now and again.

The fat dove's distraction is why he visits my yard.  
He worships my bird feeder like an altar.

The prey, in a feathery puff of illusion, is gone.

My Red Tailed Hawk flies like a scythe  
through the deepest blue furrows in my backyard.  
Anhur airline.

Midday he appears through the crooked branches,  
high in the large valley oak that covers half my yard  
with nervous summer shade.

He stills, glares down at me, disdaining the  
gravity I cling to. He's done this before.  
I imagine he knows gravity is godless,

his dreams filled only of Ra, Anubis, Osiris.  
Most of the time, I think him thoughtless,

after all, his skull's religion is Death & Silence.

With time, the weight of gravity swells,  
pressing me smaller.

More frequently I sit in the patio, under the shadows  
of clouds. I fend off drowse & dream. Knowing as I become  
minuscule, it's my winged heart he will savor.

**How We Live Now**

*after Georgia O'Keeffe*

A gas mask super-  
imposed on  
a desert landscape

a flat yellow-brown  
mustard cloud  
fetid as an olive-green  
boil rising

bleached by the sun  
deadwood branches  
stark white fingers  
pointing to the sky

**Catch**

Her baseball, rusty-skinned, moldy, tossed high as the sun, arches towards someone in the dead weeds we can't see; they break him into a sea of ragged, liquid shadows. The breeze wilts. That silence more hollow than emptiness, that sound like electric insects, forms. Who are you throwing it to, I ask. She doesn't answer. I watch her chase into the high weeds until I cannot see.

## **Empty head**

Pity the empty head,  
not one idea bouncing  
around inside.

All still and dark  
like a cloudy night,

no bats or owls  
hovering on wind  
that's not there.

No sweet dreams  
to remember

when the sun smiles  
on the horizon  
and whispers,  
*Wake up.*

**Oleander**

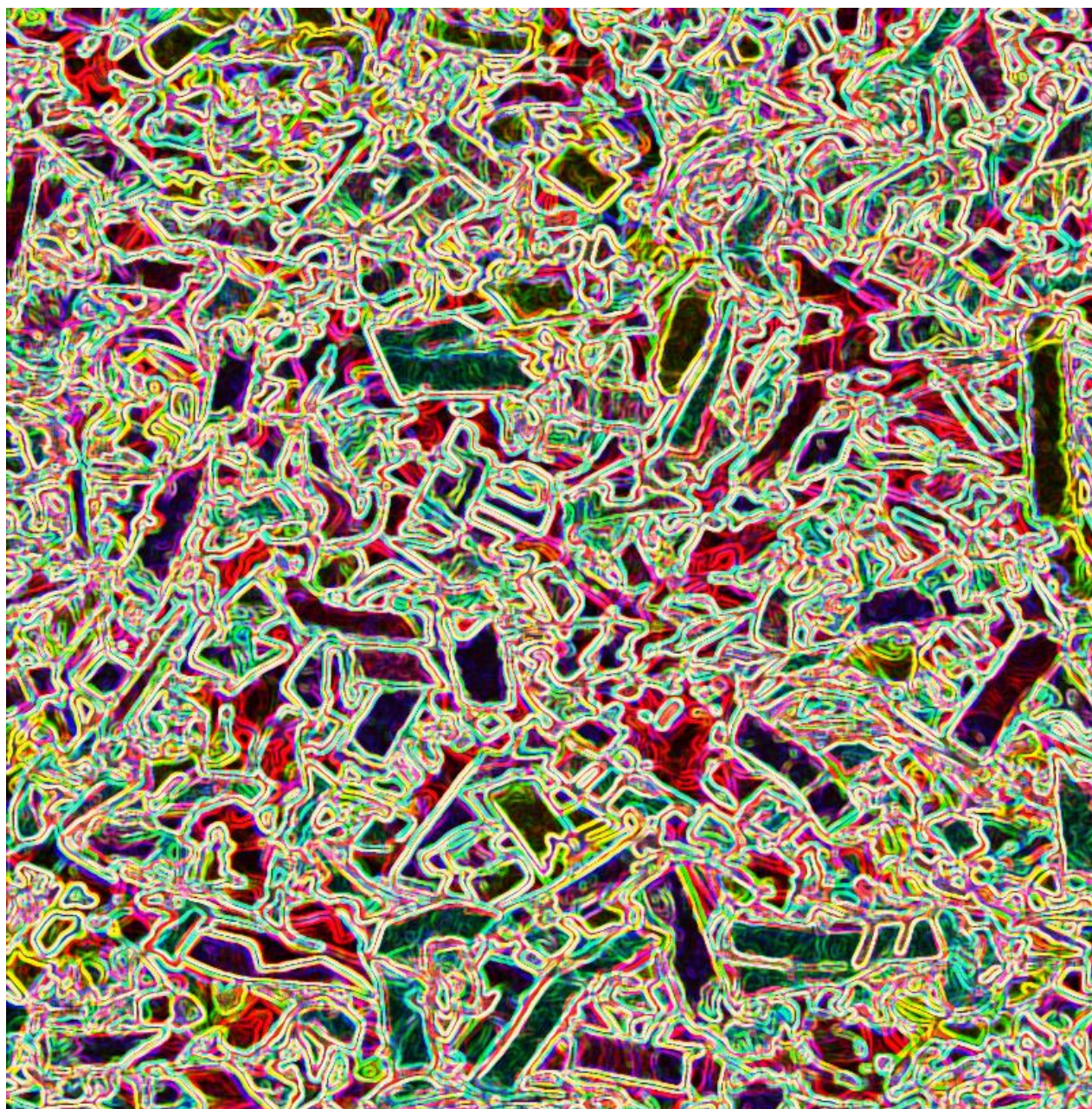
bright eyes  
that radiate through  
jewels of oleander  
piercing  
through each orb's centered hazel  
white light escapes  
wildly

a haphazard web  
birthed by euphoria and  
madness  
graceful in form  
brittle from the gale

each delicate soft  
spindle floats  
softly  
to the floor  
what poison is this  
that intoxicates my senses  
mesmerized  
by the orchestrated chaos

each breath you take is  
a symphony  
of emotions so deeply  
entwined  
with the drum of my own heart

we drink our vices sweetly  
and toast  
to the ones  
we've left behind



## **Apologies to Zelda**

My therapist mentions dissociative episodes, and I think immediately of the moments just after I found out about my ex's affair.

I watched from outside myself as I screamed at him, shoving stacks of previously important documents onto the floor. I saw myself as a creature of anger, a furious golem of flame instead of clay. I wanted to hurt him the way my pride—even then, I knew it was just my pride—had been hurt, and I threw a paperweight at his head. It flew wide, the heavy glass ball cracking the drywall three feet away from his left elbow.

