

The Big Windows Review

Issue 40 Summer 2025



**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.**

**Design and digital images by
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Contents

Azure Brandi	ABCs of NYC	4
Jeff Burt	Sandy	5
Alan Catlin	Dreams Before Waking in Eight Parts	6
Lynne Curry	The Secrets They Whisper	8
Jakima Davis	Noah Built the Ark	10
Marco Etheridge	Red-Blue	11
Jesse Hamilton	Thereafter Blues	12
William Heath	Tattoo Artist	13
Erren Kelly	Cleaning Out My Mother's Shed	14
Robert S. King	Darkness Shaping Light	15
Tom Laichas	Ghostblind	16
E. P. Lande	Second Fiddle	17
Marcelo Medone	Love Skirmishes	19
Peter Mladinic	Sudden Accelerations	20
Ben Onachila	The Hermit Observes	24
Allan Peterson	Five Poems	25
Doug Raphael	Stand Tall	27
Russell Rowland	Hundred-Acre Brook	29
Dan Sicoli	fire hall	30
Roger Singer	Pointing	33
Marvin Smith	waiting for the bus at the world's edge	34
Matt Thomas	I Know That My Redeemer Liveth	35
jessie caitlin ventulan	we were both nickelodeon kids	36
Richard Weaver	A Simple wine reduction of the muse	38
Huina Zheng	He's Not My Dad's Friend	39
Contributors		41

ABCs of NYC

alpha males need to chill
before alpha females take the reins
careful now, they're on to us
do not tarry, this is a modern verse
evidently versatile
forego your presuppositions
giggle at the mind made-up
holler at your reflection
ignite its resurrection
just do this in private
kisses in public
lovers in attic
moments in movies
numbers in phones
ostentatious window displays
public displays of affection
questions of guilt & retribution
running on hudson river piers
suddenly deciding to turn back
troubled by a mind at rest
underwhelmed by the glories that be
vulnerable, unafraid
wondering when you'll meet again
xylophone. always.
yonder way, we discover a
zoo in central park like holden.

Sandy

Where her ashes sank exactly I cannot remember,
somewhere in the Monterey Bay between Paradise Point
and Sunset Beach, not odd because she could not swim.
Soil was her province, and forget-me-nots
her favorite flower, those four-week soft blue blooms
dotting our walk like earthly stars, seeds
that would stick to socks and shoelaces
to travel and embed in another soil.

She gave us seeds to bloom in our garden,
and I have spread those infant forget-me-nots
down by the creek walk nestled amid ferns
and wild blackberries during the viral sequester,
and in the next three springs have watched them
root and spread, how people brushed
against the stems and scattered the seeds
until the whole walk is now dotted with blue.

This is her fitting tribute, a small quiet beauty,
which is how she lived, not with the brassy blare
of rhododendrons or aspirations of foxgloves
spiking into the air, just these little stars
at our feet grasping to take hold, to stick to our clothes,
our shoes, to tell us we are luckier than we think.

Dreams Before Waking in Eight Parts

1-

Time lapse photos:
multiple moons in waxing,
waning phases. Coronas
of ambient light.

2-

Ghost images trapped in
scaling mirrors. All of them
trying to get out.

3-

Inverted hour glass.
Time stalled in mid-
descent.

4-

Dry ice mist fills
orchestra pit simulating
arctic waste. Frozen music.

5-

Ghost light on bare stage.
Spot lights on polished wood
stage. Empty seats face
the reflective glare.

