

The Big Windows Review

Issue 26 Winter 2022



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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Under the Streetlight

The boys are ahead of us as we linger a little and talk about life and philosophy. Joel has an interesting mind and I enjoy his perspective.

He has studied with a Native American shaman and has been to ashrams in India. Suddenly, for no reason we can see, his boy smacks my son in the face.

My son turns to him and asks, *Do you know how that makes me feel?* Joel looks at me and says, *Wow, what unusual poise he has in his response to being slapped.*

We wait to see what will happen next. His son, a boy about 5 years old, stops and replies, *No, how does that make you feel?*

Under a streetlight on this warm October evening, our boys sit down on a curb and talk about their feelings. I think about my son and his gentle ways.

I count my blessings.

Bob Dylan's Blues

The blues isn't but a sandwich
With a cup of sorrow
Sweet home New York
Under the blue skies
Cover in a piece of cloth

Let's forgive the boy
Charley Patton will understand
Water's everywhere
The eye of the storm
Battle rap of the century

A thousand words in time
Somewhere out there
Television's a savior
Let's change the world
Instead of complaining

Urban cowboy rides again
Cream cheese and lox
Cornbread and black eyed peas
Drinking tea on the beach
Stain on the notebook page

Calls to the president
Or maybe Martin and Malcolm
Both can change the world
One Man can make it happen
Mistakes from the past

Roasting and toasting
Having very few peers
Stuck on this country grammar
More game than basketball
Bagels and chicken

Need a drink of water
Ribbons should be released
Freedom should be free
Television's an addiction
Take off the weave



Holly Day

Clinging To

We all want to leave a ghost behind, to believe
that our passing from this world will leave such a vacuum
that some remnant of what we were had to stay behind
that the walls and the floors of our house
take enough interest in our activities
to hold the energy of our traumas to replay
for future audiences.

There have to be ghosts, because we are so important
to ourselves and the people we surround ourselves with
there had to be at least some tiny flicker left behind
or some imposing force that lets you know
somebody else once lived in this house
someone who's no longer here.

Holly Day

The Cottage

If you stay in this room for too long
you will become a part of my fairy tale
initially cast in the role of a prince or a villain
doomed to eventually shrink to the status of a talking mouse
or an abandoned spinning wheel. This is what happens

when people let me write them into my life.
There is only room for one main character
in my story, and I can't afford the time to write in the supporting
cast
as anything but flat and one-dimensional.

Fireflies

You squat in the shadows, watching the movement of shadowy truncated legs. Where are they going? Glue seeping out between planks of hardboard lends the room a ribbed, skeletal quality suggestive of a giant body. The structure breathes. You can hear it breathing. And it sweats — behold the ghostly salt stains. Ambiguous in the smooth, creamy light pouring in from a small side window, only your jeweled hairnet gives any sign of your presence, the little glints and flashes when you move your head. When you move your head my eyes follow. Where are the legs going? They seem arbitrary, even nonsensical at first glance, but then again they carry a measure of menace. Shoes and boots clapping across the uneven floor, the conspiratorial whispers, the smell of spent candles — such effects cause you to recoil, to make yourself smaller, and more remote. And yet I want so much to talk to you, to look you in the eyes — what colour are they? — and speak my truth. I believe we share a vibration, a sensibility. I see us together on a davenport in a parlor filled with sunlight, sipping gold-flecked liqueur and chitchatting. We hear a train whistle in the distance and glance at each other, smiling. Then I offer you De Chirico bananas that you say create disquiet. I agree. Nevertheless they transport the eater. Peel one and see. Peel one and see how the darkly painted walls create at once a sense of enclosure and infinitude. When you move your head I think of fireflies. Can you be persuaded to come out from the shadows? I imagine you effortless, of spiraling grace, wearing a hairnet and delicate gold bracelets. Don't be alarmed. I am only here to watch. That is to say, in a sense I'm only here to watch. I could say more, but I won't now. The legs stomp on, unsentimentally. They are headed for the other dream where the other you watches the other me.

Richard Dinges, Jr. _____

Sorrow

A slow melt that
blurs vision, flows
across taut skin
to pull down cheeks
into a jaw
that sags, my self
oozes memory
to rejoin a past
that only mocks
me, a puddle
in the middle
of a firm wood
floor and a phone
that hangs limply
from outstretched arm.

Rod Drought

Gullible's Travels

You are gone
On the horse latitude deck
I taste the absent hours
Swollen tongue searches
The empty tin cup
Tied to the drained barrel
Salt pork
Stuck between teeth
Gone bad
You are lime
To my scurvy

Crewmates
Say it is for the best
Sailors lost at sea
Rationalize and ration
The first to die
Satisfies hunger

