

The Big Windows Review

Issue 31 Spring 2023





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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Tom Zimmerman, Editor.

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Website: thebigwindowsreview.com

Email: thebigwindowsreview@gmail.com

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Contents

Christopher Barnes	Townscapes 1-5	5
Emily Black	Luna	7
	We Feed Dragons to the Moon	7
paul Bluestein	Occasional poetry	8
Alan Catlin	The Eggs of My Amnesia	9
Arvilla Fee	Candles	10
George Freek	Dialogue with the Moon (After Li Po)	11
	In the Middle of the Night (After Tu Fu)	12
	October Night (After Tu Fu)	13
Matt Gillick	Headwater	15
Doug Hoekstra	Offseason (Italian Sonnet)	18
Phil Huffy	Promptitude	19
Maggie Nerz Iribarne	Former	20
Jennifer Klein	Summer Morning	21
Vyarka Kozareva	Lace on the Haystack	22
	Chain Reaction	22
Samo Kreutz	No more empty ground (a haiku sequence)	23
Mike Lewis-Beck	Bad Bar in Chicago	24
Thomas Mixon	Break of Day	25
R. H. Nicholson	Grief Train	27
ayaz daryl nielsen	Seven haiku	29
Robert Okaji	Hearse, Departing	31
	In That Moment of Clarity	31
	In This Gray Morning I Think of Hiroshige	32
Kenneth Pobo	Meteorologist on a Calm Day	33
	Nude Philosopher	34
Sharon Scholl	Change	35
Jake Sheff	We Install a Sump Pump on (What Used To Be)	
	a Holiday (Take 8)	36
Roger Singer	Night Flash	37

John Sweet	like false kings growing fat on the corpses of children	38
Terry Trowbridge	Atropos	39
Diane Webster	Cracks Run	40
Brief Book Reviews		42
Contributors		46



Christopher Barnes

Townscape 1

Striving-for-effect cornice, blunt pediment.
Forceful rhododendrons propel macromolecules.
Hived-off granite trench.
Bus creaks, hesitates...
Where Apollo dissolved intent.

Townscape 2

Colonnaded stairwell dwindles.
Gene-control pathways stiffen azaleas.
Hewed flint consumes time.
Playground swing flurries...
Where Gaia unwrapped the rum.

Townscape 3

Lumpish column, beams.
Chemical signals jostle ivy.
Rough limestone facing.
Gusts tumble bin...
Where Horus disposed of girly pinafores.

Townscape 4

Inward-sloping wall constricts.
Winter cherry admits biological universe.
Half-lit bas-relief.
Morrisons bag deflates...
Where Aphrodite off-loaded taut brogues.

Townscape 5

Ashlar, upright, gouged.
Lilies nod yielding tissue.
Moldering paint on stucco.
Skunk roach prangs...
Where Demeter bent, feebly.



Luna

When the music stops, we'll melt into a seawater puddle, a puddle of tears. I'll wear my yellow galoshes I had when I was five and pretend I'm a yellow-tailed mermaid.

My open arms are waiting. We'll spin around the room, one limber octopus, two bodies that flow as one in a tango rhythm. Our eyes will lock together as we follow this gaze.

Neptune leads our dance well, but he forgets I'm not a true sea-being and he has no power over me. I am the moon whose golden-yellow chariot lights the night sky with deep, mysterious reflections.

We Feed Dragons to the Moon

Moon dust fuels our love madness.
Breezes etch our bodies until they feel

like sandblasted glass. Our minds give
way to passion that suspends all thoughts

and makes us one. We worship the moon,
our heavenly mother, goddess of our love,

and nurture her with rituals that send
our fearful monsters into her ample arms.

Occasional poetry

Most poems are weekday, workaday prose,
tucked into magazine columns
or stared at by subway riders waiting for their station.
Occasionally though, there is a poem that ascends
to escape the gravity of the ordinary.
Comet-like, it streaks across the horizon of our imagination
to give voice to a life, a loss or a dream.
The poet knows what to say when no one else does
and thus, is often assigned that most intimidating task –
speaking for all of us
when there are no words that seem sufficient.

The Eggs of My Amnesia

are all broken in a dream
scripted by Brueghel night-
mares, dwarf legs scampering
like insects searching for a body,
nude adults of both sexes collared
by black cylinders, discs that
capture filthy rain, the offal that
drips from a putrid sky; a torn
backdrop, partial wall hangings
are composed in mixed media:
cloth tapestry, oil-based portraits
of demon children, underworld
lovers completely deformed, burnt
offerings behind sheer skin curtains,
howling monks, the voices of the
damned trying to remember the pillaged
feast, remnants scattered about this
cluttered studio floor: the empty
flagons, eviscerated bones, skulls
and mirrors, mirrors and skulls.

Candles

How briefly they burn
wax trickling down
the sides,
 tears of loss,
beaten down, bankrupt,
flame flickering, wavering
 with each gust
bending, regaining rigidity,
bending again,
 wicks blackened by time,
by carbon
 your carbon and mine,
smudged shadows on the wall, an attempt
to make us bigger than we are,
 hot wells recessed,
how little wick is left
 to kiss the match
that keeps us burning.