The watching part of myself recoiled in dread as I picked up our long-haired dachshund mix, Zelda. I held her out at my husband, crying, "You're breaking her heart!" She didn't struggle, just tucked her feather-tail under her legs and turned to gaze at me with baleful eyes—and that look brought me back to myself. I managed to swallow my rage long enough to set her gently back down, to feel shame creeping in to douse the flames.

Cancer claimed Zelda not long after, before my ex found out I had planned to leave him all along. I will never stop wishing I could take that moment back. "I know, Zelda," I want to tell her. "I don't know why I did that, either."

## **Howie Good**

### **Gotterdammerung**

A day comes when the clouds somehow resemble the fingerprint smudges on touch screens; when what people think they see isn't actually there; when headstones in the ancient Jewish cemetery have been toppled over or spray painted with swastikas; when the provincial city where Nietzsche grew up disappears into a bomb crater; when newly identified stars are given numbers, and not names; when ocean deities, debt-ridden, detested, abandoned by just about everyone, rummage in dumpsters; when hokey prayers fall back to Earth unanswered, and I say, "Oh fuck, oh fuck," under my breath, and there's so much so in sorrow.

### **Head-First into the Abyss**

The appearance of a comet with a fox's bushy tail induces piss-your-pants-type fear. It supposedly foretells an encounter after dark with a woman lying in a vegetative state. Every day or so someone else falls off a roof or ladder and gets impaled on a length of rebar sticking out of the ground. It's all part of the new gig economy. Just ask some meth cooks what that means. Why, this very minute, while I wait at the doctor's for my name to be called, a couple of children on the wall-mounted TV are high-fiving beside a mountain of skulls.

### **There's Gonna Be Dust**

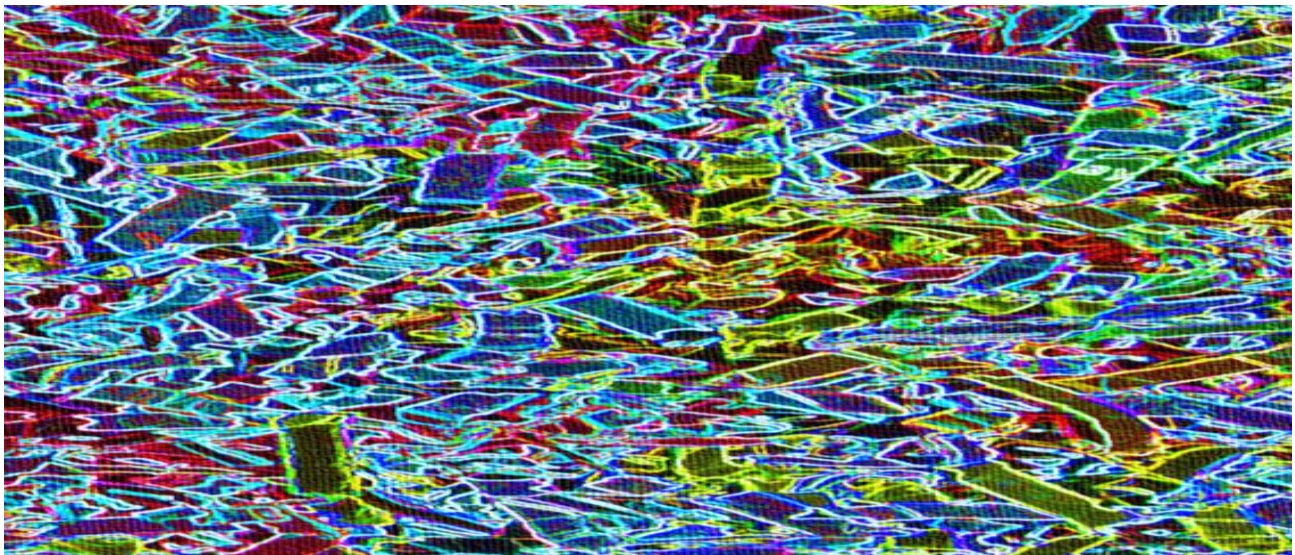
NPR or Prince plays on the radio. There's some bad shit going on in there. If I could find the map, I could go home. Where's the map? Often you have to make things, in order to have or see them. I've had a long, circuitous road of weirdness. People would sometimes stop on the road, and I'd sit with them, and we'd have a good cry. Then they'd keep going. So I confused people for many years. I was like a meteor that hit New York and said, "Thank you," and "I love you," and "There's gonna be dust."

## Nota Bene

The great philosopher thinks he sees a rifle aimed at him behind a windowpane. He slices up his hand smashing the glass trying to get at it. White hairs begin to sprout on just one side of his moustache. He sings, yodels, and screams through the night. In the morning he says 24 whores had been cavorting with him in his room. He doesn't expect this group will ever be assembled again. People keep moving, people keep slowing down. He would like to embrace and kiss everyone in the street, as there's nothing to do and a lot of time.

## Stick Figure Opera

The warning sirens didn't work. There were only these people shouting for us to run, leave, go home. Seconds after we left, it got dark. Boulders and trees were traveling at 20, 30 miles per hour down the street. I thought, "My God, not again!" Tanks rolled into the park and launched tear gas. The homeless children camping there underwent uneven and unpredictable aging. I'm older now myself, and it's hard work. Falling asleep is the hardest part. I'll hear what sounds like a wave dragging away everything, the house, everything, and then, just as suddenly, not hear it anymore.



## **Improvisation in Autumn**

I'm mindful of those who feel some peril in the change of season  
bringing an end to the confusion  
of night-blooming flowers and open windows  
—a sudden, calamitous chill of clarity  
in the precipitous drop  
from late summer to sudden fall.

And I'm mindful of those who realize that surviving  
the dead calm menace of our dog days  
and close afternoons of buzzing flies  
is no guarantee of spring.