6-

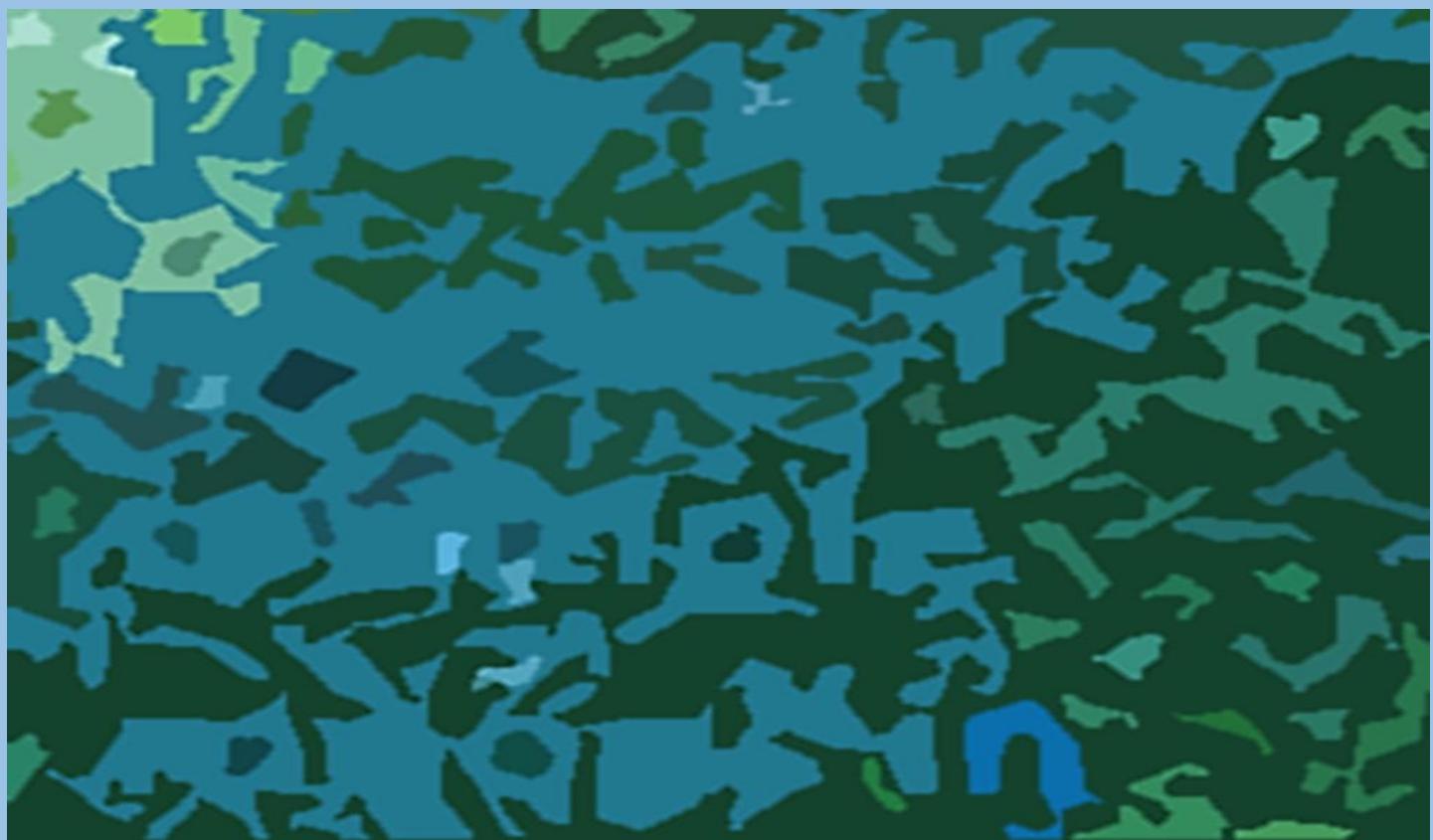
Mist rising over still
water. A lost world
found.

7-

Tsunami wave breeching
sea walls. A scatter of
skiffs left behind.

8-

Black sun over red desert.
Cracks in the earth where
nothing grows.



The Secrets They Whisper

I catch the flinch in your eyes.

Do you think I chose to live like this?

I once owned a bed, a sofa, and a kitchen table.

