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The Big Windows Review

Issue 34 Winter 2024



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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Mittens

you know conditions are arduous and hostile when the whole liquor store parking lot is backed into their spaces, in case engines need jumping make it home barely reverse in my spot as well hoping to get this beast starting still each morning too

a goat
climbs down the mountain
grudgingly bidden

**Wishing
unfinished**

When a white crow
can just escape death
and scramble up to fly,
is that a kind of sign –
good or bad for who?

Let's say: never mind,
or may we live together
on our brave best behavior?

On a bramble branch
a buzzard chick is listening
as if life is not clutched in a fist.

Life is reciprocal; we can perceive
a glimpse of the complete picture.
We're dancing on toes or firm feet,
our nimble fingers will reach the distance.
For eternity we can participate in bits of that and this.

Footfall

I keep waking to these lost days
of late dawns and early dusks

of blue light
and black
mountains

of your coffee
cold on the
counter

and the absence
of your
footfall

on the hardwood
floors all
around me.

Arrival of Destination

From a skinny girl glimpsed
through a fog of dingy college bar
she closes in and clarifies
grows into subject and object
of all his senses
forsakes, with him, imagination
for the marriage of minds
the making of Home with bare hands
the animal work of bodies
the daunting sobriety
of giving lives over
to the service of happiness

Gravity

It's a surprise, every
time when I see a beetle
but it's really a brittle, curled leaf;
a thin stick but it's a dried worm,
a bit of bumpy rock but it's a
tiny toad and I wonder

are the seasons simply
inhalations and exhalations,
the pupils of my eyes
black holes; am I pulled
forever in because
even gravity cannot escape?

Is it a flattened squirrel
or shred of tire in the road?
Dung or a cicada casing?
Flower petals or tiny,
furry, white aphids, of a sort?

These ambiguities
shouldn't surprise me—
after all, the solar system
is perhaps an atom
with its massive empty space
and small, orbiting particles—
like the sky and oceans of the earth
so vast and uninterrupted.
The carbon in my body
was formed in a star over

billions of years ago.
My organs or the earth's:
lungs or rainforests?
Isn't it all the same?

I breathe out spring,
aware after all
that sometimes all of life is the same
to the gravity of our eyes.



Leaning Forward

Cully fought her way up the steep hill, attacked at every step by thick alder bushes bent from last winter's snow. Clumps of prickly Devil's Club and patches of stinging Cow Parsnip cautioned "danger, retreat."

She didn't listen.

Her fiancé waited for her over the next rise. He'd shown her his route on the map before he launched his Cessna 180. She blinked against the stinging sweat dripping off her forehead. In her mind, she saw his wide cowboy smile as he kneeled before her, placing his ring on her finger.

She was out of breath and water by the time she arrived but knew it was the place from the shredded trees and plane debris. She leaned forward.

Then fell.

She'd found him.

Repair

All you whose lives I have crashed into—
or who've crashed into mine—
and then staggered away into the stream of the passing time,
this is to let you know that I have not given up
trying to fix everything.
Though we are of such obscure and dark machinery,
so easily broken, countless times and in countless ways,
I can't help but insist:
all the pieces must still be present somewhere,
even if dispersed as far as the stars.
To persist in being:
to take up with daily care a consciousness
capable of filling space, of finding and holding
present the farthest fragments of our scattered
selves—we could not be made more perfect.

A Poem about Time

I'm endlessly waiting,
perhaps for the right words
to express the arrival
of spring's birds. Perhaps
for something not yet
come into being, something
which will amaze me.
The moon climbs the sky,
then suddenly it dies,
and my thoughts are paralyzed.
I look for the moon
in your unhappy eyes.
Your life is a mystery to me,
so I wait, and as I wait
a million leaves slowly grow
on a thousand trees.
And I grow older,
and the stars which were once
young and full of desire,
die, and sink to their knees.

The Cadaver Bone Graft in My Mouth Speaks

Bite the inside cheek when cast-off memories
of what's-left-undone boomerang back and leak
into the skull's cavities like a busted well.
Rhizomes, breaking through bricks, refuse to take root
or give solace. Lie in an open field still fresh from tilling.

Die from infarction, a cold heart cracked
by water from a hot tap. Suffer infection
with curt words, like sepsis coursing
through capillaries, touching every cell.
Lie in windless snow beneath a copse of pines.

Lie on stainless steel. Consider each meal the last,
not knowing if it has time to fully digest or will be
picked apart in autopsy, revealing recent history.
Before that, lie in a canal blooming with willow tufts.
Be purified, after being putrefied, after being petrified.

make way

the cars are coming the cars
tear up the old road no not
just that : cut all the trees /
change the views / heap
limbs and trunks / piles
of debris *are coming* chunks
of concrete whole worlds
chewed up and the bones spit out
the views are gutted / all trees
cutted *the cars are* mega dump
trucks rumble : maws of machines
coming cart it away make way
make way *the cars are coming*
the cars will chew up everything
are coming all the trees // pave
the meadows until there are no
views left *the cars are coming*
the cars are coming the cars
the cars are....

Changing Planes at Idlewild

My wife and I are on board a large plane. We land safely, but harshly, on an empty street. We are connecting to an overseas flight at Idlewild. This is not Idlewild. It is a small town. Many people deplane at their destination. The plane moves through narrow streets, wingtips nearly hitting streetlights and the like. We are looking for a runway. I am getting nervous about the time.

“When does our plane leave?” I ask my wife.

“The time gets shorter each time the clock is turned back,” she says.

The pilot leaves the plane. We follow him out. The three of us haul the plane down the street toward a downward slope that sweeps upward, helping the plane ascend. Behind us, the plane is shrinking. As we start downhill, the plane rolls ahead of us. Almost out of sight, it swerves onto a pier and splashes into the water.

My wife and I hurry to the dock where the pilot is swimming in the nude, playing with the plane, now the size of a football. He pushes it through the water, just below the surface, a submarine with wings.

My wife and I begin to undress.

Hollywood Party Scene(s)

During one of my better periods – okay, damn good – I made the Hollywood and Beverly Hills party circuits, the social connections better than the professional ones for me. I'd usually find myself surrounded by people who were all in "The Biz." Word had gotten around I was the only writer in town not writing a screenplay while claiming to have no intention of doing so, something apparently never seen before and impossible for many to fathom. They liked me but I came to be viewed as The Freak Who Didn't Care About Fame.