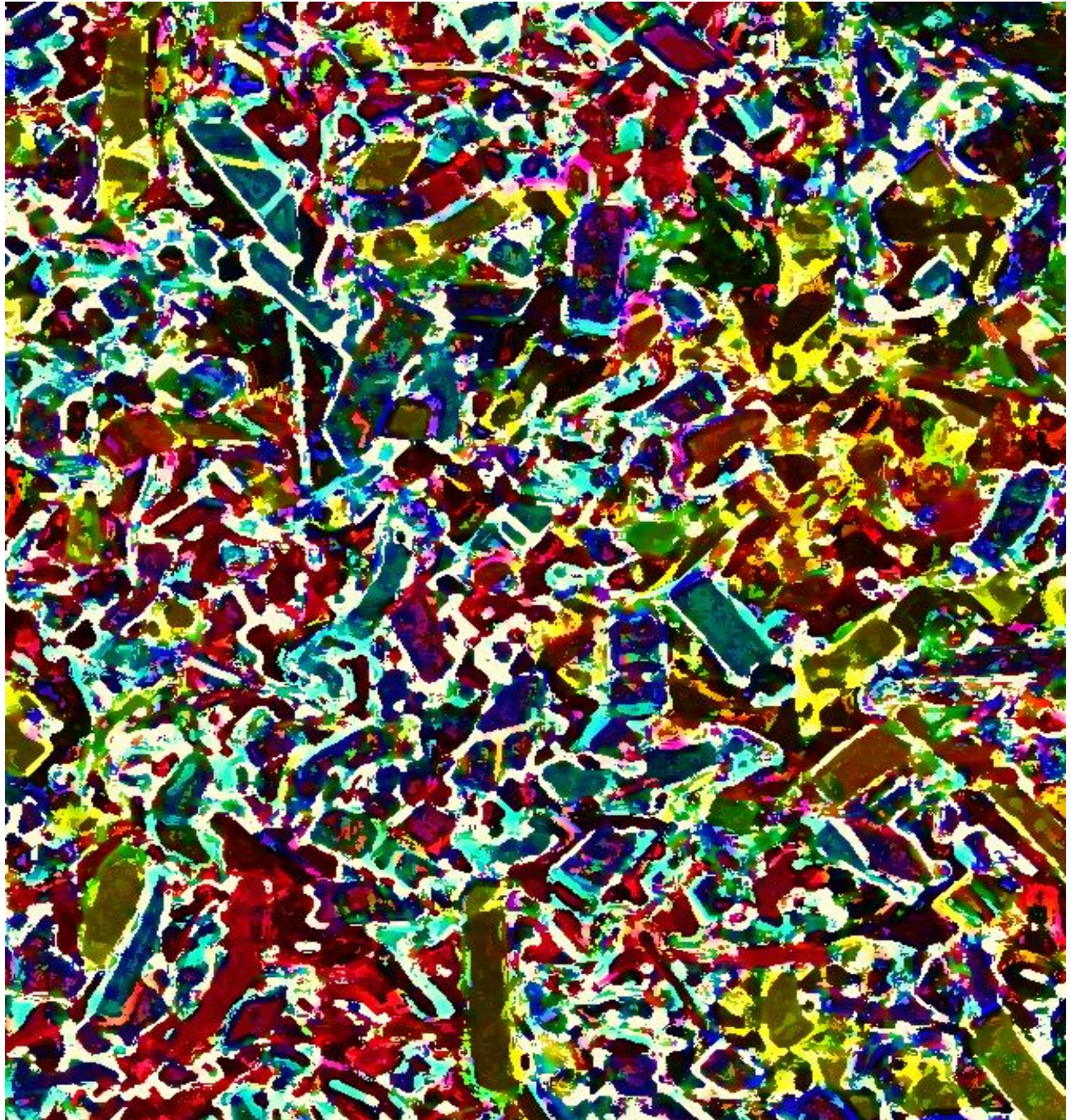
To some children, I suppose, summer is already a half-remembered fiesta  
whose rain-soaked confetti lies unnoticed along the roadside,  
while for others there may remain troubling dreams  
of twilight deer and fireflies.

I could mention a host of others:  
the stranger whose arms grow thinner with each passing year,  
the bruised young wife who sobs into her fists—not for the final time,  
and those who look away from the others and from themselves  
when their lives pass in the street.

As a courtesy I might also mention  
the rain and the swaying branches  
that form the backdrop to the pageant of their lives.

Or I could just stop and admit  
to an awkward sort of contrived spontaneity  
in this poem, which in some sense, at least,  
mirrors much about those lives:

a failed improvisation on the whole, but a performance, nonetheless,  
containing seeds of promise and moments of light,  
not to mention the usual passel of lies  
and a cast of thousands.



### **Predecessor**

He walks several paces ahead of me,  
forever saying what I want to say,  
doing what I want to do: polite,  
patient, adroit, proceeding in a state  
of grace. And, because I can never  
get close enough to throttle him, throw  
him down on his damned red carpet  
and trample on his twisted form, I try  
instead, with varying levels of failure,  
to content myself with tolerating him.  
I shudder to think how he feels about me.

## Experiment in Theatre #17

A man crawls on stage like a snake, slithering army-style,  
and stops  
mid-stage. From the other side, a woman appears and

crawls while  
singing an old favorite Christmas song, "Drummer Boy."  
She props

herself on top of the man's body lying on stage.  
The man  
lifts his head and sings "Should auld acquaintance be forgot..."

as the snow  
starts to fall on them. They wiggle and try to disengage  
their bodies

but are stuck, hers on his, both face down, as they sing louder  
with rage.

The man writhes until he turns on the floor, facing the woman

and they see  
eye-to-eye. The singing stops. They pause and then kiss with gusto,  
groaning

as the curtain closes. The audience hums "Jingle Bells" as they leave  
on their reindeer.

**Spared**

Flat on my back  
I taste your breath  
and track  
your blades  
hover for hours  
I will not sleep  
despite good weed.

The doctor warned my  
nips might tingle, so  
I pull the duvet  
tight and swaddle  
myself, like you did  
when you were alive,  
to our baby girl.

Under the covers  
I use my finger,  
hips  
lips  
clit

nips  
pink and hard,

still mine.

### **Sometimes I Think the Uncertainty Brings Us Together**

When I touch your hand it feels like a hand and not a drawbridge in the *up* position, I'm not pushing you away—I've been here the whole time, I would have noticed. Of course I trust you, if I turn away it's only to look at something else, only because I need to look around. I'm tired of guessing, are you going to tell me what you don't want me to know? I'm placing my hands on your waist, one on each side, stiffened like a sluice rather than a hose, holding myself in place, keeping my fingers out of your mouth while I'm waiting for it to dry out, I often look at you when you're not looking at me—I think your face is a hiding place for eyes, please leave your eyes where I can see them, please don't take your eyes away. Are you trying to ruin it? When people are apart they need to be together, and when they're together they start moving away from each other, as if they're disappearing together, they're not even looking for each other—if you don't care okay you don't always care, nobody cares about everything. I want to be close to you, I'd like you to trust me, how far apart we are often depends on how we feel about each other, and what we need from each other. Do you need me? Do you need anything about me? Sometimes I think it is the uncertainty that brings us together when it is only measuring the separation.