Hope sat beside me in the mornings, warm in the steam of my coffee.

My hands held dreams.

My hands cradled children.

Then, the ground crumbled under me.

If you see a woman huddled on the street, take another look.

I see a survivor.

A woman who raised herself from the wreckage—and walked.

My scars tell stories of love lost and nights survived,

of battles fought with nothing but my breath.

Try walking miles with your whole world strapped to your back.

You laugh at my layers. They keep me warm when the nights bite.

Here's what you don't know—how strong you are until the ground becomes your mattress.

I didn't choose this, but I choose to keep breathing, even when it hurts.

You wrinkle your nose? Judge?

I take care of my bags. They're clean—and if you don't think that takes work—you've never had to wash everything, every day, with nothing.

But you don't care, do you?
Your glances cut sharper than hunger.
Hunger doesn't define me—it's just another battle I fight.
Your pity lands heavier on my soul than my burdens.
I don't need it.
I walk upright, even when the world expects me to crawl.

Every night, I sing to the stars.
They don't care where I sleep.
They whisper to me—
truths you're too scared to hear,
secrets the sheltered never know.



Noah Built the Ark

I've promoted the hustle
There's blood in the streets
Lust and envy never tasted sweet
I run and duck for cover
Fame comes tomorrow
Dying just to get a name
I will kill for a nickel or dime
Many broken promises

Is it any wonder
Why the world's still turning
I'm in need of a big hug
Too many cars on the highway
Hate comes soft and hazy
The candy that I need
Spending my life in hell
Wearing the best clothes
Get the slapping wherever I go

The water is rising
Spent some time on a lifeboat
I'll see the fire next time
I'm always switching lanes
The water is rising
Spent some time on a lifeboat
I'll see the fire next time
I'm always switching lanes

Marco Etheridge

Red-Blue

Forty-four seconds. Forty-three.

The digital counter drops. Gregor wipes his sweating forehead.

Clever bastards. An analog bomb, ancient technology, immune to sensors. Blocks of Semtex, enough to fragment the ship. Bodies drifting in space. A dead crew and dead alien diplomats.

An interstellar war sparked by fanatics and triggered by the device under his fingers. And no one to stop it but him.

Twenty-one seconds.

Two wires. One choice. Red or blue. No guidance from the handheld. A pair of wire cutters.

Fifty-fifty odds. Gregor thinks of his wife, his little boy.

Now, choose. Cutters ready.

Eight seconds. Seven.

Snip.

Thereafter Blues

At the crossroads between Claireview Street and Millshire Avenue, two men, by happenstance, met each other below the streetlight that shined a lonely beacon beside snow-covered fields, stretching into a darkness of blue. One man tipped his hat, though his face could not be spoken for, and the light above him shadowed his features as he reached into his pockets and pulled out a pack of cigarettes.

“Lost?” He said to the wanderer and held out the open pack—only two were left, but he insisted: “It’s alright, take it,” he gestured to the hatless man. “I asked if you were lost.”

“I was just heading out of town,” the hatless man said, looking back the way he came.

“Out of town? With no proper footwear?” He asked with sincerity, pointing at the man’s lack of shoes, and the holes in his socks. The hatless man was utterly confused, but this confusion only mounted when he glanced down at his feet and saw he had no boots on at all.

There was a surprising jolt through his body in this realization, but it faded into numbness as he closed his eyes and recalled the moments before his meeting below the light: tires screeching themselves of rubber, the wailing of engines coming right at him.

Opening his eyes, the man was still holding the cigarette out to him when a rumble broke the silence between them. Headlights cut through the snowfall, and upon their entry, so too did the shrieks of terrified children, and the grinding of the battered vehicle against asphalt. As it came into their view, he could see then that the front end of the car had been crushed, and atop the shattered windshield sprawled a mangled figure without shoes.