Dialogue with the Moon (After Li Po)

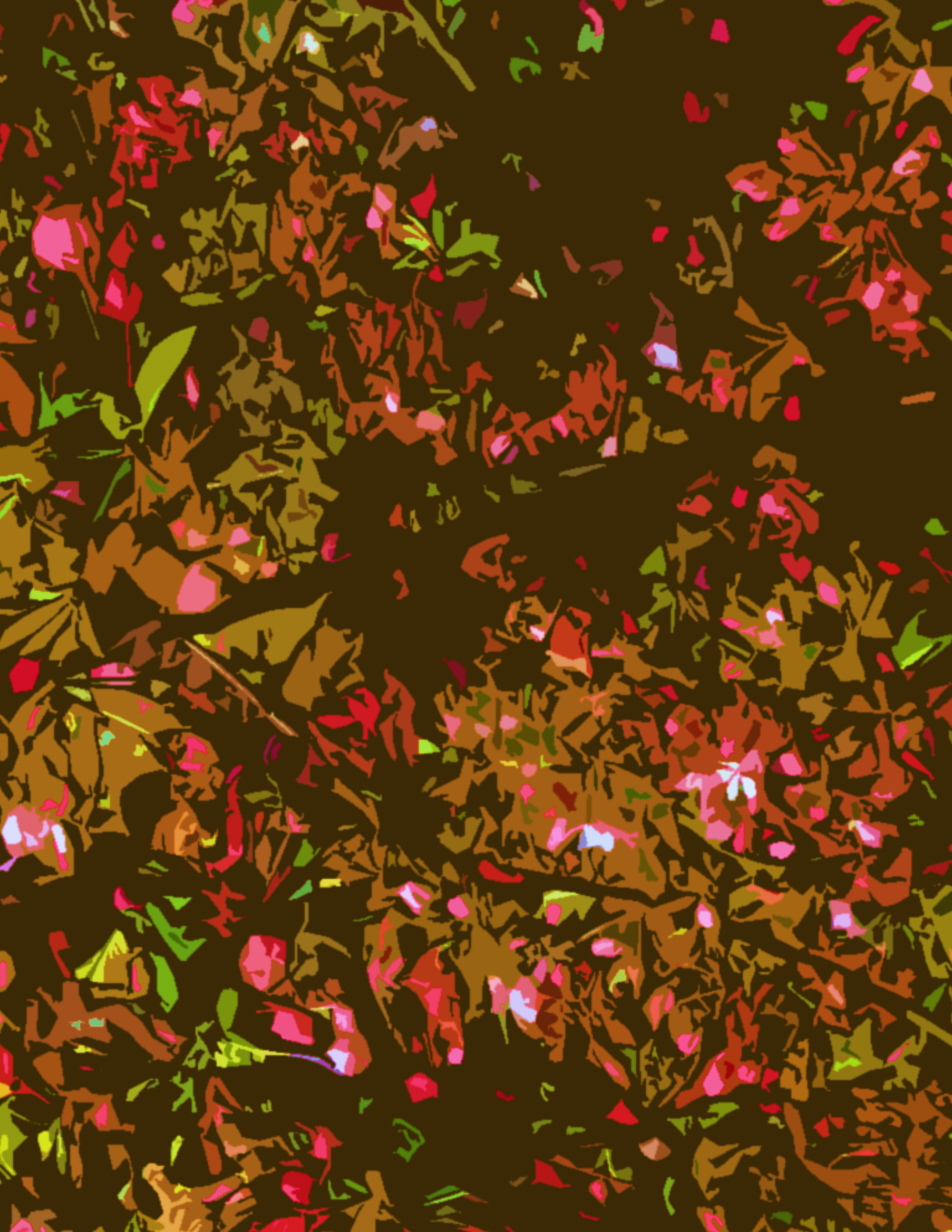
After last night's frost,
autumn leaves die fast.
The days are brief.
The nights are long.
I drink a glass of wine
to forget the past.
I speak to the dead moon
in an uncomprehending sky.
In a freezing rain, leaves
blow over your grave.
You were forty-five,
But no one
is too young to die.

In the Middle of the Night (After Tu Fu)

The sky is a clock
without a face, as the day
ticks to a conclusion.
Some stars appear.
Hanging in the air
like lanterns, lighting
the way to nowhere.
The river meanders
in haphazard fashion,
without cares,
without dreams,
without passions.
An owl awakens,
leaving his tree,
searching for a victim.
For some tiny creature,
it will be the last night
of his unmemorable life.

October Night (After Tu Fu)

A black fog hangs
like a disease
from the frozen trees.
If I could, I would pray,
but what would I say?
The sky turns dark,
as if hiding unspeakable sins.
Leaves fall
from my sapless trees.
They shudder, dancing
to death in the night air.
A solitary raven
circles the darkening sky.
He glides with a purpose.
He doesn't look at me.
And as winter closes in,
his thoughts are deadly.