At an artist friend's party high up in the Hollywood Hills, I met a certain Oscar-winning director and people stumbling around high on the juice got ticked off at me because I didn't know who he was and I didn't really care. Guilty of insufficient deference. Well, he didn't know who I was either, so I thought that evened things out. Not that Oscar winners all knew me by name, but I never did feel like kissing ass just cause someone's rich, powerful and famous. Of course, that attitude didn't go over well with some and I got burned a few times, but it was still a hard habit to break.

The director was typical Hollywood good looking, showed little plastic work, got along famously with the ladies – although Heidi Fleiss was there so maybe it was within some context – but everyone spent the night getting loaded and paying homage to his film – except me. I mean, I hadn't even seen it and it's not like he was the only Oscar winner in the damn place. I'd been nominated for a Pulitzer but no one cared about that, so call it what you want. I just retreated to the back of the room and started doing shots of Patron Silver. Despite everyone being hammered and doing lines of anything within reach, I seemed to upset the host. He stalked over to the corner I'd taken refuge in and demanded to know why I wasn't mingling, what was my problem. He knew I wasn't big on mingling, so when I reminded him of that I seriously had to fight the urge to take a swing at him – and the director too – while somehow avoiding the Beautiful People. I swear I could hear the room muttering, *Hagland*

can't write anymore anyway, I liked him more when he wrote funny shit.

Screw that! I cut out – the ultimate sin since no one arrives early; everyone arrives and stays late in Hollywood. I went home, retched at the kitchen sink while sliming the counter instead, let my bile get the best of me and wrote a lousy story before throwing the director's film I'd been gifted into the dumpster out back. Besides, I was going over to Dennis Hopper's pad in Venice the next day and he'd always been more my style.



Eyes Open

Blood work revealed that my cancer was hiding.
Cancer is alive and feeding in a bone of my spine,
a metabolic membrane seen on a radiologist scan.

Diagnosis of stage 4 cancer, a metastasis
discovered after years of being unseen.
I am told that a radiation cyber knife
will cut into the cancer's home.
Hormone therapy will be injected into my sunless thigh,
turning off my maleness, shouting at my efforts to sleep,
wringing out unneeded sweat throughout the day,
swallowing my softened muscles and bones,
licking away jars full of memories.

I begin an unrehearsed sobbing,
an emotional shedding of my future life.

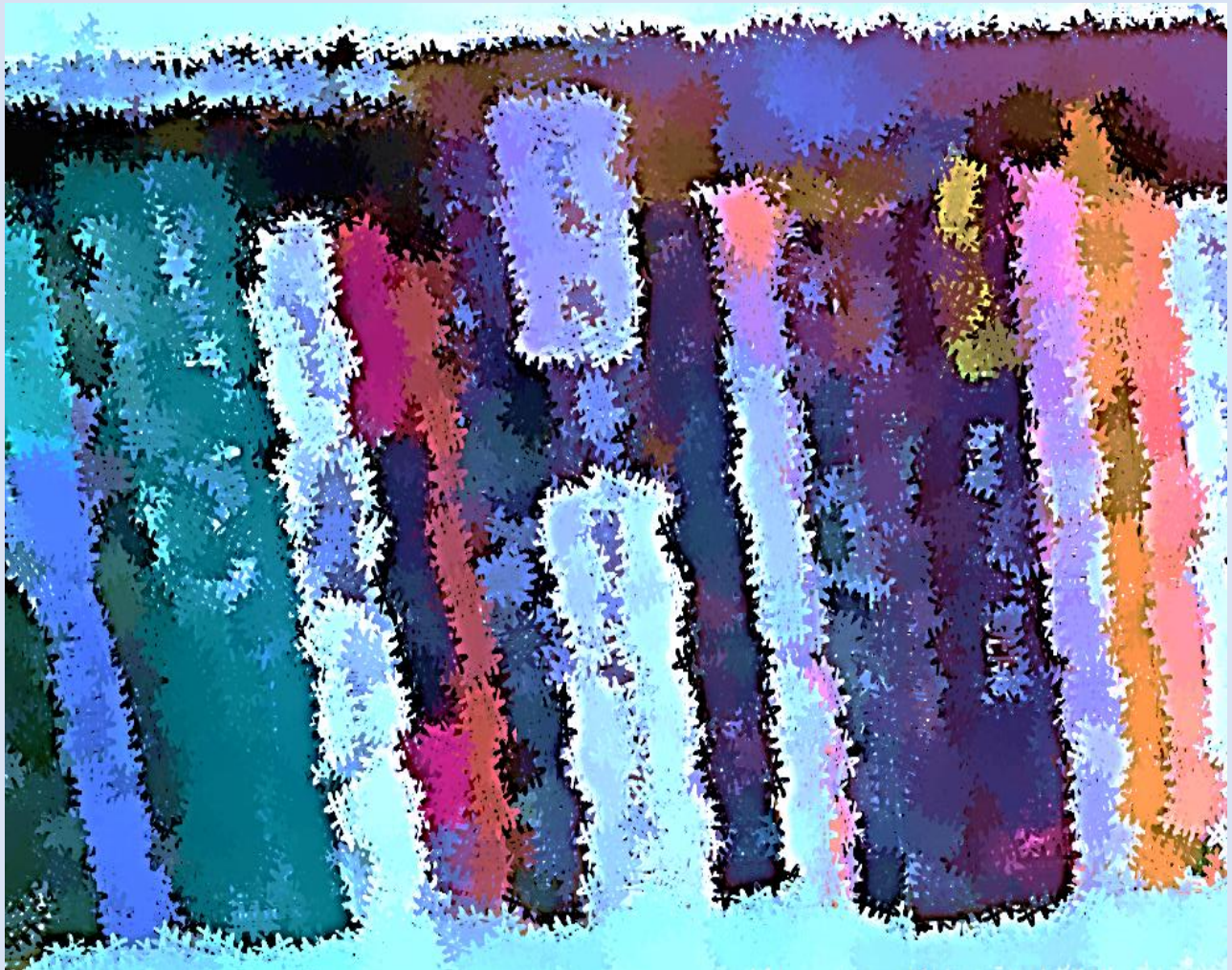
My wife leans over and holds my tense hand.
She lovingly says, "we are planning a vacation together
with our family and grandchild. Let us think
of how memorable this holiday time together will be."

I touch her heart-felt loving words,
looking forward to getting away.
But, I pause, feeling emotionally weak,
lost in my own vulnerable being, unable to be brave.
I feel myself becoming a forgotten name.