## **Desdemona Moore**

### **after meeting in the park I & II**

how dare you make  
me shy like a

schoolgirl afraid of  
your response how

dare you take my  
hand casual as if

it doesn't burn as if  
I don't & blood

flows fire & electricity  
favors you when you

touch my hand when  
your eyes do what they

do oh those eyes w/  
the canyon combined

w/cities far away &  
the ocean & me

-----

I pull my hair  
back in the shower

pull my hair back  
& it's you

a spark at first touch  
a clasp & I pull  
my wet dripping hair

away from my face

& lift up &

cannot help myself

do you ever write  
poems to people do you

still see me in your mind in your mouth in your name

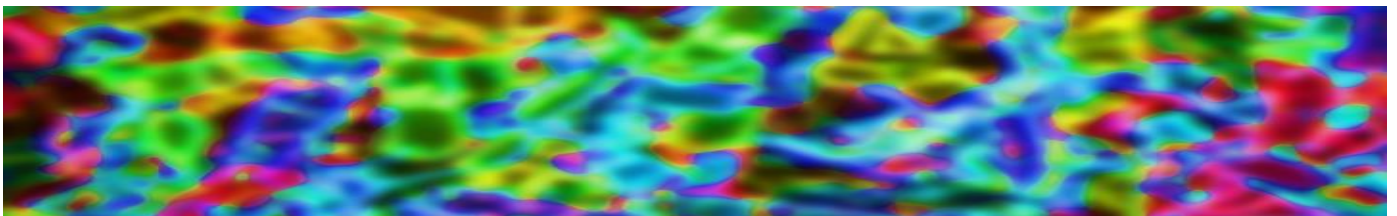
& yes

spring does something wild  
& winter unharsh cannot stop

fires that must be quenched  
that must dry the water as I

pull my hair back  
look up there you

are & I've been  
waiting



**Four Poems**

earth isn't elsewhere

the wooden framework  
of our bones  
of our immorality  
of the tortoise on top  
as it rises from the waters  
of all the tortoises  
all the way down  
standing on each other  
rising from the waters  
and I and you, you and I  
rising with them to the  
green leaves, light, and  
holinesses creating,  
sustaining, and  
embracing all of us

-----

the geese flying low  
a snowdrift in our garden  
all as it must be

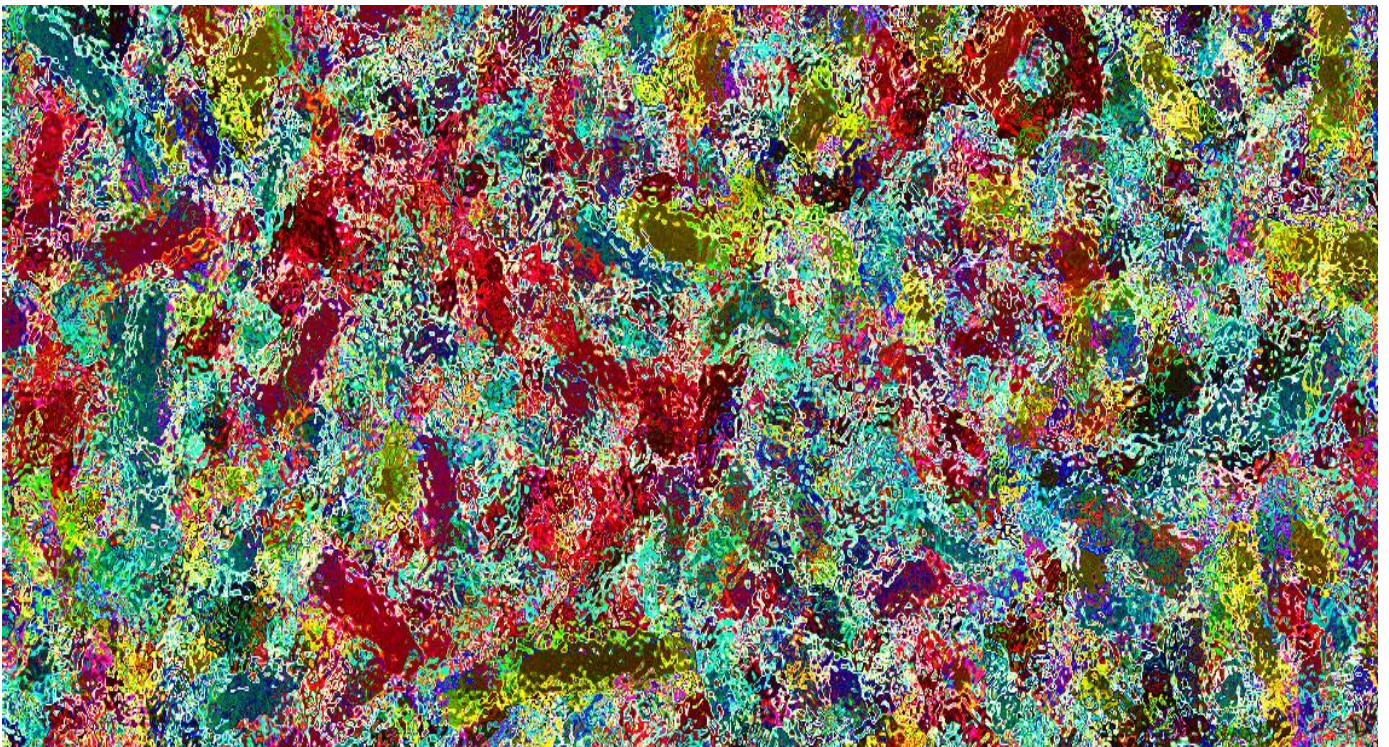
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falling petals  
a vase with red  
and yellow roses  
upon the glossy  
mahogany table

-----

window of being

geese in the moonlight  
coming across stilled corn  
we can hear their winged prophecy  
a window shining with being  
formless, pure, sudden and needed,  
life-extending being without need of  
prayer or forgiveness  
being home again  
being healthy  
just  
to be.



## **Timothy Robbins**

### **Interior**

I thought he wanted to  
shake my hand. And  
maybe unknowingly,  
desire to touch me  
(like contraband in a  
luxury liner) hid in the  
polite hands-on obligation.

The way he twisted my  
fist, I knew he had  
mistaken it for a  
doorknob. The way he  
walked through, I knew  
his grip had made me  
an unlocked door.

He had a tryst with a  
man in that room. Maybe  
I would do. Maybe he'd  
prefer me.

**The Orphan**

The unweighted half  
of a seesaw  
balances skyward—

I have fallen  
with stinging thud  
in my alone—

the whole sky  
fills  
with vacant blue—

### bryan

he was one of those cousins i had on facebook  
but never really knew  
i think i met him a few times when i was a kid.  
i think he liked video games.

my mom wouldn't tell me for months,  
didn't want to tell me.  
but finally she mentioned to me  
that he died of an overdose  
all alone in a bathtub.  
alone and blue.

i still had him on facebook.  
his page was like my mother,  
telling me nothing. like him,  
alone and blue. like me,  
letting goodbyes wash up  
like empty rain. drowning in  
sadness that was not my right  
to feel.