Tattoo Artist

He comes back from Japan
with a dragon tattoo, the artist
says give me some skin, sticks
his barb in with the colors
of choice, and sets to his back-
breaking work, graceful circles

are a good way to start, he tells
his canvas not to move, this
will hurt but stay still, there will
be blood, the needle burns
but you'll get used to it,
even come to crave the pain,

beg the artist to go ape, which
is to say epic, on your body,
turn the skin into a text
that keeps on unscrolling—
the most gruesome images
make the biggest impression.

I write this poem because
I too work with ink.

Cleaning Out My Mother's Shed

An old pair of python skinned
Cowboy boots (they've shrunken so much
I can't get my foot into them !)
Newspapers from Boston and Portland Maine
A poster of Jimi Hendrix
A thank-you note from Shannon
For the English paper I helped her write
Mardi Gras beads
Spoken Word Cd's
3 dozen books
A tape of Malcolm x's speeches
A tribute to Shannon I wrote
That was published
A turntable
Albums by Billy Joel, Elton John
George Carlin, Carole King, Barbara Streisand
And the Beatles
A VCR
My high school diploma
Baby pictures of my nephew Joshua
Receipt of a Greyhound Ticket to
San Francisco, May 1994
Acceptance letters from
Each my publications
A picture of Shannon
I thought I'd thrown away

Darkness Shaping Light

For now it flickers,
the porchlight left on
for the return of our souls.

We fear the bulb may crack
in the weight of darkness,
and not that far away
the lighthouse pulse
grows dimmer,
its revolution slowing down,
ghost ships in the night
wailing blindly for shore,
the light from our eyes
not bright enough
to lead them home.

Ghostblind

The dead would like
to know us better.

They gesture wildly
but our fleshy hereness
shines too intensely
for us to see them.

Between the streetlights,
the desk lamp,
and the microwave's
digital display,
we've left no darkness
that's dark enough to haunt.

Forgetting that the dead
are always with us,
we grieve their loss.

Only in horror films
do we remind ourselves
that life and afterlife
once kept fewer secrets
from one another.
The living and the dead
are now such lonesome souls.

Second Fiddle

I woke up with an uneasy feeling; something had happened.

The Stock Market — something had happened in the world while I was asleep and the stock market had somehow been affected. I quickly opened my CNBC app.

Nothing ... only a photo of Sen. Elizabeth Warren looking like one of the Furies, resembling a mother with a poker up her ass scolding her child. Below, another photo, this one of our President wearing a shit-eating grin that told the world he had just gotten laid.

I scrolled farther down.

I shouldn't've. I was met by Bernie, scowling, not the face anyone would choose to wake up to ... okay, maybe his wife, but she has to.

I clicked on WhatsApp; perhaps my publisher had sent me a message, as yesterday I had emailed him the proof-read copy of my novel. Nothing.

I saw there was an unread email. An acceptance for one of my stories? The email looked promising: "We enjoyed reading your words" Not a good beginning. Words? Not 'your story'? I continued reading: "While" I stopped. I didn't have to read further; another 'unfortunately' letter.

I patted the bed covers, as Roma, my playful cat, usually slept with me. But she wasn't on the bed, nor had she been all night. Where was she, and where had she been?

I jumped out of bed. Not a good idea. I have neuropathy causing vertigo. I stumbled, hit the night table beside my bed and knocked over my 18th century blanc de Chine lamp which came crashing down on the hardwood floor. At that moment, I wished I had laid down softwood flooring as my 18th century Chinese vase was now in pieces.

I needed to unwind and cheer up. I asked Alexa to play songs by Edith Piaf, my favorite singer. "Non, je ne regrette rien". Exactly what I needed. It took me back more than 60 years, to lunch with Marc and Vava Chagall in Saint-Paul-de-

Vence. During lunch, Marc asked me, "Qu'est ce que tu veux pendant ta vie?" I didn't hesitate to answer, "J'espère que je ne regretterai rien."