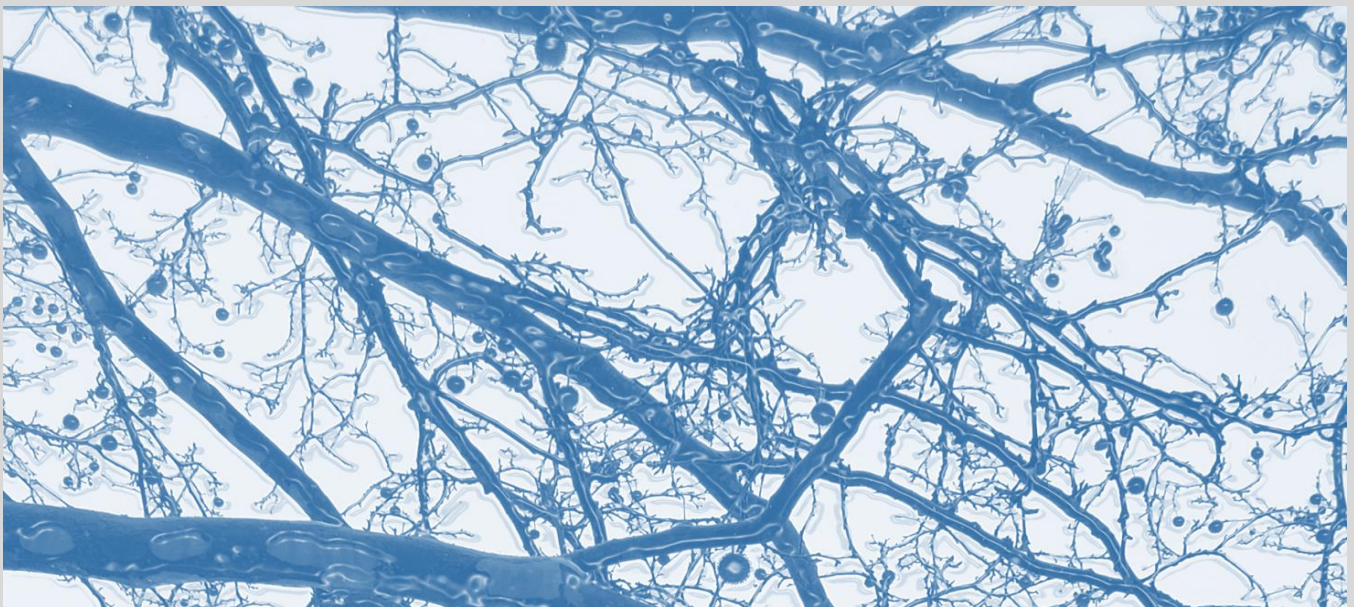
I voyage
The dead sea town
Hop deserted island bars
Robinson minus Caruso
My coconut head fills with rum

Across the undertow
Auto-tuned sirens
Beckon
In sweeping tides
Of attraction and repulsion

Every port of entry
Seems like an oasis
Cool grottos of self-delusion
Punctured by fangs of sunrays
No matter the currents, the ebb and flow
Inebriated Lilliputians
Tie me down

I escape
Bilge rat jumping ship
The stars,
The wind in sails
Speak the truth
A new charted course

You are a shadow of a sun not risen,
The deceitful promise of horizon
You are not coming back
You found a safe harbor



The Kind of Love That a Butterfly Has for the Sun

You're killing me, you know that right?
Because I don't know how to make a home,
Make a poem,
Outside of my head and you're stuck in my mind like a song.

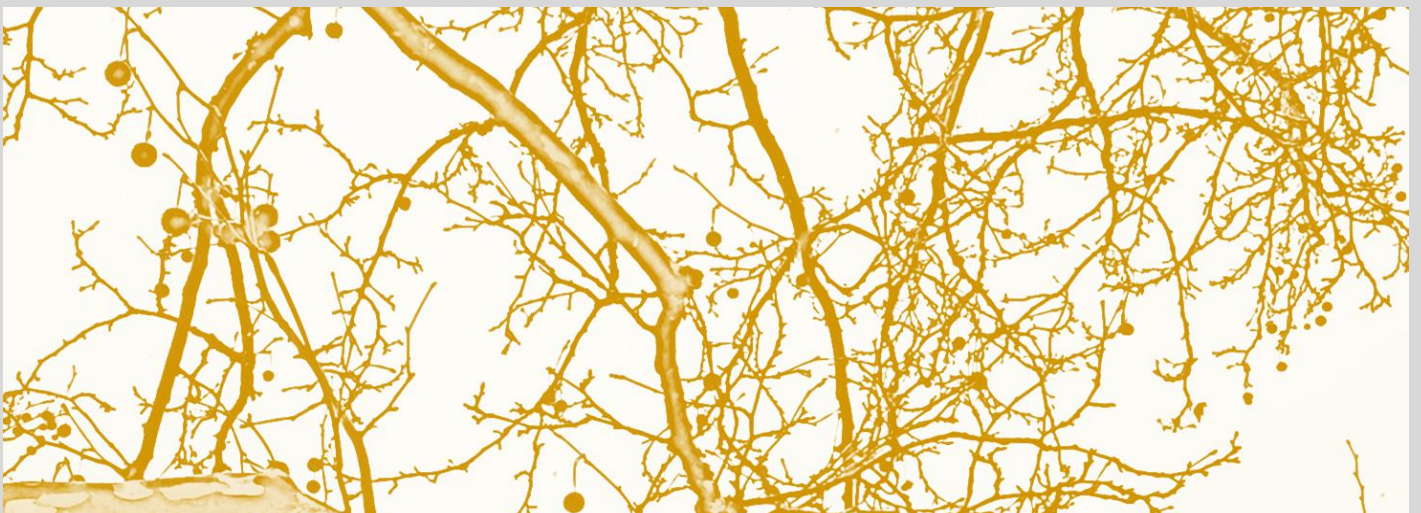
You told me that we all had flaws but sugar,
Bent words make the sweetest poems.
And I've been writing poems about you for weeks,
Like I could tell the future–

Two weeks ago I told you that I wanted to draw rainbows on your
body with my lips.
But I never called you by name
I called you Butterfly.
I called you daydream.
Soft skin.
I called you future.
I called you Sunday.
So bright that you make my freckles darken
And I think that you gave me a sunburn;
Either that or you're making me blush.