## Everything Becomes Silence

I am hopeless to the night,  
praying for the silent,  
yet drawn to its collection of noises.

Haunted  
by the fingers of arthritic trees  
scraping across my window screen,  
forewarning:

*It may be our time.*

Alleycats find refuge  
in the weeded growth beneath my sill—  
their feral chants claw their way up  
a creaking fire escape  
towards a crescent-scarred sky.

I can almost hear,  
hidden between the timbre of raindrops,  
worms crawling from the earth,  
left to flop hopelessly  
upon the cement—a rudimentary dance  
to a moon that will not reply.

Slowly these sounds are buried  
in the dirt of the sky. I surrender my eyes,  
and everything  
becomes silence.

### **It's Always Been Big**

My wife sleeps on a pillow wide as this city,  
but only I get to sleep on it with her—draped  
as we are over the streets, avenues, boulevards  
and the hundreds of thousands who wave red  
hearts from the skyscrapers and the old tenement  
houses once white as the Milky Way. Darling,  
the paradoxes of this Universe love us endlessly.

### **In the Luxembourg Garden I Check My Watch**

You'll be here soon, coming over  
from Rivoli, wearing the red beret  
you wanted to buy a week ago.  
I have our lunch in tow and you'll  
find me walking around the basin,  
counting every paper boat there is  
and contemplating the timelessness  
that will still exist long after we're  
gone—this is Paris, after all, but I  
assure you the ham sandwiches will  
get their share of attention, the future  
street sign bearing our names near  
the shop I bought them at will display  
its mustard color flame like a sunflower.

**cage**

rumors of rain all afternoon and so  
we hide in the basement or  
out in plain sight

in the fields where the poison was  
poured for the first 20 years of our lives and  
i kiss your wounded heart without  
hesitation

i laugh at the man who  
says he'll save the world

tells me money isn't what he's after  
which is how i know he's lying

all dogs roll in shit

all gods demand  
unquestioning obedience

watch the wolves take down the child at  
the water's edge and understand  
that the sun will still rise tomorrow

believe in the pills until the  
morning you don't wake up

just lie there quietly while the  
humor of it all breaks like  
waves across your lost and broken  
dreams

## **Stars**

A burning passion roaming the night's sky  
placing me in between heaven and earth.

Dare I ask for more among the silent twinkles,  
or is it enough to know they are there?

Stars, collect all of my feelings that you  
give so freely to the night, and my eyes are  
closed to the journey of trust ahead.

### A Closed Lid

My mother ran into the den, terrified. My heart raced, as she, unable to speak, began to mime what she had just seen.

“Something’s in the bathroom?” I said, watching her point down the hall. She nodded, moving her hand up and down like she was jiggling something.

“Something’s in the toilet!” I yelled.

This time she nodded so hard I thought she would make herself dizzy.

I jumped from the couch and approached the bathroom cautiously, several steps ahead of my mother.

Standing on either side, we stared at the closed toilet, unable to ignore the sounds of violent splashing within.

I instinctively put my foot on the lid, unsure if whatever was inside could push open the lid and run out into the house.

“What is it?” I asked, swallowing hard.

“A rat,” she deadpanned, her voice finally back.

It seemed as if the splashing was getting louder and louder.

“Did you try to flush it?” I asked.

“I’ll try—but keep your foot on the lid, okay?”

I nodded, more out of fear than obedience.

She leaned forward and cautiously pressed down on the handle, as if the motion might offend the thing inside. The familiar sound of the toilet’s flush filled the room.

Then silence.

We stood staring at the closed toilet, my foot still planted firmly on top.

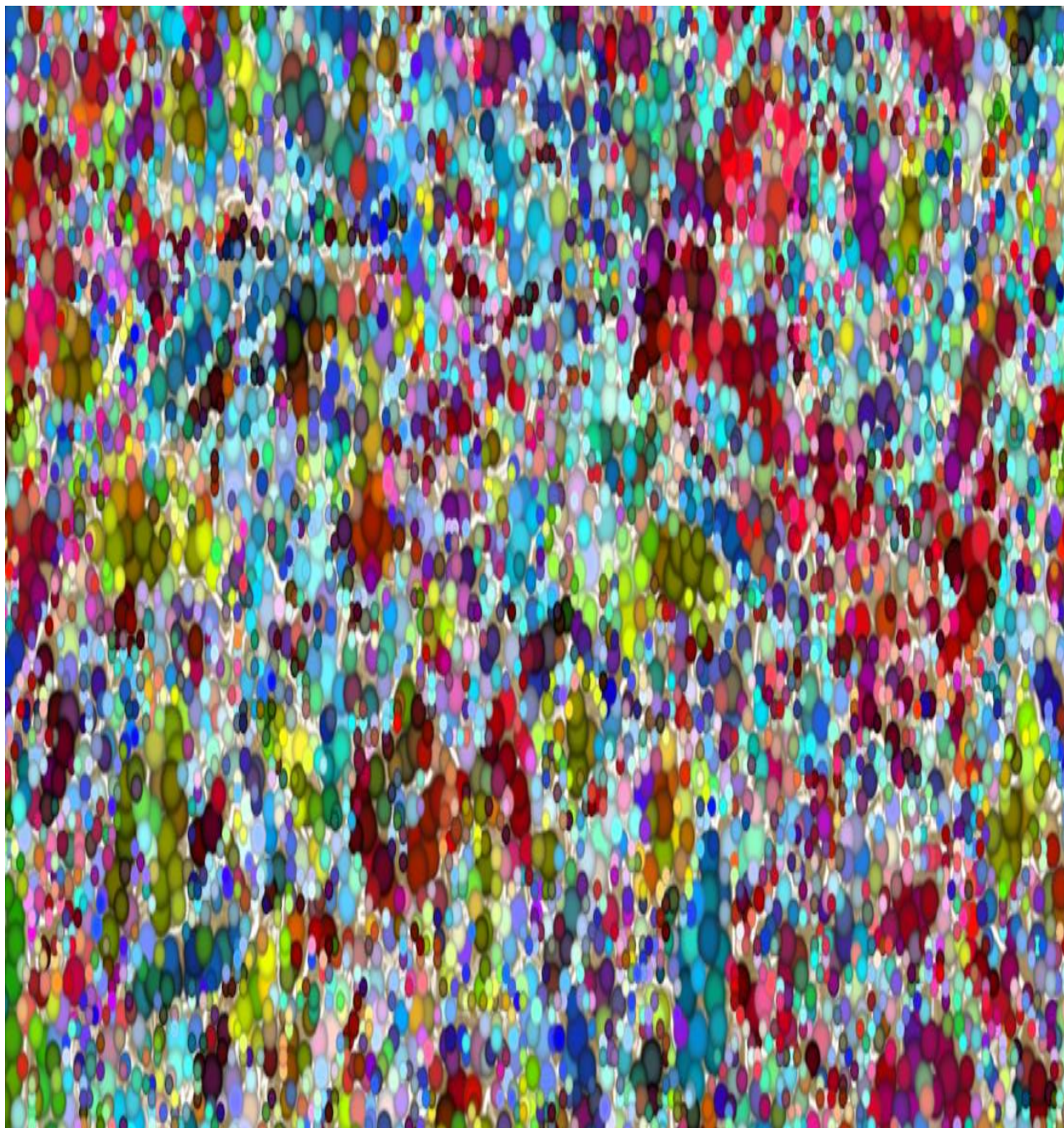
“I guess we should look now,” I said.