And, I say, "I do not want to die in my sleep.
I want to meet the last moment awake,

seeing my last breath leaving a mask of air.
I want my eyes open, to feel the last stream of light
stopped on the surface of my fading gaze,
like a narrow mountain stream
that has been blocked by a fallen tree.

I want to see who is present in my last room.
I want to see what I will be missing.”



Pour me an epiphany on the rocks sunny side up with a twist

Ah! tout est bu, tout est mangé!
–Verlaine

Of the totally abstract
 hopelessly inscrutable
 powder of the cosmiverse
to fuck up everything I sing I sing.

Into the valley of death they ride,
“Half a sylb, helf a solb, holf a salb onward,”
they chant and I quote with all of my hurt
prominently displayed upon mirrors of infinity
apposed obliquely under duress.

Perhaps a bit of exposition channeled through diversion
even inversion and a series of “You don’t say” type blurts
would be the odor of the placental creatures’ wool.

Cries of “nonsense will avail you nothing” won’t suffice
to berate the lack of meter and asolnonce
for now is a time as adequate as any for the total exclipse
formerly shadowed in doubt. For egsample::

Logic is the last refuge of scoundrels peddling the sins of the fathers.
Nothing proceeds without big lies since the decay of verse into prose fiction.
That one is the only one and no one is only sly nomen or Noman though not a
pipe.

And all these yestodays blighted pools the fey to musty breath.
To borrow and to borrow and to borrow craps in shits sweaty place

from say to say til the last shibboleth of imported grime.

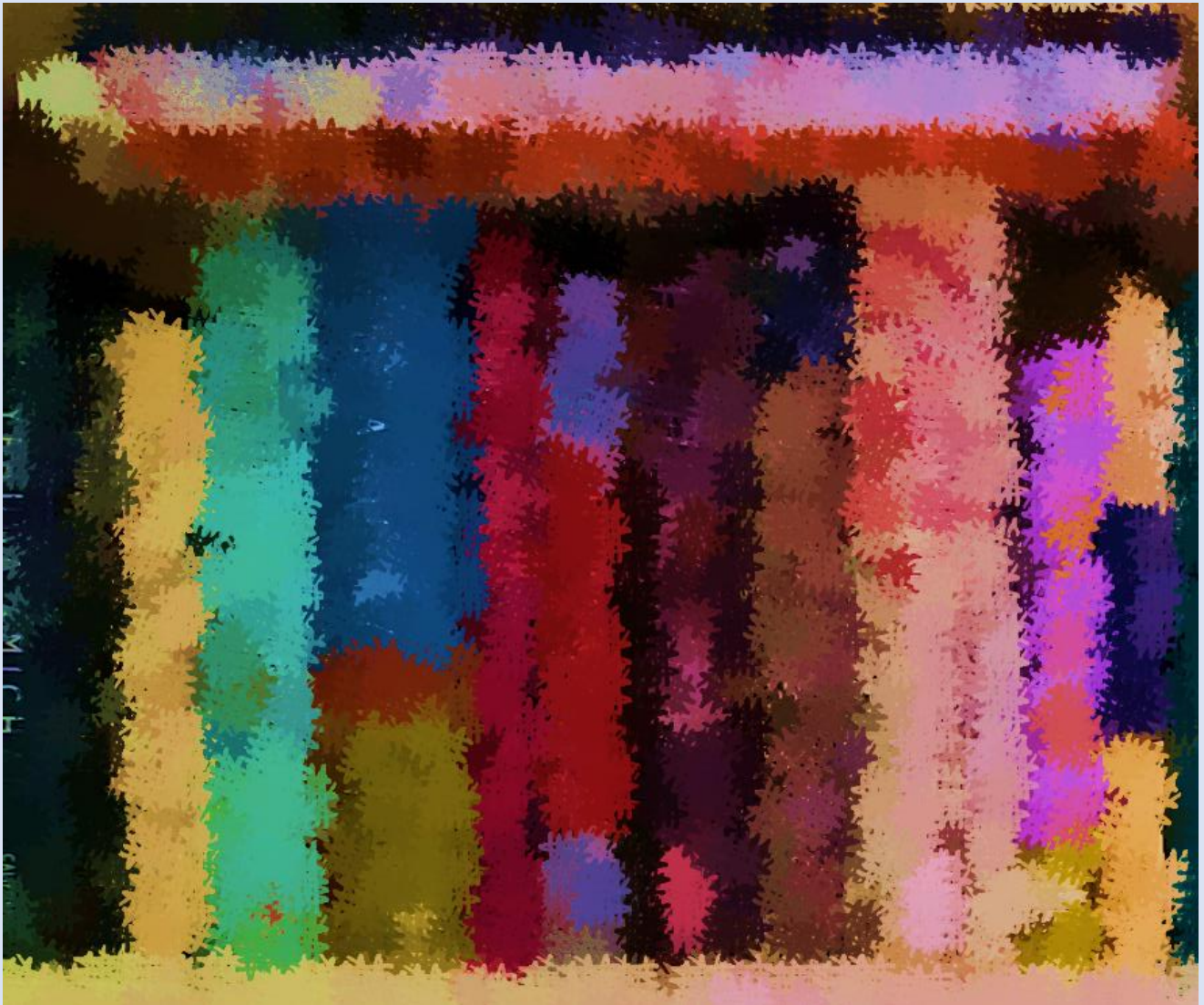
Play it again in Café Americain for old times' sake. If she can stand it, I can.

But Dooley was a drummer and he couldn't do it. Try Ella.

Why did she have to go? Why does anybody?

"It's the beast of boredom," calms the Joyfreud,

"come to fertilize us all." Ah shit.



1958 Plymouth Fury (Transfiguration)

The bird fights its way out of the egg. The egg is the world.

Whoever will be born must destroy a world.