Headwater

Cold dawn water
 goes mute in
 the autumn wood

I'm bleeding out on the riverbank
 and there are
 reverberations of frequencies
 made visible

Turning up to the redding
 black then
 red again sky
kinetic oars
 of clouds
 within clouds
 of electrons
 collide
 along flying flowing water
 mirrored in the sky
 hurtling
 darkened

 The bridge groans and chips
 breaking off
like loose scrim woven
 upon
 the land
 as the wild festers
 digs out
 from underneath

 Strings of nylon light peer through
 suspension wires
 bends
 smiles
in the fashion of sons' and fathers'
 tangled
 castoff lines

What an early morning
pruned worms in tiny hands

Rising
flapping heat flutters their shadows
away

Words float atop
brown riprap
as trees fall
into the river

Greenish shrubs
perm to the surface
slowly dragged into the current
the way half-dreams
dew to droplets of prickled sweat
before awakening
except here they're
suspended
resigned to sleep

It will all be over soon
not over
just not here

Slowcreep of the numb
melting
then hardening bones

Sputtered whispers
drift out
to become riven runoff
while vowels and trochees
clog the throat
and become an attempt to laugh
at how relaxing this is now
slackjawed

But these gurgling streams
become wrinkles
sickbeds
bridal gaze
collapsing phone calls
desert highway
mother
and this could
be why we look
surprised
when we're found



Offseason (Italian Sonnet)

Offseason. Dusty windows shuttered tight
In the blackness, I listen to her sleep
The rise and fall of interrupted dreams
Shallow waters. The edge of ocean tide
Lost afternoons. Small moments magnified
Paintings of horses. Landscape stucco scenes
Lined the walls of our hotel by the sea
She huddled close, the one I still rewind

No histories or stories to be read
Baggage lost or never bought. Two unclaimed
By a future that wasn't ours to see
Magic. In the hollow of our bed came
The turning of a string of present days
Fading, I still remember how she sleeps

Promptitude

Oh yes, a window,
there always seems to be
nearby, a window,
so, onward, lucidly.

Perhaps that window
looks from the second floor
and such a window
reveals a little more.

But you, dear poet,
have not the only one
and now, poor poet,
your job has just begun.

To write, a poet
requires poetic eyes.
Alas, good poet,
that's where the challenge lies.

Former

Pressing his black trousers again, the steam hisses and sputters. I smooth out the faint lines, push in a crease. The children, who watch me from their framed faces lining the walls, are at school. In another frame- our holiday group shot-the five of us standing beneath looping words: Merry Christmas from the Phillips Family, the children are decked out in holiday greens and reds. My husband and I wear off tones. He dons a purple sweater with his black slacks, “Because it’s technically Advent,” he said at the time. For no good reason, I wear a butter yellow turtleneck. I fade into background, like an unlit candle

I shift the trousers from the ironing board to my husband’s side of the closet. They line up in smooth order, a sight I know will give him pleasure, provoke a peck on the cheek while I wash dishes.

He wears the black trousers always, whether at the office or mowing the lawn. He refuses the khakis, jeans, and corduroys I bought him at the beginning. They stay neatly folded in a stack on a shelf. He would never consider giving them away. “They were a gift from my wife,” he says, “it’s unthinkable.”

I slide the rounded triangle of my iron across swathes of dark fabric, acquiescing to the encroaching memory – the first time he let go, pulled me in, my bottom meeting his black lap, my arms and legs wrapping around his chaste body.

“Slut,” that’s what the parishioners called me.

“Savior,” is what my husband said, just that first time.

I work the last pair of his black trousers, repetitive motions across the flat surface, attempting to tease out that final stubborn wrinkle.

Summer Morning

On a summer morning
I witnessed dew on the grass
The air was crystal cool
In my mind, I bent down
And let the elements do with me
What they will

Sun-drenched dewdrops
Birthed from their lushness
Wandered into the crevices
Of my heart, emanating
Glow-in-the-mornlight
Bioluminescence

They showed me The Way
Of my future
Sang it to me
With just as much Cackling
As Wisdom

Lace on the Haystack

The bride wore the sweet smell of acacia
Like royal robes, with dignity.
The summer was sleeping in her copper curls
The honey was melting on her tongue.
Her breath—a healing whiff,
Her eyes—crystal vials
Keeping secrets.

Chain Reaction

Yesterday,
I wanted to memorize you
Cutting red jalapeños
On the kitchen board.
Because
The spirit always conquers the flesh
It's the charming chrysanthemums
In your lap
That will make me panicked tomorrow.
If you lick your wounded finger today,
Your blood will clasp my throat,
My saliva will heal your pain.