I think I have a sensitive tongue,
Because I do not like mint or pop or bitter words,
But I want to tell you that I want to taste your palms,
And to kiss your tattoos and wonder,
If they are what make you more delicious,
Or if it is just you that I'm hungry for.
Or if everything tastes better when I'm starving.

I picture covering my hands in art and touching your face,
Because it feels almost disrespectful to touch you with anything less
than beautiful,
Sacred hands.
I told you I had butterflies in my stomach and you told me to digest
them,
Because you are nothing for me to be afraid of.
My knight in a shining beanie.

So recently I've been making lullabies out of the sirens
But there's this thing I never told you—
You see,
The butterflies gave me indigestion and now they are coming up,
Flying up and out my mouth—
A poem.
You are a poem.
Butterfly.
Butterfly.
Fly.



Water Off A Duck's Back Inn

Well, I guess we're stuck with each other.
It looks that way.
It could have been worse.
I suppose so.
No, really. Just think of the possibilities.
I could have been stuck with a monkey grinder.
Exactly. And one who ate garlic raw.
Yeah.
You see. We're getting along better already.
I wouldn't go that far. We have a long history.
Are you feeling hot? I'm sweating.
I'm fine. Maybe you're uncomfortable with what I said.
No. That's not it. It's close in here.
Of course. We're like in one body.
Yeah. It's like that.
That shouldn't bother you. You like it that way.
What do you mean?
I said you like it very close.
What are you implying?
Nothing. I said what I meant.
No. Tell me. You meant something else.
Did I?
Yes. You did. Tell me.
Well I've seen you.
Yeah. Seen me what?
I've seen you looking.
So. Everyone looks.
Yeah, but you look at everyone.
I do not.
You do. I've seen you look at the curves of rear ends.

I only look at women's rears.
I don't think so. I've seen you.
Fuck you.
How would you like to do it?
That's very original.
Look just tell me if you like saunas?
Everyone who joins a gym uses the sauna. You know there's just no getting along with you.
I feel the same way about you. Look it's not a big deal. A man's rear might look like a granite formation in Yosemite. Smooth. Solid. Enduring. It draws the eyes.
So what are you saying?
I'm saying it's chic. Give it a rest.
Are you for real?
Are you religious?
Don't bring up that subject.
Okay I won't. It's boring anyway.
So, what's next?
I don't know. We'll play it by ear.
Or tongue?
You're being childish.
What's wrong with children?
You're like my father. Always changed the subject.
Outside the bay window, they saw two ducks floating on the pond. The wind was coming up and blowing the tail feathers. They helped themselves to the preening fluid there. One of the ducks took the fluid and preened the other. They had mated for the season. Next season there would be another mate.
Shadows were beginning to fill in the crevices between things in the room.
You want to get some dinner at the restaurant in town?
Sounds good.
You sure you don't mind being seen with me?
Why should I?
Well, we are in our forties and single.

So what?
You know what people say.
I'm hungry.
Me, too.



What it Means to be American, a Personal Essay

I'm American, and I mean that. I'm smiling. My father's a veteran so in my dreams I'm an armored tank.

I watch a lot of television.

In America, on television, there's a lot of strangers pretending to love each other and a lot of smiling. I'm smiling, and I'm American despite having never fired a gun. In America, there are a lot of people firing guns on television. In America, there's a lot of people pretending to love each other. This is America, and I'm smiling. My father is a veteran despite having never fought in a war. He is American, and he is my father despite having never taught me how to fire a gun. I'm American, and I'm smiling despite it meaning nothing and I mean that. When my father was in the Army, they taught him how to shoot airplanes down from the ground despite there being none to fire at. They were pretending.

America is a lot of pretending. America is a lot of smiling and a lot of firing guns but nobody smiles when firing guns.

In America, when someone fires a gun, they mean it.

This is America. I am American, and I am an armored tank.

This is America. Everybody's smiling. Nobody means it.

Anne Boleyn (1507–1536)

It is small, very small indeed.

In poems that he wrote for me
he would extol its slender grace,
say it was “like unto a swan’s”.

I was the king’s
and his alone:
his pillow
and his battered mattress.

Now I am become a barnyard fowl,
fed and protected
till my time has come
to stretch out on a wooden block
beneath the farmer’s axe.

Billie Holiday (1915–1959)

Don't be in such a hurry.

You know: more haste,
less speed.

I'll go just when I choose,
and not before —
the train won't leave without me.

I've got my ticket,
paid my fare in dynamite
and booze.

I can't complain,
I knew that everything I made
I'd lose;
even if I'd rolled in dough
I'd not have had a prayer
of leaving with a dime,
and so I'm off without a care.

But still, I wish that there was time
to sing just one more blues
before I climb aboard;
when I get to where I'm going
I'll be sure to ask the boss
to fix me with a cabaret card.

Feather

Sometimes you do sit by the pool and look past it to the sections of light that dissect the property. And the trees and the grass below and the light and shade. Then the mountain beyond and then the clouds. And after that it's unclear but vast and large. And you can be left there to stew by those you love because you had a few too many on a Monday holiday. But that's all right. Because the truth is that living is understanding what happened from the beginning and realizing that that's what everything is. So maybe you take another sip and remember being a child. Innocent, and the neighbor girl who said show you mine if you show me yours and your dad's van and the time your mom said there was a big surprise for dinner, and it was cauliflower and you never forgot how much that angered you. But it's like your dad always said. Life isn't fair. Though maybe he was wrong, and life is fair. And maybe it's okay but simply didn't live up to your expectations. Maybe you aren't special. Maybe your life won't mean anything. Maybe you were supposed to be something you didn't become. And now float endlessly on an unfamiliar path. It's funny that we believe we will become anything at all. Or that anything will ever matter.