“Wait,” she responded, running to the kitchen to grab a broom. When she returned, she lifted it, prepared to beat the hell out of whatever emerged.

I lifted the lid with sloth-like slowness until we could see the clear, empty toilet bowl.

Afterwards we laughed nervously about what had happened, but in the years that remained before I left home to go to college, I nervously looked down every

time I used the bathroom, unable to shake the fear that something hairy might one day brush against me.



## **Potato Harvest**

In the field sacks  
of exhumed potatoes  
line the rows  
like tombstones  
marking graves  
now evicted  
of occupants;

A many-handed  
sundial of shadows  
long in morning stretch,  
gone under noon spotlight,  
long in afternoon repose,  
gone in night's descent.

Potatoes, cool and smelling  
of dirt, awaiting trucks  
to haul them away,  
to leave the field  
to rejuvenate under snow.

# **Gary Charles Wilkens**

## **Forest**

green leaf

red dot of legs

scurry

sky tapestry

cloud of bats

pierce

red petals

sliver drizzle

shake

clod of dirt

white flecks

crumble

**Michael H. Brownstein's** work has appeared in *American Letters and Commentary*, *Skidrow Penthouse*, *Meridian Anthology of Contemporary Poetry*, *The Pacific Review*, *The Big Windows Review*, *poetrysuperhighway.com*, and others. He has nine poetry chapbooks including *A Period of Trees* (Snark Press, 2004) and *The Possibility of Sky and Hell* (White Knuckle Press, 2013). His book, *A Slipknot Into Somewhere Else: A Poet's Journey To The Borderlands Of Dementia*, was recently published by Cholla Needles Press (2018).

**Dan A. Cardoza** lives in Northern California and is the author of three chapbooks: *Nature's Front Door*, *Expectation of Stars*, and *Ghosts in the Cupboard*. Partial Credits: *Amethyst*, *Ardent*, *Better Than Starbucks*, *California Quarterly*, *Chaleur Magazine*, *Entropy*, *Esthetic Apostle*, *Foxglove*, *Frogmore Journal*, *High Shelf Press*, *Oddball*, *Poetry Northwest*, *The Quail Bell*, *Skylight 47*, *Spelk*, *Unstamatic*, and *Vita Brevis*.

**Alan Catlin** has been publishing for five decades. He has had work in some of the most obscure, way out of print publications of all time, and in some of the better, still extant, larger ones. His most recent book is *Wild Beauty*, from Future Cycle Press, which previously published his *American Odyssey*.

**Genelle Chaconas** earned their BA in Creative Writing from CSUS (2009), and their MFA in Writing & Poetics from Naropa University (2015). Their first chapbook is *Fallout*, *Saints and Dirty Pictures* (little m Press, 2011), and *Yet Wave* (the Lune, 2017). They serve as head editor of *HockSpitSlurp Magazine*.

After a career in print journalism, **Eric Chiles** teaches writing and journalism at a number of colleges in eastern Pennsylvania. His poetry appears in *Allegro*, *Chiron Review*, *Gravel*, *Plainsongs*, *Rattle*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Third Wednesday*, and elsewhere. His chapbook, *Caught in between*, is available from Desert Willow Press.

**Serjevah Davis** grew up in Tampa, Florida, and graduated from the University of West Florida with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre. Currently based out of Minneapolis, Minnesota, she hopes that one day her poetry will encourage readers the same way this beautiful art form has encouraged her.

**Nora E. Derrington** holds degrees from Boston University and the University of New Mexico, and she currently teaches English at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. Her stories have appeared in *Pilgrimage*, *The Future Fire*, and elsewhere, and she reviews fantasy, horror, romance, and science fiction titles for *Publishers Weekly*.

**Howie Good** is the author of *The Loser's Guide to Street Fighting*, winner of the 2017 Lorien Prize from ThoughtCrime Press. His latest collections are *I'm Not a Robot*, from Tolsun Books and *A Room at the Heartbreak Hotel*, from Analog Submission Press.

**Tim Hawkins** has lived and traveled widely, working as a journalist, technical writer and teacher in international schools. Today he lives in his hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan. His writing has been nominated for Best of the Net, the Pushcart Prize and Best Microfiction. His poetry collection, *Wanderings at Deadline*, was published by Aldrich Press in 2012, and he has two forthcoming chapbooks: *Jeremiad Johnson* (In Case of Emergency Press, July 2019) and *Synchronized Swimmers* (KYSO Flash Press, September 2019). Find out more at his website: [www.timhawkinspoetry.com](http://www.timhawkinspoetry.com).

**Kyle Heger**, former managing editor of *Communication World* magazine, lives in Albany, CA. His writing has won a number of awards and has appeared in 58 publications, including *London Journal of Fiction*, *Nerve Cowboy*, and *U.S. 1 Worksheets*. He attended Washtenaw Community College in the 1970s.

**David James** has published three books, six chapbooks, and has had over thirty one-act plays produced. He teaches at Oakland Community College.

**Stacey Z Lawrence** teaches Poetry and Creative Writing in a public high school in Northern, NJ. She is working on her first book of confessional poems, which explores the untimely death of her husband shortly followed by her bout with Breast Cancer.

**Peter Leight** has previously published poems in *Paris Review*, *AGNI*, *FIELD*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Raritan*, *Matter*, and other magazines.