– Hermann Hesse

After they were married, which was just short of a miracle because she was frail and he was literary and eccentric, a city boy to her country girl, they defied the medical odds and conceived a little girl together, although the birth nearly killed the mother; just before she passed out into haze, she saw a large dark hawk pass over two eggs in a porcelain bowl. She lost their son later on. Fertility, so precious, so elusive. They held onto each other in the summer nights, him, a humidity, wrapping himself around her sudden night chills because she was ill, and her, clinging to him like a vine. Nervous, he purchased a car for them, drove them to Iowa. Blue bonnet blue, it rose up on the highway, stole time. A four door, its front grill marked with a V, and thin chrome lines, and a round silver bumper that gripped the entire car's face. And a set of rear fins rising up like mountain-edged peaks with red, pendulum bell taillights. And a rear bumper that rose like a set of chrome elbows. Soon, the mother would die too. *And the little girl in the back seat, innocent as a small cat, cracking eggs open all over the car's seat.* Each single egg, opaque, yellow, lush, with whorls of igniting light and amniotic fluid; a spirit-glow. Osmotic, undisguised, the fluid spilled through her fingers and across the car's interior; it was migratory, transient, prosperous. She broke open each egg, let the clear fluid liquefy and spill. Watched in wonder at just how the fertile wetness spread, it roamed. The spirit: like an aqueduct, a flume, a channel and a groove where all that's most holy arrives by sensual, tactile openings. The gentle couple talked on, oblivious, while the classical music station, on AM radio, played S. Rachmaninoff's, *The Bells*.

the world is my prayer mat

this morning on bahía san carlos
fat doves strut along imagining family matters
prayer flags release into the breezy sonoran waltz
frivolous wrens flirt with little yellow flowers
as the sky greets sea with open embrace

while crisp blue sky is decorated with fluffy white sculptures
a fisherman and his tiller nestle like twins into the wind
a newborn seal pup wonders into the wind ignoring
a squabble of seagulls who continue their discussion
arguing into the fearless northwesterlies

in some distant place a frightened neighbor shelters
a youngster from the burning rath of a bomb,
broken families sob at graves of children shot in schools,
starving hearts and tummies turn toward hollow days
with dried up gardens and empty shopping bags,

but the sun rises again, i turn toward the wide world,
heart moaning with what might-have-beens
give deep gratitude for earth's innocence
and bow low to horizon's passionate gift of hope
with a simple prayer, may there still be time

Hours after My Grandfather's Funeral

I swung arm over arm
at a light pole. My hands
came away in gashes.

A spider's web landed
on my sleeve, and I caught
the spider in my palm, put
an end to its spiral down

from light. Simple things.
I was not fighting. The rain
was a small one.

The spider crept
up my arm, gathered a strand
of its fallen web,
another, rounded them into a ball.
I counted the seconds

between lightning strikes, counted
poles lining the street.
Lit windows changed colors,
I counted those.

The spider moved
back to my palm. I closed
my fingers softly, walked home.

There, my car was still running,
headlights still yellow

globes on my garage door,
dingy, flickering.

I lifted the spider to my porch light.
It caught the fixture
and found a hole to hide in.

Through the door, mail
I wouldn't open. The television
gave news to an empty chair.

My shudders alone with the walls,
coping with the walls, simple things.
A shower. So much hot in all this
cold. So many faces mourning, me

without a face to come home to.
I cut a handful of hair
from my head, another, balled it up.

I dropped it all at my feet, left it
floating. I went back to find the spider,
but the spider had gone. One faint

strand of web hung from the porch light.
Simple things. There was rain,

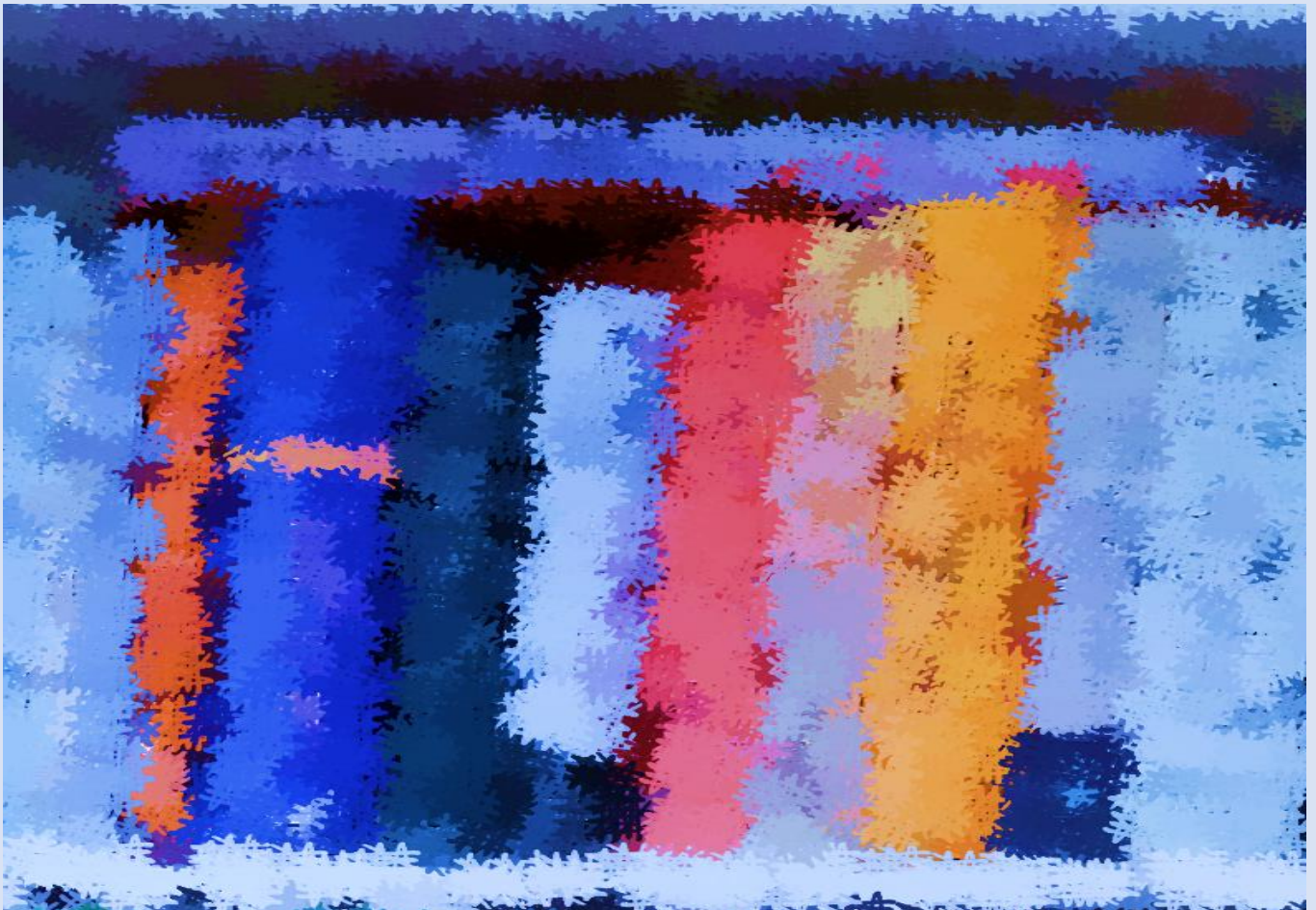
but the sky couldn't fall fast enough.
The world has never slowed down.
I never knew him. I never cared to try.