Edna St. Vincent Millay Is Dead

Her legs buckle at the top of the stairs.
Her heart, the timepiece of hell, stops.
She cannot watch the fall
because her mind is stone black.
Fingers no longer grasp air.
Her lifeless body jounces down each step
and crumples at the bottom in a drift
of blue nightgown and matching slippers.
For eight hours her broken beauty lies
undiscovered. The nearest neighbor lives
a mile away. She no longer hears owls hoot
in the Berkshire Hills or the scrape of
October's yellow leaves claw the window.
The key turns in the lock of the back door.
The caretaker, James Pinnie, enters
to start the evening fire. He ambles
down the hallway, turns the corner
into the foyer and discovers her face down.
He feels for the pulse, touches her
still pallid flesh. Shock of discovering her
beneath layers of silk compels him
to call the coroner. "Miss Millay is dead," he says
into the phone. "You mean the poet?" he hears
on the other end. "Yes. The poet."
The coroner arrives, lays his bowler on the side table,
bends into his pronouncement of finality.
The two men stand silent as they wait
for the undertaker and family to arrive.
A sudden ray of orange dawn spreads across
hardwood floor, stains the end of her
wealthy manners and luxurious decay.



The box

it fills like a box
and once
I thought I wanted
a box like nobody
else had – an apartment
on my own – a place
to live comfortably,
to drink wine and read books
and to write out my poems
while dishes filled sinks
and made stacks on the table.
now, getting married
and I'm somewhat
looking forward to it. and we
live together. and we
share a dog. a life
then, I suppose,
as much dull
as another – dinner,
a glass of wine.
a movie and going
to bed. I imagined that this life
would lead to less
experience.
it hasn't; a box
stays its size
whatever's in it.

A barnacle

you get under next to me;
the mattress goes down
like a boat. bobs about
sideways and bangs
on the pier. I turn
to your hand, which is cold
as wet seaweed; a barnacle, living
to cling. on the sail
of our curtains, the moon
fights off streetlights
for the pleasure of pushing
us forward. your body some flotsam,
moving and seeking.
my body a tideline,
given shape by what lands
on its beach.

Themselves

He gave in
and embraced the
shared pitfalls,
exotic anguishes
and tempered
lonelinesses
of her swollen,
plaintive embrace

They lived
within the space
between freedom
and constriction

and never
were more
themselves.

Scarecrow's Wealth

Who needs words when you own the wind?
When wingtips flash and you embrace the subtleties
of reflection and shrugs and the next moment's
glee. My friends bring me bits of each day.
Today, the bright cap lifted from a cava bottle's
cork. Three days ago, an aluminum half-heart
stamped with "best." The rodent-nibbled straw hat
perched jauntily atop my head bears a pearl
earring, and yesterday a skeleton
key materialized in my left coat pocket,
in which a mouse skull and foil wrappers
also rest. My wealth abounds, and despite
protests, I am rewarded daily. Look, they say,
accept these offerings for what they are: participation
in joy. So I point to choice grains, contribute advice
and song, screech warnings and recite poetry,
though my straw tongue often wavers.
What else may I tender to those who travel
so freely? Last week a polished hinge
came to me, and before that, a chipped glass
eye, which might someday replace my missing
ocular button, should needle and thread appear.
Each day is a gift to be shared. Every gift,
a celebration of days, a commitment to living.
I am grateful, and in my gratitude, give.

Cells

That morning I kneaded dough.
The rose wilted in its cup by the window.
Day folded into night.

What matters? Who?
I don't know why hope dwindles.
Or how cells grow or navigate. Or
divide. Or keep living. What precedes change?

By candlelight, I sliced bread,
battered it with a broad, dull blade.
Tossed a piece to my dog.

Planned the next move.



*

Inside this statue's mouth its tongue
was run aground the way wave after wave
each fossil still hears itself becoming stone

and though the sea is just now taking place
your headstone says the darkness helps
—there's nothing else, the voice you hear

is yours, again and again from your lips
as boundary stones, half sealed in the ground
half on all sides the years to come

as some hillside that no longer has its ballast
on the lookout, that waits for a wider shore
hemmed in, using the time over and over

to tighten around those bottom stones
mourners use to bring you nothing that moves
that feeds you salt, was brought by boat.

*

The rag you fold into a loop
knows better, flattening out
where a window should be

though night after night its soot
lifts off the way piece by piece
a sleeve empties into your hand

as moonlight –it was a dress
motionless, waiting at the wall
for her arm, the usual talk.

*

As if the sun was lost again, its light
crashing into this hillside already covered
with empty bottles, cans and the foul breath

left by a small fire after things didn't work out
–your eyes still smoldering from nights
with enough rainfall for you to come back

healed by tears, by your footsteps wiping dry
what dirt falls from your mouth
as something certain, could be counted on.

*

Every night now you circle the same lamp
become weightless though the bulb
is burning through a gap in the wires

the way madness arrives as darkness
and shoreline –the usual maneuver
–you reach in for the light

not yet struck by a wall kept waiting
for the sound that has no place to go
hears where the sun is buried

still breathing, lit, over and over
reaching for salt from the emptiness
in this room heated by a bed

and what's left from a window
to put out the wound
reeking from ashes and cloth.