**Desdemona Moore** lives near Grand Coulee Dam and has had work published in a few literary magazines.

**ayaz daryl nielsen**, veteran and former hospice nurse, lives in Longmont, Colorado, USA. Editor of *bear creek haiku* (28+ years/150+ issues) with poetry published worldwide (and deeply appreciated), he is online at: *bear creek haiku: poetry, poems and info*

**Timothy Robbins** teaches ESL. He has a B.A. in French and an M.A. in Applied Linguistics. He has been a regular contributor to *Hanging Loose* since 1978. His poems have appeared in *Three New Poets*, *Slant*, *Main Street Rag*, *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *Off The Coast*, and others. His collection *Denny's Arbor Vitae* was published in 2017. He lives with his husband of twenty years in Kenosha, Wisconsin, birthplace of Orson Welles. Check out Timothy on *YouTube*: <https://www.youtube.com/user/timalrob64>

Born in Pennsylvania, **David Anthony Sam** is the proud grandson of peasant immigrants from Poland and Syria. For much of his life, he lived and worked in the Detroit area, graduating from Eastern Michigan University (BA, MA) and Michigan State (Ph.D.). He lives now in Virginia with his wife and life partner, Linda. Sam's poetry has appeared in over 90 journals and publications and his poem, "First and Last," won the 2018 Rebecca Lard Award. He has five published collections including *Final Inventory* (Prolific Press 2018) and *Finite to Fail: Poems after Dickinson*, the 2016 Grand Prize winner of the GFT Press Chapbook Contest. He currently teaches creative writing at Germanna Community College, from where he retired as President in 2017. He serves on the Board of the Virginia Poetry Society.

**Chelsea Sieg** is a slightly queer, often sarcastic author of poems, interactive fiction games, game reviews, essays, and a whole bunch of other random things. She can be found at <http://www.somestrangeircus.com>.

**Judson Simmons** earned his MFA in Creative Writing from Sarah Lawrence College, and holds a BA in English from the University of Houston. He currently resides in Brooklyn, and works at NYU. His poems have appeared in various journals, and his chapbook, *The Hallelujah Hour*, was published by Amsterdam Press.

**Tim Suermondt** is the author of four full-length collections of poems: *Trying To Help The Elephant Man Dance* (The Backwaters Press, 2007), *Just Beautiful* (New York Quarterly Books, 2010), *Election Night And The Five Satins* (Glass Lyre Press, 2016) and *The World Doesn't Know You*, published by Pinyon Publishing in late 2017. His fifth book, *Josephine Baker Swimming Pool*, will be released by MadHat Press in January 2019. He has poems published in *Poetry*, *The Georgia Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Blackbird*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *december magazine*, *Plume Poetry Journal*, *Southern Humanities Review*, and *Stand Magazine* (England), among others. He is a book reviewer for Cervena Barva Press and a poetry reviewer for *Bellevue Literary Review*. He lives in Cambridge (MA) with his wife, the poet Pui Ying Wong.

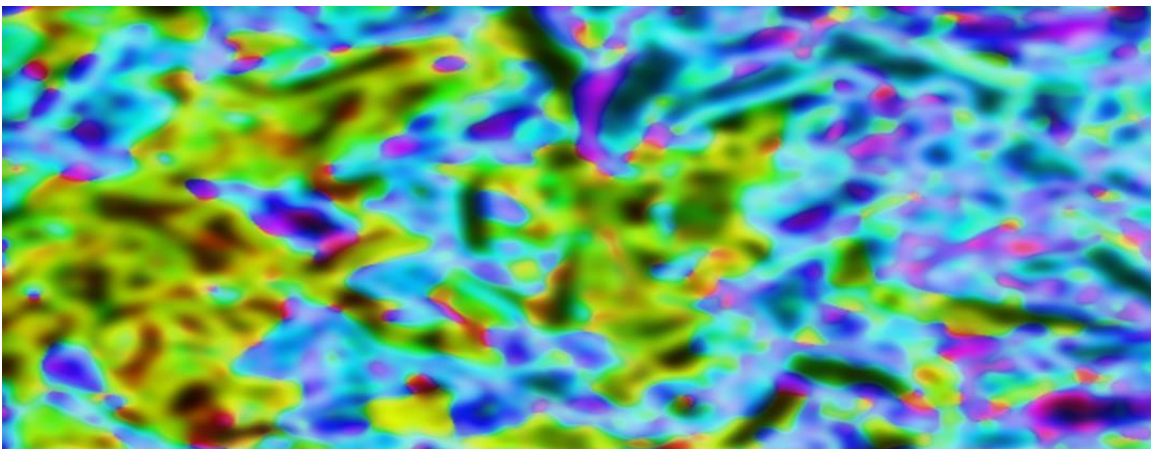
**John Sweet** sends greetings from the rural wastelands of upstate NY. He is a firm believer in writing as catharsis, and in the continuous search for an unattainable and constantly evolving absolute truth. His latest poetry collections include *HEATHEN TONGUE* (2017 Kendra Steiner Editions) and *BASTARD FAITH* (2017 Scars Publications).

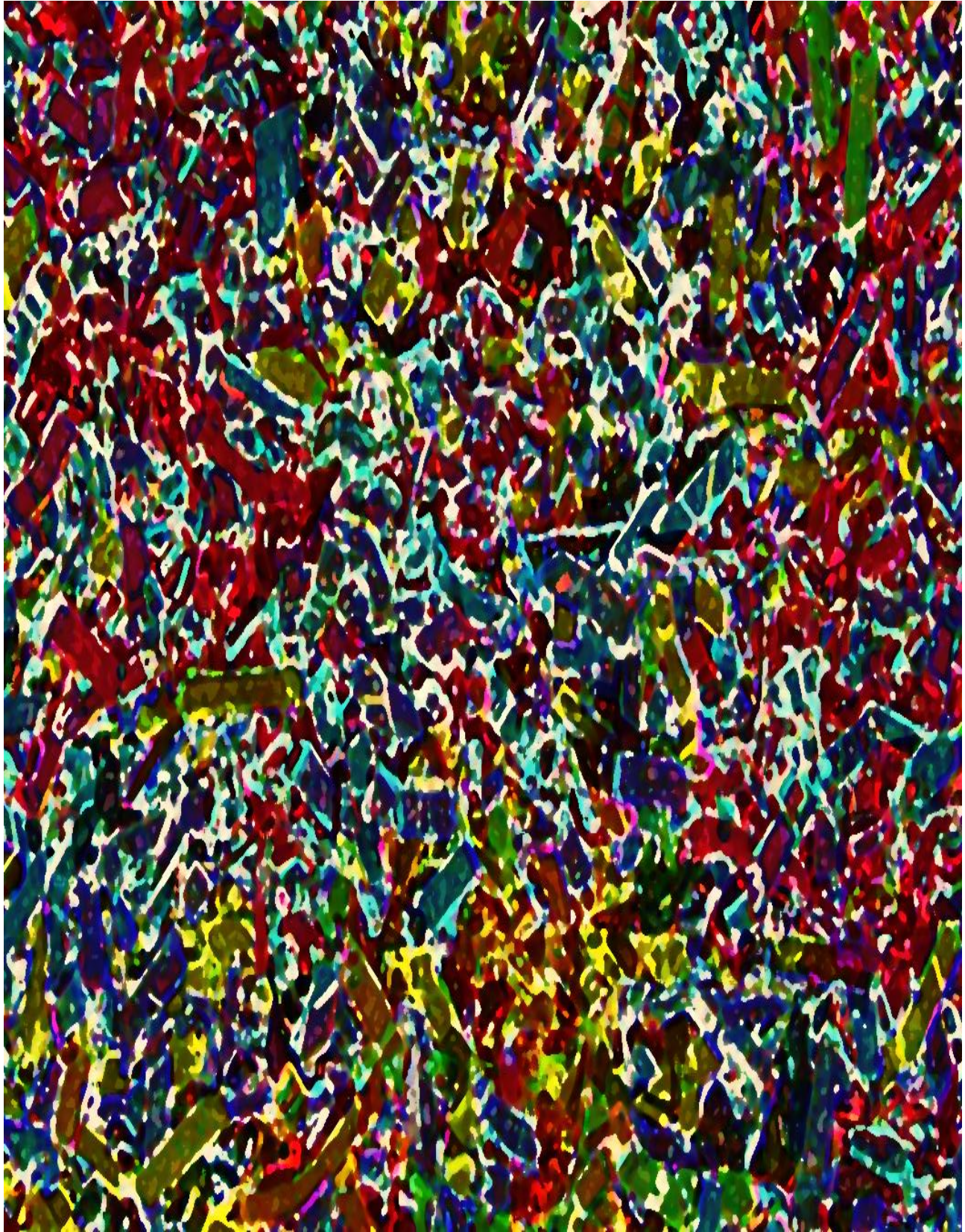
**Lily Tierney's** work has appeared in *Harbinger Asylum*, *Veil: Journal of Darker Musings*, *The Stray Branch*, *Illumen Magazine*, *Polu Texni*, *Space and Time Magazine*, *The Writing Disorder*, and many others. She enjoys writing and reading poetry.