Everyone Was Nice

It should be annoying but isn't,
that even here we're collected
in comfortable rooms and sorted,
then carry documents
along sometimes the wrong but always
pleasant corridors to smaller rooms
and groups. We're reminded
of the welfare states we were born in
and which at least a number of us hoped
would return. An idealized version –
for the ubiquitous officials
who help us to the right place are all young
and never seem annoyed or condescend.

A loose circle, couches;
decent coffee and pastries. We tell,
as expected, our stories.
It takes a while to grasp the common thread,
and not everyone does, because
it isn't a thread but the whole cloth.
For this group life isn't one thing after
another – which is easier to deal with, or
not – but one thing. Which
the incidents we crowdedly
recount (mine, I'll admit,
the pettiest and most diffuse)
reveal ... So that when

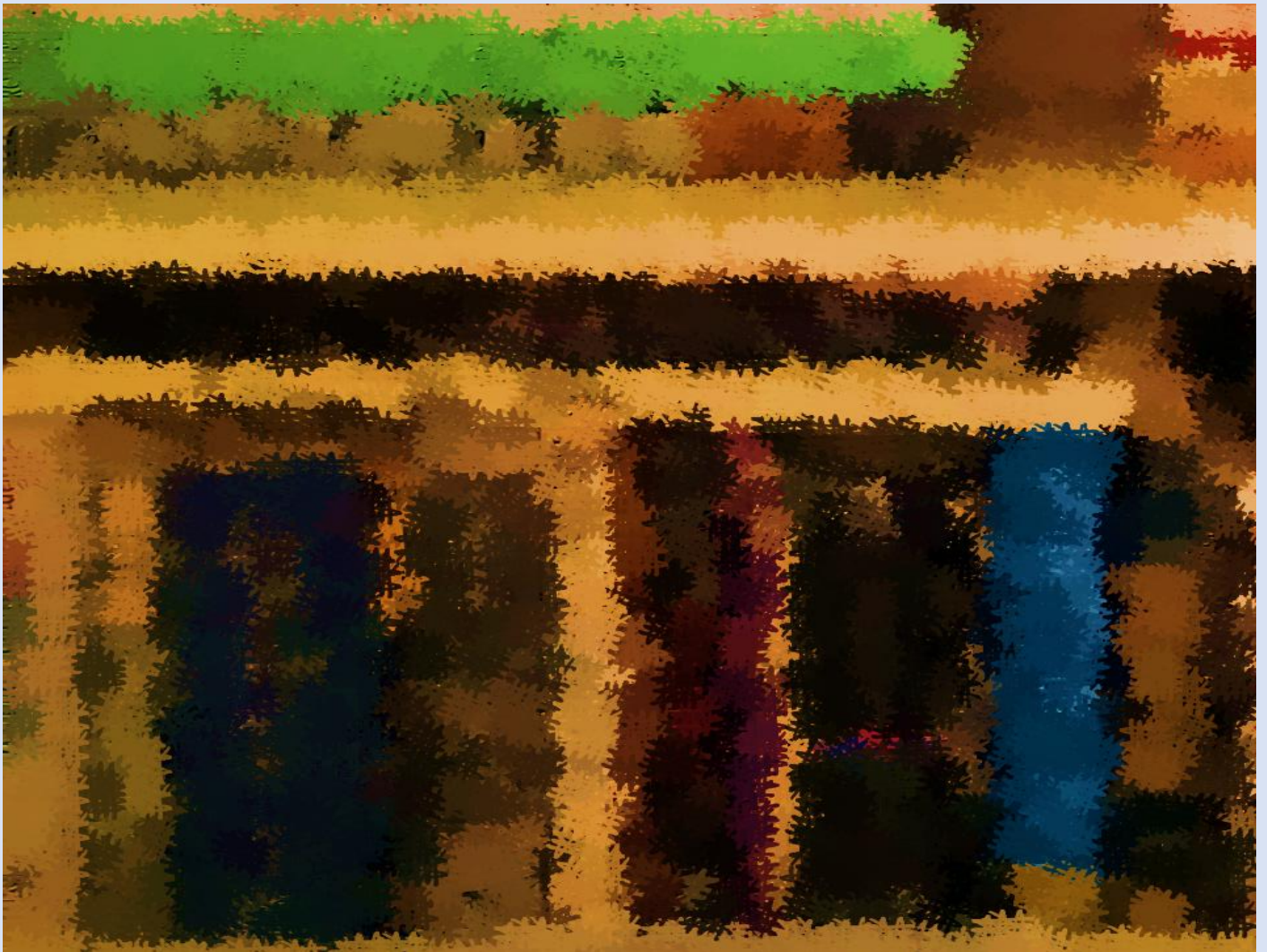
we've finished, and the pastries
and coffee are all gone, we
stare at each other with no idea
what to do; the room, as it were,
is full of monuments or philosophical
systems ... We should admire, I think –
critique, polish – but all we manage
is silence. At which the officials,
who somehow receded, seem more visible.
They had better (the consensus is)
not ask us to relinquish those
statues; it would be
worse than what they've done with our bodies.



At my age

those who were married
are now divorced
and maybe
remarried
and maybe
divorced again
and those
of us
who
were never married
long
for anything
other
than the life
we lived
and I
have to catch
myself
from falling
into
the gaps,
imagining
what it would be like
to be held
by a person
who will be
snoring
in minutes
instead of
all of this

humming
and everything
in my apartment
exactly where I put it
when I wish
someone
had misplaced
at least
something.



Trying

I keep bringing up the things I should have done;
you are no longer listening.
To be fair you should
close the door and lock it.
I am really lost, but
I am trying.

I have a family to remember,
an image crafted so close to perfection
it is a work of art.
I gave them what I could.
I barely see them now
but not for want of trying.