*

Too early? Even so, the sun
is backing out though this orchard
was already tilted into Autumn

by the flowers mourners use
to lower one season closer to another
the way every death here

begins as two :an added weight
that heats your forehead
till it touches where the ground

listens for the motherly darkness
made from stone that arrived
as two evenings at once, made heavier

for the kiss beginning a few feet away
still warm, not yet November
is leaving your face thinner, more like bones.

Question in a Stray Cat's Eyes

I like living in a place
where stray cats roam
there's a white fluffy one around
I've seen several times

today I step out
as he's padding down the sidewalk
I sit in my doorway
and say Psst!
he stops, turns,
and looks at me
then continues on his way

Psst! Psst! I say
holding out my hand
as he pauses
and looks again
his narrowed eyes clearly asking—
What do you want
you idiot?

I know because
I've been seeing
that same question
in the mirror
for years

it's a good one
all right

Images Divine and Secular (Ghazal)

Many names for life abandoned behind
myths ignite the darkest clouds from behind.

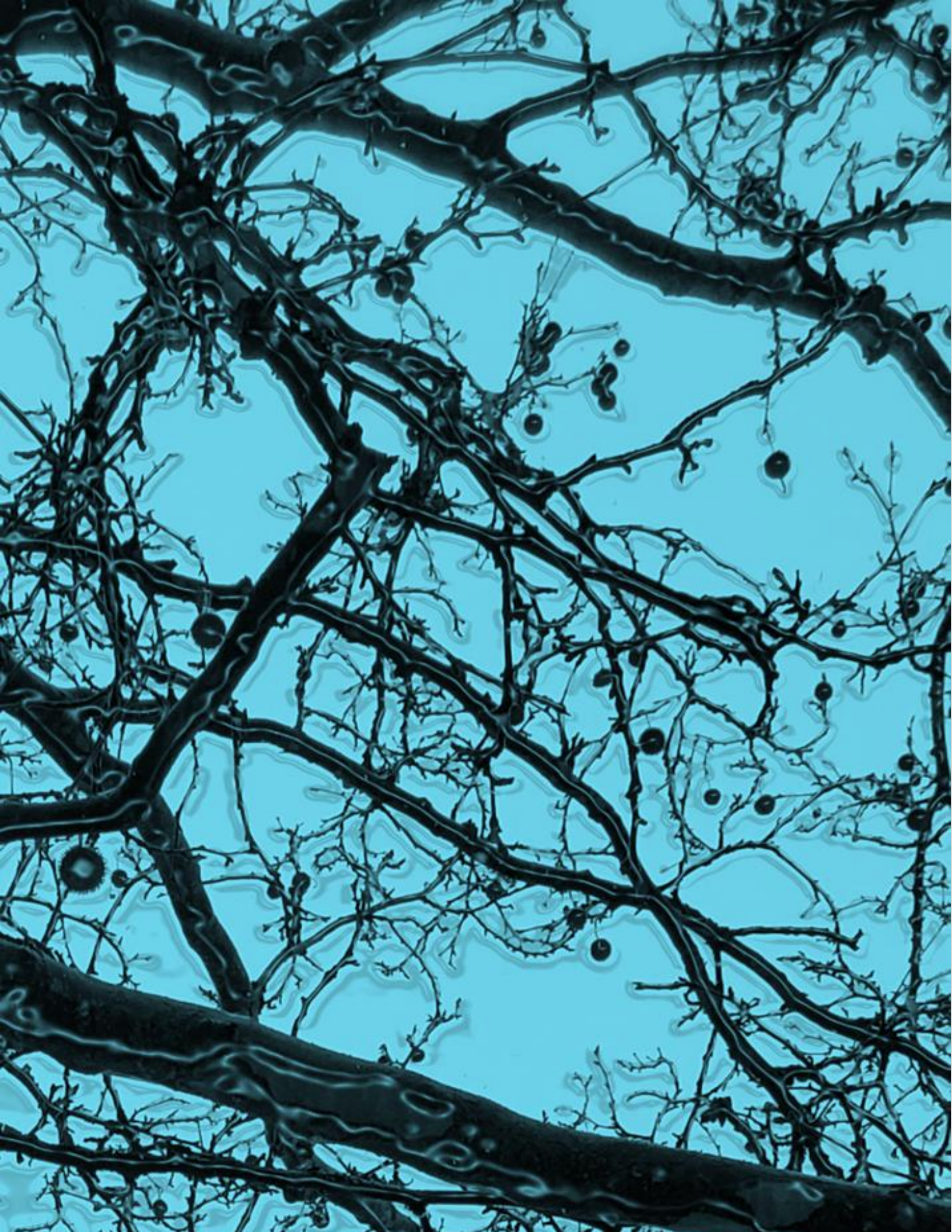
We're designed to come apart in pieces,
leaving trails of separate songs behind.

Sometimes, there is a miracle that births
a moth and leaves a broken hope behind.

This valley teaches us by steps and falls
and memories of all we've left behind.

As shadows, we are moths to distant stars—
our mercy to each other far behind.

A Luna moth at night on window screen—
a living dream by which I'm left behind.