No more empty ground (a haiku sequence)

furrows
already sown in them
the bird's sounds

planting beans
a small child speaks
about the cosmos

lettuce seedlings
no more on a bare ground
his shadow

watering flowers
all the new shoots
of her stories

Bad Bar in Chicago

I'm in a bad bar in Chicago but not as bad as your tarot bar. The ranter next to me explained, between bites of bone, that he now understood everything and didn't need to explain. I said I understood. He left, not themed but he did have a lime windbreaker and I thought of a gimlet. So I ordered a gimlet although then I knew I wanted a Gibson like Chandler. Still I wonder which of your 4 cocktails are your inventions? Which two? Must be Smile cause of the calamus and Corpus cause of the Cherry Herring which broke all over me when I was hit by a biker in Guatemala City in 1967 and I thought it was The End Of The World. But it only ended the Cherry Herring.

Break of Day

On dark mornings I go walking in the frozen tracks
the trucks I don't look out for made, gloves askew,
head turned down, eardrums stuffed with sticky

rhymes from skeletal verses, and hoof prints
dirt road petrified, which I ascribe to horses,
which can't be right, it must be boars, escaped

from rich folks' hunting grounds, game preserve
across the highway, and the broken fence forbears
its tale, not that I'd listen, as the ledge begins

to crest, and only then do I look up to verify
that I'm alone, to make sure I'm not asked
to console another passerby, that I won't jump,

I won't, I haven't yet and have no plans
to start, and I'm relieved by the diluted sun
paltering with clouds, sprawling landscape

empty of a single soul who wants to sell me
hope, and it's a joy to turn around and unexplain
myself to scalloped ground, faltering, then falling.



Grief Train

The Grief Train
Pulled into the station
Onyx black
Steam hissing
Angry, sullen,
And I handed the porter my single ticket
For grief is a solitary passage.
I claimed my seat,
Facing backwards,
The only option,
Nearest the couplings
Clanging in the gloam,
The rhythm of nihilism
Gnawing at my brain,
And watched the others board:
A Latina whose daughter drowned in the Rio crossing,
A lamenting veteran,
A husbandless wife,
A father whose son slipped
Through his fingers,
A sister who survived the massacre,
A lover lost.
We sensed that we did not sense each other,
And traveled in silence,
Blur in the windows,
Arctic air at our bones,
With beads and bibles,
Photos and fragments,
Tears and trinkets,
Clutched to our hearts.
And we rode.
After hours or months or decades or days,

(For one is as the other),
The iron horse crawled to a stop.
We sat,
All of us
In silent stagnation,
Until the porter gently
Ushered us
To our destinations,
Surprisingly all the same.
I disembarked,
Numb and knotted,
And followed the path,
Of crucible stones
To the other side
Of the languishing locomotive,
Stood in line,
Until the porter punched
My ticket,
And I boarded the Grief Train
Again.

geese walking on ice
each careful, focused web-step...
echoes from my heart

through our big window
dreams of loving peacefulness
opening it wide

all of them, fallen
imaginary angels
prancing through my dreams

underneath these ribs
missing the presence of you
my heart pumping tears

the world ends somewhere
but not here nor today
kissing her again

behind shrubbery
howling like a pack of wolves
neighbors and I, laughing

this poem makes its stand
critiques my uncertainty,
and states, “I’m complete”



Hearse, Departing

Not waiting for God. Nor that light
glancing off the windshield,
leaving us farther behind
in the blurred passage. Grief
is a cold engine, a stump,
a daily migraine. Not force
but absence. Gray sky
clamping down on the
sun-starved chrysanthemum.
Our goodbyes, incomplete.

In That Moment of Clarity

Body of moon, body of light. That
central point moving ever outward
through avoided bliss. No one
suited you. Spring became autumn
and your hair thinned as the soil
dried, inept, harsh, a howl caught
at the throat of the blurred lens
in the owl-eye of contention. Missteps
expanded in tongue-slipped days,
and you slurred forward. Yesterday's
lapse. Today's misdeed. Another's
intent. My mistake was living.

In This Gray Morning I Think of Hiroshige

Hummingbirds pause at the agave blossoms.
Sunlight trickles through dense clouds.
I stand sweating in the emptiness.
Hiroshige, too, acknowledged oblivion,
leaving his brush in the East, having
completed a final task. Facing death,
he sought the Western Land. In this space
nothing fills me with desire. As you,
in your unknowing, observe the flow.



Meteorologist on a Calm Day

I can't even speak about clouds,
the sky an unforgiving blue.
I climb the sun's gold ladder
to heaven—but it's empty.
Everyone returned to Earth

to enjoy a perfect day. No wind,
just a slight breeze to tease open
the eye of a violet. An angel
almost slipped on morning dew,
but it grabbed onto a lilac
just in time. I'm probably

the only sad person, rain far away.
I could indicate what might
appear in tonight's sky. Look up

and see Jupiter, a world
with real weather,
a huge red spot gashed into it
for centuries. Or Neptune
with 2000mph winds.

What can I offer but 75 degrees
and a bluebird preening
on a flagpole?