Just so things are clear,
in the light of day, I see what I have done.
I try– repeat prayers, wait for answers.
Waiting is what I do,
but the horizon is a straight and empty line,
beyond, there is no one left but me.

this poem
will not be written
by anyone because the author
will go to the supermarket for vodka
and never come back

There is no more home
ruins play the stones of a scream
There's no more peace because
someone skipped a history lesson
on Hiroshima at school

the leaves don't resent it when you step on them
the bones barely crunch when you do
people barely crunch on such occasions.
death is like a land mine doesn't resent it when you step on it

A Year Later

I taste scrambled eggs covered
with cheddar cheese, and topped with toasted walnuts,
inhale the scent of a Honeycrisp apple just opened
with a two-handled slicer, a gift from a friend.
Lilacs nod their lavender heads above my table.
The scent of childhood is everywhere.
A Mother's Day bouquet, German iris and yellow tulips rest
on the glass table we bought at Klingman's together so many years ago.
Cardinals and yellow finches wait in the trees for a turn at my feeder.
A red male presents his mate the gift of a sunflower seed.
The dogwood we brought from the old house
has spread its arms and blossoms again.
Pots of parsley, thyme, basil and chive thrive on my deck.
Two apple trees let go of petals,
that blend like pink and white confetti,
as they have every year.
I hear bird song.
My husband is dead,
but I am still here.

Observing

he saw her
style and poise
and the parts
within

the soul
searching for
escape

the spirit
higher powers
for fair
weather
past here
to somewhere

that's what
he saw

The Weight of the World

On both sides of bookstore glass,
glazed eyes contained worlds.

At that moment, you were no different
than your two children, or any child
who has ever stared into a shop window
amazed by glittering things,
or the irreplaceable things
lost so many years ago.

Mother of two, you may have seen the glare
of the aging poet's balding head—
(maybe that's what startled you)
or the flock of attuned onlookers
moved by his heavy breathing,
heavy words, heavy heart.

Wandering woman, you may have wondered what
occasion may have warranted
such attention from one man
stuck in the muck of time, whose verse first
dipped into a quiet stream of memory
but drowned us in whitewater.

At that moment, you may have been gripped
by fractured light, or some distant night,
when death was as common as hunger
in your country of origin, where the State
commanded allegiance, friends disappeared,
self-determination wilted in your hands.

Even if you have never seen a man
shoot all his cattle, set his barn aflame,
then hang himself from a rafter—
as the sage poet has—on the other side
of the glass, you may have parried piercing pangs
that ran as strong and coarse as his rapids.

Rising evening wind buckled you and the children.
You—we—all walked on into a world beyond glass.

The troubled aging poet waded still now,
like a heron on the edge of a dark river.

What settled in softly, though, his wake:
a prayer he unwittingly left behind:

*a surfeit of blooming flowers
that once bowed his 90-year-old friend's fragile fence,
that couldn't contain the weight
of beauty in this world.*

It is Written

Yes. I have an ego like a Brontosaurus. It is thirty stories tall and leathery. It won't eat anything with a soul, but you'd best watch out for that swaying neck.

Yes. I want the tiaras, stacked like heretic halos. I want enough Pushcart nominations to cause a traffic incident. I want pizza delivery to be delayed because my words split the sidewalks.

Yes. I want the yes on the tall shelf. I want you to drench me in rose petals. I want a tattoo of the Eiffel Tower on my ankle so I will never forget that I am "oui."

Yes. I have been here before. I have spliced particle physics with pyrotechnic poetry in the greasy gymnastics of online dating. I have checked my inbox every eleven minutes for the ones I like to like me so I can still have light when my power fails.

Yes. All of this is the hunt for the hit. I wanted acceptance from husband holograms, and I wrote myself into their expectations. I want acceptance from story sergeants, but the stakes are higher because this time I am telling the truth.

Yes. This oozes with addiction, and the returns diminish. What once felt like atomic assurance is now a drowsy game of badminton. This morning's "congratulations" is charred by dusk. Yeses add up to little. I like my words when I forget to be "likable," but they congeal on the stove of submissions.

Yes. This is all grand. Writing is worth it. My life is a comedy. There are cat hairs in my microwave and limbo poles at the corners of my eyes. I cannot describe my divorce without bringing in Weird Al, or walruses, or the wind-sock people at the car dealership. I cannot grease myself in grief without a mouthful of honey-butter.

Yes. I want my words to count, and I am incompetent at math. I want to feed the starving. I want to heal the sick. I want to run through the cave pulling candles from my crown, until the people in darkness circle up with light. I want to write people free.

Yes. I have a savior complex, an inferiority complex, and an infatuation with affirmation. If we are capable of being damned, I am doomed. My hands are red and sticky from the caramel apple. It is good, and it is evil. I am incapable of telling the difference.

Yes. It is written. Whether we are speaking of my brown hair, my punk pancreas, or my dervish drive, my mother claims, “it’s in your book.” I don’t know where faith becomes fatalism. My book will not go unread. I live not by bread, but by every word from the mouth with no ego.

Yes. I am still hungry. I bite my own neck, then read the Beatitudes. I am poor in spirit. I contemplate pawning my pride. I buy a plastic Eiffel Tower for my desk instead.

Heaven and Hell

Silence fills the air,
as I sit, alone,
among endless rows of graves.

I wish for heartbeats,
for laughter,
for tears.

I miss the noise.

But I know that I can't have it.

I can hear the footsteps of the living,
but there's no sound for me.

Silence surrounds me,
as I lay in my own void,
a void of life,
eternal and silent.

I will never know happiness again.

But I accept it,
lying here, alone,
among endless rows of graves.

It was fun being dead for a while,
to feel the quiet
and the peace.

I thought hell would have fire and brimstone,
but I guess that's only what they tell us.

I'm moving on now,
accepting my reality.
And I know that one day,
I'll find my meaning,
in the cold abyss.

But for now, all I have is silence,
a silence that never ends.

And I bet there's fire in h



Contributors

Jerome Berglund has many poems in a variety of forms, including haiku, haibun, and tanka exhibited or forthcoming online and in print, most recently in the *Bottle Rockets*, *Frogpond*, and *Modern Haiku*. His first full-length collection of poetry, *Bathtub Poems*, was just released by Setu Press.

Poet and novelist **Arno Bohlmeijer** writes in English and Dutch, is the winner of a PEN America Grant 2021 and has been published in renowned journals in five countries, including *Universal Oneness: An Anthology of Magnum Opus Poems from around the World*, 2019.

Ryan Brennan lives in the Catskill Mountains where he writes poetry that just barely exists. He has recent or forthcoming work in *Cider Press Review*, *Frost Meadow Review*, *Pacific Poetry*, *Brazos River Review*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *The Mantle*, *One Sentence Poems*, amongst others.