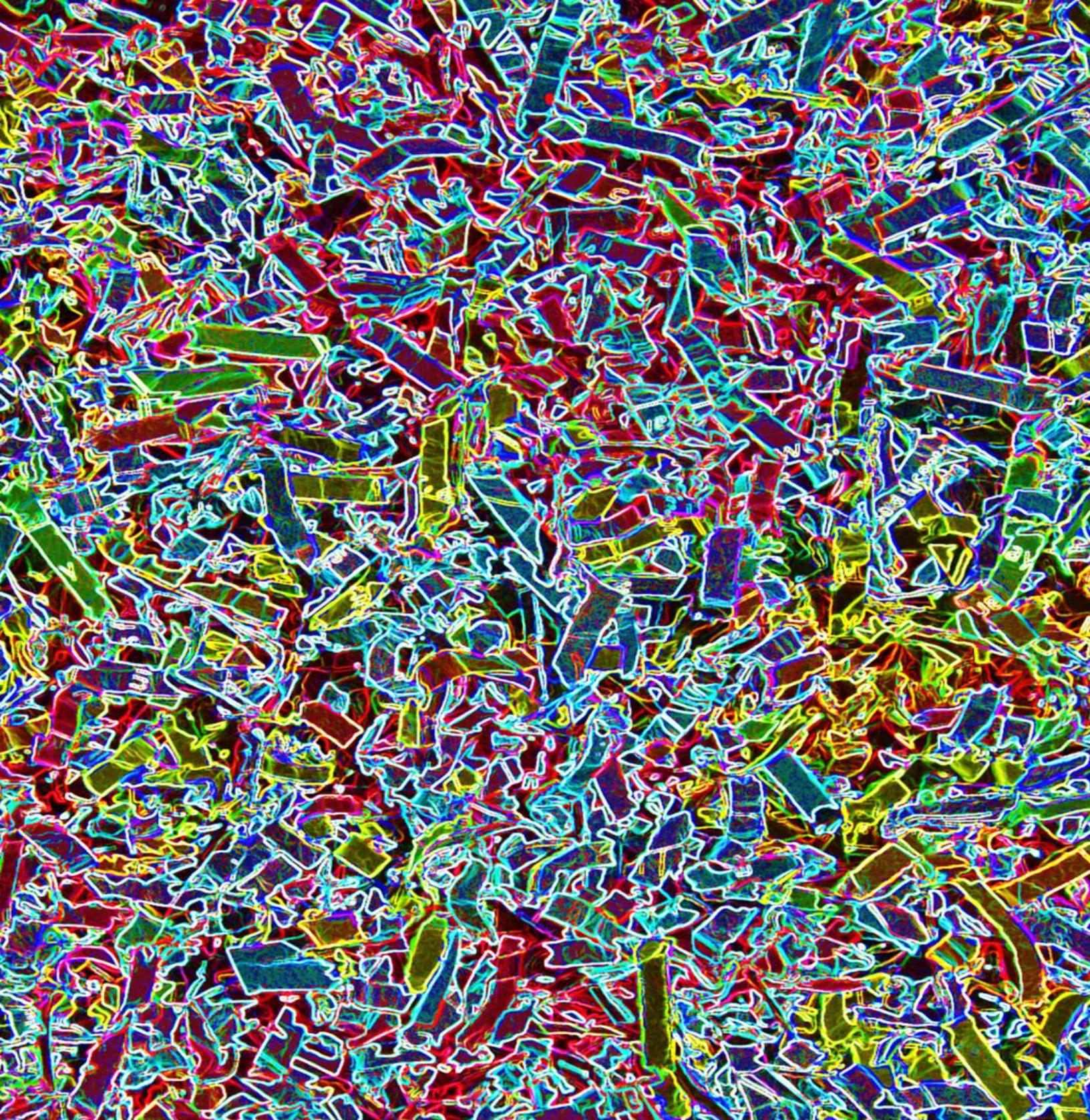
**Ran Walker** is the author of sixteen books. He is also the recipient of a Mississippi Arts Commission/NEA fellowship for creative writing and a Callaloo Writers Workshop fellowship in fiction. He currently teaches fiction writing at Hampton University in Virginia.

**Diane Webster** grew up in Eastern Oregon before she moved to Colorado. She enjoys drives in the mountains to view all the wildlife and scenery and takes amateur photographs. Her work has appeared in *Better Than Starbucks*, *Eunoia Review*, *Philadelphia Poets*, and other literary magazines.

**Gary Charles Wilkens'** book, *The Red Light Was My Mind*, won the 2006 Texas Review Breakthrough Poetry Prize. His poems have appeared in *The Texas Review*, *Moon City Review*, *Passages North*, *The Adirondack Review*, *James Dickey Review*, and *Melancholy Hyperbole*. He is Associate Professor of English at Norfolk State University.







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