Nude Philosopher

I peel off my clothes.
Under fabric, the same old me,
breathe in, breathe out, cars
roll by, and my parrot theorizes
on my shoulder. I think

that I think better naked,
but my ideas come fully dressed,
soldiers in formation. Why
did I tell them that they could
live with me? It's time
that they fledge, make their
own nests. Usually I keep

each room dark. A light bulb
hangs down by my bed. I turn
the day on and off. I'm often
asked about the meaning of life.
I point to the sky and say
"Clouds."

I guess it sounds deep.
My favorite flower
is a dahlia. Blossom and go.
Redden something along the way.

Change

Fall comes whistling softly
like one who wants to be felt
but not yet seen. It's like holding
and holding a door ajar,
hoping the cat will choose in or out.

After long, sweaty months
with night settling in by ten p.m.,
dawn knocking us awake,
a flash bulb at six a.m.,
the long dusk folds its gray curtain,
shaking out cool morning mist.

Time that held its breath
for days while heat rose in waves
expels it with a sudden wind
that causes windows to fly open,
houses to inhale, cough out mildew.

We shed a season's lassitude,
gearing up brain and bones
for some slow forward movement.
We are on the verge, perched
between skin and sweaters.

We Install a Sump Pump on (What Used To Be) a Holiday (Take 8)

It's good to be home, son. This storm must be
Re-examining its assumptions, or giving us
The silent treatment. Let's put on *London Calling*,
After this Tchaikovsky number. Try to put your
Body into it a little more, like you're contending
With a vortex full of ancient and angelic thoughts!

Screw that in tighter; make a seal. I read a lot
Of H.G. Wells in prison, thought a lot about fox-
Gloves at Fort Stevens in the needy months of
Rain. Camping? If your mother's permission slips
On a banana peel. First, we better persuade this
Crazy sump pump to at least pretend it's not

Insane. The warden looked like the spectacled
Eiders we used to see up north. In this weather,
My hands conceive better than they combine. Work
Tastes like the salmonberries at Oxbow Park,
When the shotgun shells and fabric softener above
The vortex are mine. I'm dumber than a rifled slug.

Night Flash

city without
sleep

angels at the
corner

light and shadows,
a siren owns the air

marching shoes,
a sidewalk melody

street pipes,
steam songs

blue night

black hawk

like false kings growing fat on the corpses of children

a different assassination in a
later century, but
the idea remains the same

history written lightly in pencil
in case the
names need to be changed

one small step in someone else's
idea of the right direction

you invent a cause, and then
you figure out
who needs to die for it

Atropos

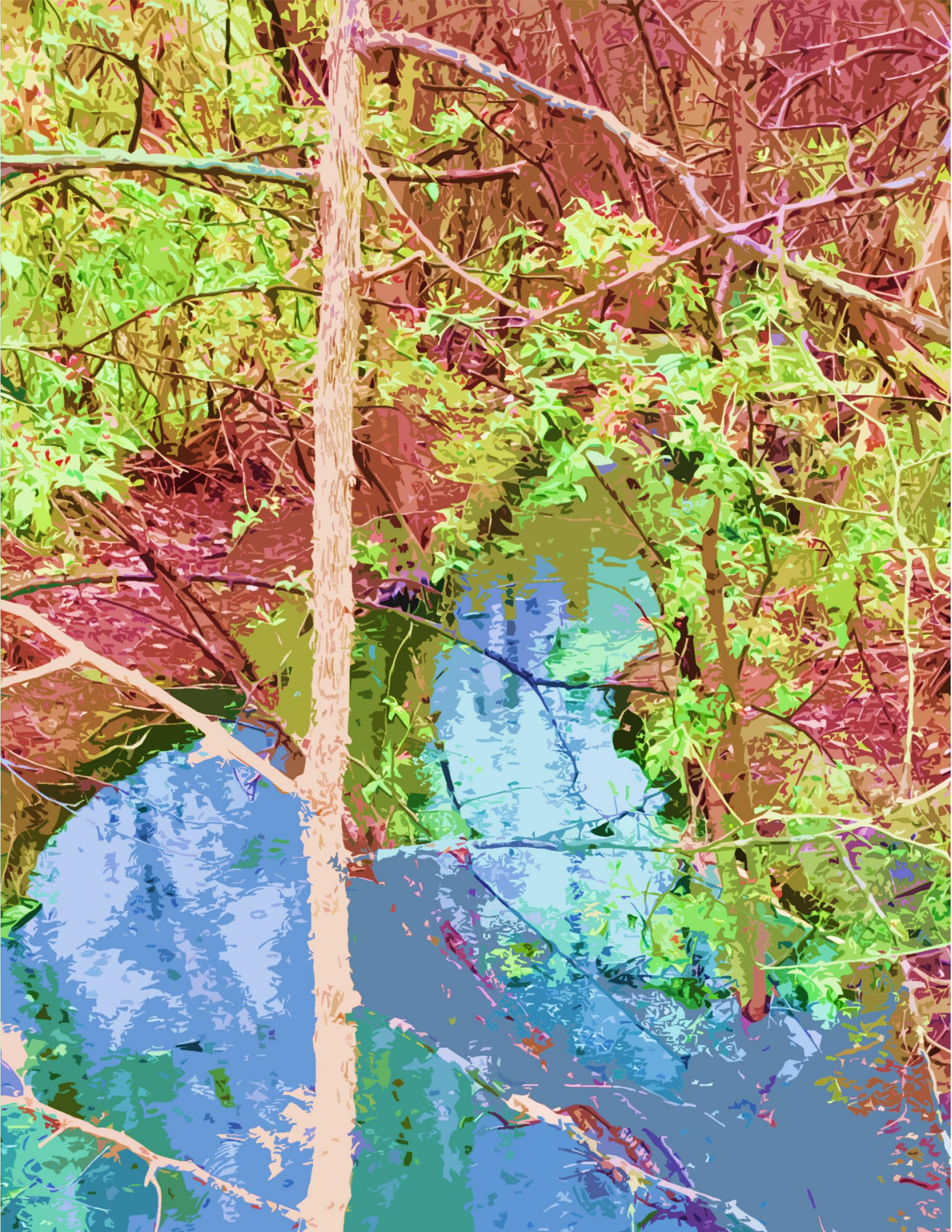
When I cut my hair I will bury it
in the stream behind my parents' house
so that the bog will digest it.
It will lace together the
dreary bacteria and cold peat
and be the anchor for frog eggs
and the hibernating smell of toad holes in the winter.