Dan Carpenter is a freelance journalist, poet, fiction writer, essayist and blogger, residing in Indianapolis, and has published poems, stories, and essays in *Laurel Review*, *Poetry East*, *Illuminations*, *Pearl*, *Xavier Review*, and many other journals and anthologies. Dan has also published two books of poems, *The Art He'd Sell for Love* (Cherry Grove, 2015) and *More Than I Could See* (Restoration, 2009), and two books of non-fiction.

Loralee Clark lives in Williamsburg, Virginia. She writes poetry and nonfiction. She has had poems published in two anthologies as well as *Broadkill Review*, *Literary Mama*, *The Binnacle*, *Penwood Review*, *Cape Rock*, *Grasslands Review*, *The Iconoclast*, and *The Sierra Nevada College Review*.

Alaskan author **Lynne Curry** has published six short stories, the most recent in 2022 (*After Dinner Conversations*) and 2021 (*101 Words*) and six books, including *Navigating Conflict and Managing for Accountability* (BEP), *Beating the Workplace Bully* (AMACOM) and *Solutions*. She publishes in a weekly “dear Abby of the workplace” newspaper column, in her “Writing from the Cabin”

blog, <https://bit.ly/3tazJpW> and on [www.workplacecoachblog](http://www.workplacecoachblog.com) (2525 subscribers).

E. J. Evans is the author of *Ghost Houses* (Clare Songbirds, 2021), *Conversations with the Horizon* (Box Turtle Press, 2019), and the chapbook *First Snow Coming* (Kattywompus Press, 2015).

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.

David A. Goodrum, writer/photographer, lives in Corvallis, Oregon. His poems are forthcoming or have been published in *Tar River Poetry*, *The Inflectionist Review*, *Passengers Journal*, *Scapegoat Review*, *Wild Roof Journal*, *Triggerfish Critical Review*, among others. Additional work (poetry and photography) can be viewed at www.davidgoodrum.com.

Cordelia M. Hanemann, writer and artist, currently co-hosts Summer Poets, a poetry critique group in Raleigh, NC. Professor emerita retired English professor, she conducts occasional poetry workshops and is active with youth poetry in the North Carolina Poetry Society. She is also a botanical illustrator and lover of all things botanical. She has published in numerous journals, including *Atlanta Review*, *Laurel Review*, and *California Quarterly* and numerous others; in several anthologies, including best-selling *Poems for the Ukraine* and her chapbook. Her poems have been performed by the Strand Project, featured in select journals, won awards, and been nominated for Pushcarts. She is now working on a novel about her Cajun roots.

Richard Holinger's work has appeared or will appear in *Chicago Quarterly Review*, *Hobart*, *Iowa Review*, *Chautauqua*, and has garnered four Pushcart Prize nominations. He holds a doctorate in Creative Writing from UIC and lives northwest of Chicago.

Scott C. Holstad has authored 60+ books & has appeared in *Minnesota Review*, *Exquisite Corpse*, *Santa Clara Review*, *TODAY Show*, *Long Shot*, *Chiron Review*,

Ginosko Literary Journal, Southern Review, & Poetry Ireland Review. He lives in Gettysburg with his wife & cat & his website can be found at <https://hankrules2011.com>.

David Lipsitz has been writing poems for over fifty years. His poems have appeared in *BIG WINDOWS REVIEW, CAPE ROCK, CHAFFIN JOURNAL, FROM THE DEPTHS, MAIN STREET RAG, UPPAGUS, WASHINGTON SQUARE REVIEW*, and other literary publications.

John Marvin is a teacher who retired and subsequently earned a Ph.D. in English at SUNY Buffalo. He has poems in scores of journals, including 6 Pushcart nominations, and literary criticism in *Hypermedia Joyce Studies, James Joyce Quarterly, Pennsylvania English, and Worcester Review*. He has a chapter in *Hypermedia Joyce*, and his book, *Nietzsche and Transmodernism: Art and Science Beyond the Modern in Joyce, Stevens, Pynchon, and Kubrick*, awaits a publisher. He seeks to marry the experimental, non-narrative with the lyric and traditional in the manner of Nietzsche's marriage of Apollo and Dionysos. He generally avoids accessibility for its own sake, and the prosaic personal story with superimposed line breaks that is ubiquitous these days.

Ken Meisel is a poet and psychotherapist from the Detroit area. He is a 2012 Kresge Arts Literary Fellow, Pushcart Prize nominee, and the author of eight poetry collections. He has work in *Rattle, Crab Creek Review, Concho River Review, San Pedro River Review, Panapoly, Sheila-Na-Gig*. His new book, *The Light Most Glad of All*, will be published by Kelsay Books.

Sharon Lopez Mooney, poet, retired Interfaith End-of-Life Chaplain, received: a '79 California Arts Council Grant for rural poetry series; a "Best of the Net" nomination, "Peseroff Prize" finalist, & two other publisher's honors. Mooney's book is slated for publication in '24, and her poems are in national and international publications.

Brian D. Morrison completed his MFA at the University of Alabama, where he was an assistant editor at *Black Warrior Review*. His poetry has appeared at *West Branch, Verse Daily, Copper Nickel*, and other venues. Currently, he works

as an Associate Teaching Professor of English at Ball State University.

Frederick Pollack is the author of two book-length narrative poems, *THE ADVENTURE* and *HAPPINESS*, both Story Line Press; the former reissued 2022 by Red Hen Press. Three collections of shorter poems, *A POVERTY OF WORDS*, (Prolific Press, 2015), *LANDSCAPE WITH MUTANT* (Smokestack Books, UK, 2018), and *THE BEAUTIFUL LOSSES* (Better Than Starbucks Books, September 2023). Pollack has appeared in *Salmagundi*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *The Fish Anthology* (Ireland), *Magma* (UK), *Bateau*, *Fulcrum*, *Chiron Review*, *Chicago Quarterly Review*, etc. Online, poems have appeared in *Big Bridge*, *Hamilton Stone Review*, *BlazeVox*, *The New Hampshire Review*, *Mudlark*, *Rat's Ass Review*, *Faircloth Review*, *Triggerfish*, *The Big Windows Review* (2020, '21), etc. Website: www.frederickpollack.com.

Ron Riecki has been awarded a 2019 Best of the Net finalist, 2020 Dracula Film Festival Vladutz Trophy, 2019 Très Court International Film Festival Audience Award and Grand Prix, 2020 *Rhysling Anthology* inclusion, and 2022 Pushcart Prize. Right now, Riecki's listening to The xx's "Islands."