Jan Seagrave

Clay

My mother's lap was bony and thin
I wanted one wide and welcoming

With small muddy fingers
I made a Venus figurine
squatting on a clay kitchen chair
and glazed her with pewter slip
down to her unformed feet

For her bosom
two lumps big as her head
rolled to perfect spheres
stuck on her dress
Her braided hair coiled
face featureless save a nose

Now my mother lies
as white as clay on the ocean floor
A kelp forest sprouts from her breast
Her lap has flattened
and gained geography

At night her calcified head
rolls in to fill my room
I enter quiet through her mouth
Strings of pale lanterns reveal
the red tapestries of a temple

Her lips close to keep me in darkness
then release me as a royal tern

Nolo Segundo

When I Brush Eternity

Rare, rare it is,
yet sometimes
I can feel
God's warm breath
stirring awake my
somnolent soul...
and for a moment
or two
I think I will know
the meaning of All,
but soon it recedes,
that sense of Infinity,
and I'm left hollow,
that taste of Eternity
gone....

Roger Singer

Head Clearing

feeling lost
but not afraid
I quickly move
among levels
of nearby shadows
on a walk with
evening,
attempting
to wear out the
approaching
darkness
and uncounted stars,
as winds close in
on my heels
attempting to
push me
off center

Being Alone So Often

Being alone so often
I read Aristophanes for laughs
While I drink 15 beers
And continuously look out the window
To see if that big white truck is still out there.
Eventually Hank Williams stops by
And gives me a slip of paper
That contains the most amazing couplets
Before getting into the backseat of his Cadillac
And verily dying.
The slip of paper gives me the slip
Between beer 14 and 15
So I go back to Aristophanes
And read until I nearly piss my pants,
Having temporarily forgotten that the toilet
Is only fifteen steps away.

Anyway,
Why is that big white truck still out there
While Williams' caddie is long gone
Without even the memory of a taillight
In the road?

Mitchell Untch

Beautiful

Nothing stops him from opening
my mouth, entering the quiet rooms
of my body. The scent of his skin,

lips red as camellias.
If I were to speak his name,
it would make no difference.

He is always whispering in my ear.
I take him in, this grief. He runs his fingers
through the thick shadows of my hair.

Sometimes I taste him in my food
or when a word enters my mouth.
He salts my tongue, kisses me in the dark.

I only see him when I've stopped
looking. Like innumerable lanterns
through my ribs, up the long

ladder of my spine, he moves
toward the interior of my heart.
Brilliant, this grief never leaves.

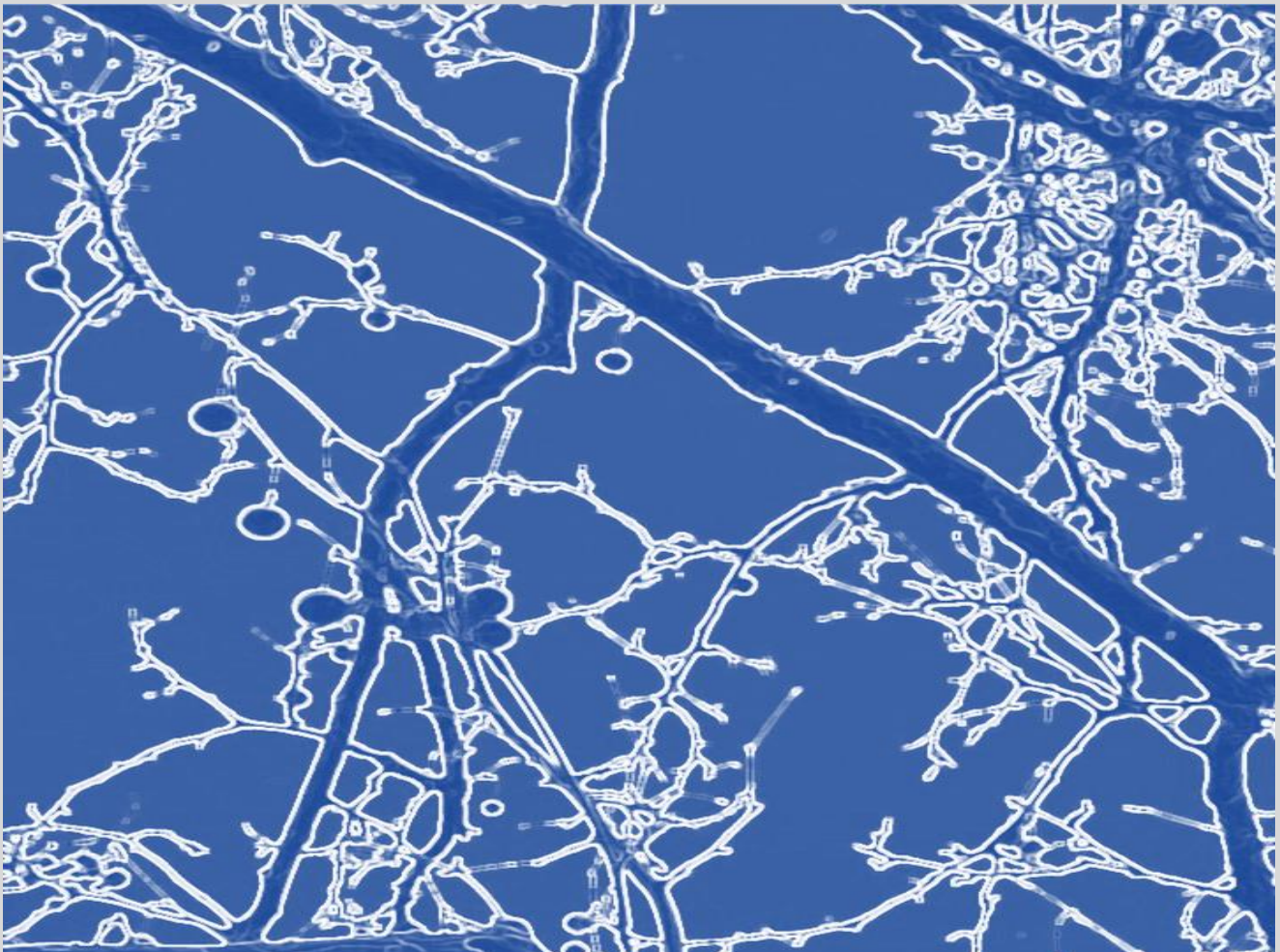
I cannot look him directly
in the face, no more than I
can look directly at the sun.