When I cut my hair I will leave it
under a tall tree so that birds
will weave their nests from it.
Embryos will grow in my woolly warmth.
Later, abandoned to the branches
crows will pick at it, wasps will pack mud
on the balled up clogs, squirrels might tie
them around packages of walnuts.

After I cut it and find a spool,
I might count my hair, one a day,
to find out if I have more hairs on my head than days left to live.
Or I might string them over a loom in a ritual
with some disregard for colours and a need for earthy smells.

Cracks Run

Grass in pavement cracks
runs across the black top
like green rivulets of lava
surging, overflowing banks,
creating new avenues
until weed killer spray
browns growth in its tracks;
sea water blackens
molten stone into granite plugs
as steam scowls skyward
until somewhere else a shift
in surface sprouts another crack,
and dormant roots seek escape.



Brief Book Reviews

Greenspan, David. *One Person Holds So Much Silence*. Driftwood Press, 2022, 77 pp.

Blood, spit, mirrors, prescription drugs: these are the images that stick with me after having read David Greenspan's smart, gritty poetry collection *One Person Holds So Much Silence*. Waves of pain, waves of painkillers: this is how I would describe Greenspan's poetic line. For example, take these lines from the book's opener, the wonderfully titled "Poem for a god of my own understanding":

Florida covered in cuticle
mush warm throat pink
bloated with Vicodin
no spit to speak of
how many times can I find myself
covered in honeysuckle
before I wise up

Or the closing lines from one of my favorites in the collection, “Poem for Florida”:

The sun
touches itself in the backyard
as the dead mosquito
around its ugly medicine. I sit
rat tail against dandelion stem,
bruised as ground fruit and
drinking from a hose.

Or these, from the long piece that closes the book, “A Poem to Pass the Time”:

I look balder than I feel
like a hardboiled egg a quick mouth
a seasick ache I was never

mentally ill just unfit for production
pessimism of the spirit
the feeling of a twenty-dollar bill
slid firmly between teeth

There are many other excellent poems: “Skinny Fisted Sons,” “The first time my father cut himself,” “Palliative on a Rooftop,” “Body by Adderall,” and both pieces entitled “An incomplete history of.” An added feature at the back of the book is a revealing interview of Greenspan by Jerrod Schwarz. All in all, a very satisfying collection.

–TZ, 22 February 2023

Schneider, Peter. *In the Field of Unintended Consequences*. PB&J Books, 2022, 100 pp.

Two long, rangy, allusive poems, “Wild Chervil” and “Gingko and footnotes,” frame Peter Schneider’s excellent full-length collection *In the Field of Unintended Consequences*. Both poems blend physical description, scientific fact, environmental consciousness, and Eastern and Western philosophy in mostly unpunctuated, rarely enjambed free verse that, to my ear, uses human breathing to determine its line lengths. Here’s a stanza from “Wild Chervil”:

And isn’t it the same deal
with mental weeds
the word-and-thought chervils
ah, disingenuous me
on my black zazen cushion
plucking out what always comes back

And this, from “Gingko and footnotes”:

*gingko. . .
just living its life
private in public
like this room of yellow light

and books
suspended
in the organic mechanism
of the city

These excerpts also display Schneider's skill with using metaphor to connect and extend his ruminations. Similar skills and techniques are evident in the book's other ten poems: the nine-part "Quilted Pillows" employs as a controlling metaphor certain microbes from the Ediacaran Period (which occurred five or six million years ago, according to my Google search); "Openings" is a fourteen-part poem mixing the physical and the metaphysical; "Black Garnet" presents a clever metaphor for the workings of language and the mind; "China" blends memory and Eastern philosophy; "Springs" travels "from Spain to Macedonia"; the twelve-part "From the Book of Numinous Dreams" is just that; "Letter to Space" and "Everywhere men speak in whispers" ponder the imagined end of our planet; "The Coraçon Function" deftly employs a heart metaphor; and "Philosophy Library" ends beautifully with "there is no good reason / why things matter / just that they do."