Richard Rubin is a retired librarian and library educator. Recently he decided to try and publish some of his current poetry, and he has been fortunate to have work published or accepted for publication in *The Dunes Review*, *Great Lakes Review*, *Green Silk Journal*, *The Main Street Rag*, *I-70 Review*, and others.

Mykyta Ryzhykh is winner of the international competition Art Against Drugs and Ukrainian contests Vytoky, Shoduarivska Altanka, Khortytsky dzvony; laureate of the literary competition named after Tyutyunnik, Lyceum, Twelve, named after Dragomoshchenko. Nominated for Pushcart Prize. Published many times in the journals *Dzvin*, *Dnipro*, *Bukovinian magazine*, *Polutona*, *Rechport*, *Topos*, *Articulation*, *Formaslov*, *Literature Factory*, *Literary Chernihiv*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *Stone Poetry Journal*, *Divot journal*, *dyst journal*, *Superpresent Magazine*, *Allegro Poetry Magazine*, *Alternate Route*, *Better Than Starbucks Poetry & Fiction Journal*, *Littoral Press*, *Book of Matches*, on the portals *Litcenter*, *Ice Floe Press*.

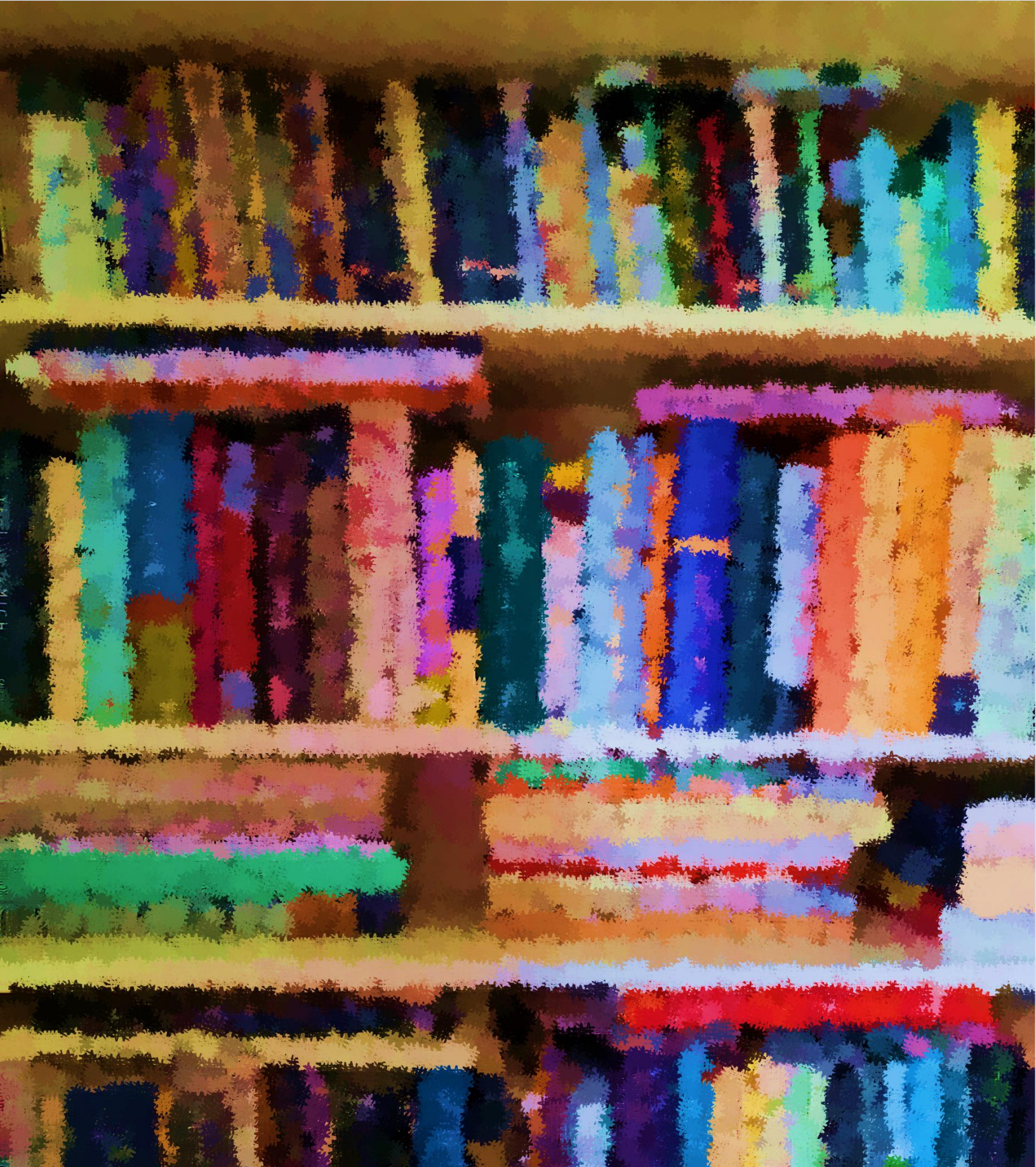
Linda Leedy Schneider, a psychotherapist in private practice and a poetry mentor, was awarded The Contemporary American Poetry Prize by Chicago Poetry. Linda has written six collections of poetry, including *Through My Window: Poetry of a Psychotherapist*, and edited two poetry anthologies, *Poems From 84th Street* and *Mentor's Bouquet*. She leads workshops for the International Women's Writing Guild and founded The Manhattan Writing Workshop.

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.

Mark Strohschein is a Washington state poet who lives on Whidbey Island. His work is forthcoming in *Flint Hills Review*, *Cosmic Double* and *Plants and Poetry's* anthology, *Plant People*, Vol. 3. His poems have also appeared in *Lips Poetry Magazine*, *In Parentheses*, *Dippity*, *Quibble*, and a poetry anthology, *Dulce Poetica*.

Angela Townsend is Development Director at Tabby's Place. She graduated from Princeton Seminary and Vassar. Her work appears in *Cagibi*, *Hawaii Pacific Review*, and *The Razor*, among others. She is a Best Spiritual Literature nominee. Angie has had Type 1 diabetes for 33 years and laughs with her mother daily.

Claudia Wysocky, a Polish poet based now in New York, is known for her ability to capture the beauty of life through rich descriptions in her writing. She firmly believes that art has the potential to inspire positive change. With over five years of experience in fiction writing, Claudia has had her poems published in local newspapers and magazines. For her, writing is an endless journey and a powerful source of motivation.



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