Knees, hips, shoulders, arms,
I am back to him on all fours,
a moon on the water.

I lift his body. He lifts mine.
My wrists swell. You can tell
a body that has not been touched,

when something reminds it
of what it once was, how it once
murmured. Sometimes I just

want to be recognized.
Mostly he comes to help me remember
everything about you that was alive.



Fame Is the Spur

Three spies had made it back to camp, all dirty, wet, and breathless.

“Two lines. Light artillery in the first, heavier guns behind.”

“They’ve dug ditches and flooded them, but they’re shallow and they left three gaps at least eight horses wide.”

“Dragoons dismounted. Infantry armed with muskets, some with just pikes. Gunpowder and morale low. Their uniforms look tidy, though.”

So, he knew everything he needed.

His army, once small, green, ill-fed, and on the run, was now large and hardened. The men had climbed cliffs, forded rivers, harassed in squads from cover and attacked in battalions on open ground. The cavalymen, his special pride, recruited from the plains, were fearless and invincible. He had rangers too, tough men from the mountains who could walk soundlessly through forests, who terrified the enemy with night attacks on their camps, slitting throats with hunting knives. He’d drilled peasants into artillerymen more skilled with the captured field pieces than the men who had abandoned them. Three recent victories, the last a rout, had made his men confident, and so was he.

He summoned his last Council of War, laid out the order of battle, made sure his officers knew precisely what to do, when and where. He promised them the capital would be theirs before noon on the next day. They cheered and saluted but insisted on extracting another promise, that for once he would not lead from the front. Old Dominguez, who’d been with him from the first, spoke for all in his usual half-sentences. “Needed after,” he said. “Indispensable. No one else.” They believed they could see his future, saw him seated at a big desk and delivering speeches in epaulettes and a sash.

At first light, he took his spyglass and climbed the small observation tower to look over the enemy's double lines of defense behind which the capital lay like a raped woman longing to be freed from the violator she despised. He thought of his lessons with Father Sebastián. The enemy was Cetus and he was Perseus. The enemy was the dragon and he was Saint George. But he didn't believe in sainthood nor did he want to found a dynasty. He was a free-thinking republican. His job was to liberate, not to govern. He loved his country but did not want to marry her, to cope with appointments, taxes, ambassadors, the tangle of bureaucracy. He wished to be remembered as the Liberator, commemorated with an equestrian monument capturing what he would do that morning, not as an old man undermined by faction and defiled by compromise. And that is why he broke his promise, mounted his horse, raised his sabre, and led the charge through the gap in the ditches, making straight for the enemy's cannon and the hail of grapeshot that would liberate him.





Contributors

Emily Black, a civil engineer, always dabbled in writing. Now she has taken up poetry writing with serious intent. She's fortunate to have found an amazing teacher who's given her the wings to soar like an eagle! "A humble eagle," she says, "who appreciates being taught how to write with the eyes of an eagle, the heart of a lion, the perseverance of a mountain goat and the memory of an elephant, at least about things that matter." Her work has been published in numerous journals.

Jakima Davis writes, "I've been writing poetry for 21 years. I've been published in underground publications, including Conceit and Amulet magazines, The PEN, misfits, among others. I published three chapbooks in 2016 and 2020. I'm expecting my first full-length book of poems to be published in the following year. As of now, I'm posting my poems on Facebook to gain a fanbase."

Holly Day (hollylday.blogspot.com) has been a writing instructor at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis since 2000. Her poetry has recently appeared in *Asimov's Science Fiction*, *Grain*, and *Harvard Review*, and her newest poetry collections are *Into the Cracks* (Golden Antelope Press), *Cross Referencing a Book of Summer* (Silver Bow Publishing), *The Tooth is the Largest Organ in the Human Body* (Anaphora Literary Press), and *Book of Beasts* (Weasel Press).

Salvatore Difulco's work has appeared in a number of print and online formats. He lives in Toronto.

Richard Dinges, Jr. lives and works by a pond among trees and grassland, along with his wife, two dogs, three cats, and five chickens. *Hurricane Review*, *Thin Air*, *Oddball*, *Illuminations*, and *Willawaw Journal* most recently accepted his poems for their publications.

Rod Drought, an ex-New Yorker, now calls Arizona his home. He has four books of poetry found on his website, droughtsthirst.com. He has been published in many literary journals, and is co-administrator to *Port of Call Poetry*, an online page that supports poets worldwide.

Korinne Ellert is currently a college Junior. She is a poet from Indiana and embarks to write about the grief she has experienced through the loss of her father to suicide in late 2020 and the loss of her mother to a drunk driving accident in mid-2021. On top of her grief poetry, she often writes about mental illness, feminism, significant cultural events, sexuality, and the romantic aspects of being alive.

Jack Galmitz was born in 1951 in NYC. Though an older man, he doesn't write poems about his libido and find words to rhyme with it. He is published in *Otoliths*, *otata*, *And/Or*, *Poetica Review*, and many other sites.

J.I.B. is a traveling prose poet.