—TZ 19 February 2023

Solonche, J.R. *It's About Time*. Deerbrook Editions, 2023, 69 pp.

Accessible, aphoristic, big-hearted, and humorous, J.R. Solonche's *It's About Time* is a delightful poetry collection. Most of the poems are short, often two to a page. Here, in its entirety, is one of my favorites, "Three Butterflies":

I do not care
about the pair.
It is the third one
that my heart
goes out to.

Another favorite of mine is the collection's closer, "When the Time Comes":

When the time comes,
I want to be waiting there.

I have something to say
that I do not want to say
behind its back. I want
to say it to its face as all
important things need be said.
When the time comes,
I want to be there, waiting.

Of course, the book also features longer poems. Memorable to me are the book's opener, "Time," which juxtaposes a physicist's notions of time with the speaker's discovery of a dead opossum during a morning walk; "In the Bar," in which the speaker and a friend discuss a good-looking woman sitting nearby; and "Virginia Beach," a childhood-reminiscence piece that ends with these thoughts about the speaker's mother: "She just didn't tell the whole truth. / She would have made a great poet."

And, speaking of great poets, Solonche alludes to quite a few. William Stafford and Stanley Kunitz, clearly touchstones for the poet, appear together in "Pictures." Immediately following, "The Soul's Sea" namedrops A.R. Ammons. "Dim Gold" conjures Frost's great "Nothing Gold Can Stay." "Shadows," with its mysterious hawk, brings to mind Wallace Stevens's blackbirds. Solonche even gives us a tragicomic tribute to Dylan Thomas.

I'll close with Solonche's poem "Introductions":

It's good to know about
them before you dive
in, I suppose. I guess it's
helpful to be prepared, but
I never read them. You'll
know right away how warm
or how cold the water is.

There's little doubt about the temperature of It's About Time.

—TZ, 10 March 2023

Contributors

In 1998, **Christopher Barnes** won a Northern Arts writers award. In July 2000 he read at Waterstones bookshop to promote the anthology *Titles Are Bitches*. Christmas 2001 he debuted at Newcastle's famous Morden Tower doing a reading of poems. Each year he read for Proudwords lesbian and gay writing festival and partook in workshops.

Emily Black, second woman to graduate in Civil Engineering, University of Florida, enjoyed a long engineering career. She is published in numerous journals. Her first book, *The Lemon Light of Morning*, was published in 2022. Her second book is scheduled for publication in 2023. She wears "Firecracker Red" lipstick.

paul Bluestein is a physician (done practicing) and a blues musician (still practicing). He lives in Connecticut near a beach where he finds quiet time to think about the past, and wonder about the future. In addition to work appearing in a wide variety of online and print publications, he has had two books of poetry published – TIME PASSAGES in 2020 and FADE TO BLACK in 2021.

Alan Catlin has several new books out in the past year, including *Exterminating Angels*. His *How Will the Heart Endure*, a labor of love about the life and art of Diane Arbus, was just accepted by Kelsay Books. His long-lost book *Altered States, a cross country trip of a United States of the mind* will be out in 2023 from Cyberwit.

Arvilla Fee teaches English and is the poetry editor for the *San Antonio Review*. She has been published in numerous journals, and her poetry book, *The Human Side*, was released this month. For Arvilla, writing has always been about making connections with ordinary people who will say, "She gets me."

George Freek's poetry appears in numerous Journals and Reviews. His poem "Written At Blue Lake" was recently nominated for a Pushcart Prize. His collection *Melancholia* is published by Red Wolf Editions.

Matt Gillick is from Northern Virginia. He received an MFA from Emerson College in 2021. He is a co-founding editor of Cult Magazine. Recent or forthcoming work in *decomp journal*, *Lucky Jefferson*, and *Duck Duck Mongoose*.

Doug Hoekstra is a Chicago-bred, Nashville-based writer and musician, educated at DePaul University in the Windy City (B.A.) and Belmont University in the Music City (M.Ed.), whose prose, poetry, and non-fiction have appeared in numerous print and online literary journals.

Phil Huffy writes early and often at his kitchen table, casting a wide net as to form and substance. His work has appeared in dozens of journals and anthologies, including *Schuylkill Valley Review*, *Eunoia*, *Pangolin*, *Orchards Poetry*, *The Lyric*, and several haiku publications.

Maggie Nerz Iribarne is 53, living her writing dream in a yellow house in Syracuse, New York. She writes about witches, dys/functional relationships, small disappointments/pleasures, the very old, bats/cats, priests/nuns, cleaning ladies, runaways, struggling teachers, neighborhood ghosts, and other things. She keeps a portfolio of her published work at <https://www.maggienerziribarne.com>.

Jennifer Klein is an American writer. Poetry is one of her favorite ways to make social commentary and merge her inner and outer worlds. Her poems have been featured in *Fahmidan Journal*, *Bombfire*, and elsewhere. She studied English, Dutch Studies, and Norwegian at Indiana University Bloomington. Follow her on Instagram @JenniferKleinReal

Vyarka Kozareva lives in Bulgaria. Her work has appeared in *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *Ariel Chart*, *Poetry Pacific*, *Basset Hound Press*, *Bosphorus Review of Books*, *Mad Swirl*, *Ann Arbor Review*, *Fevers Of The Mind*, *Juste Milieu Lit*, *Trouvaille Review*, *Aberration Labyrinth*, *Triggerfish Critical Review*, *Sampsonia Way Magazine*, and *Synchronized Chaos Magazine*.

Samo Kreutz lives in Ljubljana, Slovenia. He is the author of ten books in Slovene and three in English (they are haiku books, titled *The Stars for Tonight*, *A Time Different from Ours*, *No Bigger Than a Crumb*, all published by Cyberwit.net). His recent work has appeared in *The Heron's Nest*, *The Big Windows Review*, *Ink Sweat & Tears*, *Green Ink Poetry*, *First Literary Review—East*, *Ariel Chart*, and others.

Mike Lewis-Beck writes from Iowa City. He has pieces in *American Journal of Poetry*, *Alexandria Quarterly*, *Apalachee Review*, *Aromatica Poetica*, *Big Windows Review*, *Birdseed*, *Blue Collar Review*, *Columba*, *Cortland Review*, *Chariton Review*. He has a book of poems, entitled *Rural Routes*.

Thomas Mixon has fiction and poetry in *Barren Magazine*, *Wrath-Bearing Tree*, *Rogue Agent*, and elsewhere.

R. H. Nicholson is a professor emeritus of English, a writer, poet, playwright, and public speaker who spent forty years teaching in high school and college classrooms. His work has appeared in *The Back Porch*, *New Poetry*, *Echo Ink*, *The Blue Lake Review*, *Wordmongers*, and *The English Toolkit*. He was a contributing author in the book *From Vision to Action*. He won the 2015 Cincinnati Poetry Prize.

ayaz daryl nielsen has been/is editor of the print poetry publication *bear creek haiku* for 35+ years and over 185 issues, the blog site is *bear creek haiku: poetry, poems and info*.

Robert Okaji lives in Indiana among hundreds of books, with his wife, stepson and cat. His most recent chapbook, *Buddha's Not Talking*, won the 35th annual Slipstream Poetry Chapbook competition, and his work has recently appeared in *Threepenny Review*, *orangepeel*, *Lakeshore Review*, *Evergreen Review*, and other venues.

Kenneth Pobo (he/him) is the author of twenty-one chapbooks and nine full-length collections. Recent books include *Bend of Quiet* (Blue Light Press), *Loplop in a Red City* (Circling Rivers), *Lilac And Sawdust* (Meadowlark Press), *Lavender Fire*, *Lavender Rose* (BrickHouse Books), and *Gold Bracelet in a Cave: Aunt Stokesia* (Ethel Press).

Sharon Scholl is a retired college professor who convenes a poetry critique group and volunteers as editor of local literary journals. She serves as her church pianist and maintains a website of original music compositions at www.freeprintmusic.com. At age 90 she is still active as part of a piano duo. Her poetry chapbooks (*Remains*, *Seasons*, *Timescape*) current in *Gyroscope Review* and *Rockvale Review*.

Jake Sheff is a pediatrician and US Air Force veteran. He's published a full-length collection of formal poetry, *A Kiss to Betray the Universe* (White Violet Press), along with two chapbooks: *Looting Versailles* (Alabaster Leaves Publishing) and *The Rites of Tires* (SurVision).

Dr. Roger Singer is the Poet Laureate of Old Lyme, Connecticut. He has had over 1,000 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.

John Sweet sends greetings from the wastelands of upstate NY. He is a firm believer in writing as catharsis, and in the continuous search for unattainable truths. Recent poetry collections include *HEATHEN TONGUE* (2018 Kendra Steiner Editions) and *A DEAD MAN, EITHER WAY* (2020 Kung Fu Treachery Press).

Terry Trowbridge's poems have appeared in *The New Quarterly*, *Carousel*, *subTerrain*, *paperplates*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *untethered*, *The Nashwaak Review*, *Orbis*, *Snakeskin Poetry*, *M58*, *CV2*, *Brittle Star*, *Lady Lazarus Experimental Poetry*, and many, many more. His lit crit has appeared in *Ariel*, *Hamilton Arts & Letters*, *Episteme*, *Studies in Social Justice*, *Rampike*, and *The /t3mz/ Review*.

Diane Webster's goal is to remain open to poetry ideas in everyday life, nature or an overheard phrase and to write. Diane enjoys the challenge of transforming images into words to fit her poems. Her work has appeared in *El Portal*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Eunoia Review*, and other literary magazines. She also had a micro-chap published by Origami Poetry Press.