Peter J. King (born and brought up in Boston, Lincolnshire) was active on the London poetry scene in the 1970s, returning to poetry in 2013, since when he has been widely published. His available collections are *Adding Colours to the Chameleon* (Wisdom's Bottom) and *All What Larkin* (Albion Beatnik). Web site: <https://wisdomsbottompress.wordpress.com/>

Wilson Koewing is a writer from South Carolina. His work has recently appeared in *Hobart*, *Maudlin House*, *Wigleaf*, and *X-R-A-Y*. His memoir "Bridges" is forthcoming from Bull City Press.

R. Nikolas Macioci earned a PhD from The Ohio State University. OCTELA, the Ohio Council of Teachers of English, named Nik Macioci the best secondary English teacher in the state of Ohio. Nik is the

author of two chapbooks as well as nine books: Critics and judges called his first book, *Cafes of Childhood*, a “beautifully harrowing account of child abuse,” but not “sentimental” or “self-pitying,” an “amazing book,” and “a single unified whole.” *Cafes of Childhood* was submitted for the Pulitzer Prize in 1992. In 2021, he has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and The Best of the Net award. More than two hundred of his poems have been published here and abroad in magazines and journals, including *Chiron*, *Concho River Review*, *The Bombay Review*, and *Blue Unicorn*.

DS Maolalai has been nominated eight times for Best of the Net and five times for the Pushcart Prize. His poetry has been released in two collections, *Love is Breaking Plates in the Garden* (Encircle Press, 2016) and *Sad Havoc Among the Birds* (Turas Press, 2019)

ayaz daryl nielsen, veteran and hospice nurse, lives in Longmont, Colorado. Editor of *bear creek haiku* (35+ years/175+ issues), he is online at: *bear creek haiku poetry, poems and info*.

Robert Okaji is a displaced Texan living in Indiana. He holds a BA in history, served without distinction in the U.S. Navy, is the author of multiple chapbooks, and his poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Taos Journal of International Poetry & Art*, *Boston Review*, *Vox Populi*, and elsewhere.

Simon Perchik's poetry has appeared in *Partisan Review*, *The Nation*, *The New Yorker*, and elsewhere.

Brian Rihlmann lives in Reno, Nevada. His work has appeared in many magazines, including *Chiron Review*, *The Main Street Rag*, *The American Journal Of Poetry*, and *New York Quarterly*. He has authored three collections of poetry, most recently “A Screaming Place,” (2021) by Cajun Mutt Press.

David Anthony Sam lives in Virginia with his wife and life partner, Linda. His poetry has appeared in over 90 journals and his poem, "First and Last," won the 2018 Rebecca Lard Award. Six of his collections are in print including *Final Inventory* (Prolific Press 2018), *Finite to Fail: Poems after Dickinson* (2016 Grand Prize winner of the GFT Press Chapbook Contest), and *Dark Fathers* (Kelsay Books 2019). He teaches creative writing at Germanna Community College, from where he retired as President in 2017 and serves as the Regional VP on the Board of the Virginia Poetry Society.

Jan Seagrave lives beside an oak and a redwood north of Golden Gate Bridge. Her work appears or is forthcoming in *Panoplyzine*; *San Pedro River Review*; *Gyroscope Review*; *Eunoia Review*; *Amethyst Review*; *Reverberations II* (ed. Pendergast); *Marin Poetry Center Anthology 2016, 2017, 2021*; *Redwood Writers Poetry Anthology 2018-2021*; *Amore: Love Poems* (ed. Tucker).

Nolo Segundo, pen name of L.J. Carber, 74, has in his 8th decade become a published poet in 46 online/in-print literary journals in the U.S., U.K. Canada, Romania, and India; in 2020 a trade publisher released a book-length collection titled *The Enormity Of Existence* and in 2021 a 2nd book, *Of Ether And Earth*.

Dr. Roger Singer is the Poet Laureate of Old Lyme, Connecticut. He has had over 1,150 poems published on the internet, magazines, and in books and is a 2017 Pushcart Prize Award Nominee. He is also the President of the Shoreline Chapter of the Connecticut Poetry Society. Some of the magazines that have accepted his poems for publication are: *Westward Quarterly*, *Jerry Jazz*, *SP Quill*, *Avocet*, *Underground Voices*, *Outlaw Poetry*, *Literary Fever*, *Dance of My Hands*, *Language & Culture*, *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *The Stray Branch*, *Toasted Cheese*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, Ambassador Poetry Award Massachusetts State Poetry Society, Louisiana State Poetry Society Award 2019, Arizona State Poetry Society Award 2020, and Mad Swirl Anthology 2018 and 2019.

John Tustin's poetry has appeared in many disparate literary journals since 2009. fritzware.com/johntustinpoetry contains links to his published poetry online.

Mitchell Untch writes, "I am an emerging writer. Partial publications include *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Poet Lore*, *North American Review*, *Confrontation*, *Nimrod Intl*, *Natural Bridge*, *Owen Wister*, *Solo Novo*, *Knockout*, *Baltimore Review*, *Lake Effect*, *The Catamaran Reader*, *Grey Sparrow*, *Illuminations*, *Tusculum Review*, *The Tampa Review*, *Mudfish*, *Chiron Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, *srpr*, *Paris American*, *Moth*, *Fjords*, among others."

Robert Wexelblatt is a professor of humanities at Boston University's College of General Studies. He has published seven fiction collections; two books of essays; two short novels; two books of poems; stories, essays, and poems in a variety of journals, and a novel awarded the Indie Book Awards first prize for fiction.





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