While Piaf sang I began searching for Roma. I looked in my bathroom where I keep her litter box in the shower. She wasn't there. I went to my study; she often lies beside my chair. No Roma. I next walked to the kitchen. In the morning she'll sit there, waiting for the wet food I feed her. She wasn't waiting ... but I heard her little cry. I looked, and there she was, on the heated floor of the conservatory.

"What are you doing here?" I asked as I petted her.

"Meow," she said.

"Do you want some food?"

"Meow."

"No? What, then?" She looked away. I followed her eyes.

A mouse.

During the night I had become second-fiddle to a mouse in Roma's life.



Love Skirmishes

Let's make war by making love,
you proclaimed,
provoking me,
that spring afternoon
by the sea.

We shot each other complicit glances,
we recognized our battlefield,
ready for a hand-to-hand fight,
armed with tongues and lips,
nails and teeth.

We advanced and retreated,
without giving each other respite,
conquering high ground and trenches
until we both laid exhausted,
mutually victorious,
in a blissful embrace.

Sudden Accelerations, or I Hate to Say This but ...

The white-capsule, white-pink-and-black
box of Good & Plenty is
no better or worse than the yellow-orange-
brown Reese's Butter Cups wrapper.

In a circle of mint-green chairs
each child, in turn, reads aloud
from *Around the Corner*.

The book's title seems a metaphor for fate,
and the circle a circle of mortality.

Culture vulture that I am, I wonder
if singer Pearl Bailey and actor Dorothy
Dandridge knew each other. Google
could tell, or a looker, listener
who was alive when they were alive.

In the dark of my celibate room, I rise
and shine, thinking I moved far away
from the person I should have married,
and the person I wanted to marry moved
far away from me.

Within these walls, Bill,
who was in lumber, passed away, and Carl,
a handwriting expert, settled.
I wonder if either, or both, ever admired
the beauty of leopards.

The dark underbelly of humanity lies
behind the sunny skies of filmmaker David
Lynch's *Blue Velvet*, and *Mulholland Drive*.

One night, on a riverbank, it was still
light outside, I rubbed red-green leaves
from a poison ivy bush on my arms.
I wonder, have you ever bitten into tinfoil,
say, from a gum wrapper?

Dana was walking and fell through ice.
He got out of the freezing water,
and to a phone booth and called his mother.
That happened after the night of Anselm
Hollo's poetry reading. Hollo said,
"Anything can be a poem." Dana, sitting
next to me, said, quietly, "If it's good."

When musician John Coltrane did an album
with vocals, he chose Johnny Hartman,
whose voice is as smooth as water poured
from a decanter into a glass,
and whose life was ill-fated, due to an excess
of alcohol, according to Wikipedia.

The sound of dice shaking in a cup,
a sequence of soft clunks, is pleasant,
though I'll be damned if I can recall
my hand shaking such a cup.

Have you ever stuck your fingers
in a bowling ball,
or petted a mare's mane, or been bitten
on the back of a leg by a Wheaton
while mowing a lawn?

Note money's similarities: Abraham Lincoln on a five-dollar bill, Alexander Hamilton on a ten. Both names start with a and end with n; both men died from being shot by pistols, Lincoln from behind in a theater; Hamilton in a duel on a promontory above a river.

Have you ever sat in a garden? I haven't, but I weed a small garden, shaped like a shield curved on one side, straight on the other, and, at the bottom, pointed. In my garden red roses, a stone throw a brown milk box.

Weeding a garden is like writing a song or a poem. The poet Stanley Kunitz, in Provincetown, tended a garden. Its array of colors and blooms startled passersby.

I wish I could act as well as Barbara Payton, the femme fatale in James Cagney's film Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye.

Google could tell me the name of glass with diamond patterns in it, that you can see yourself in, like the two glass doors of a big brown cadenza I saw myself in, when I was nearer a floor than I am.

Face the invisible mirror, I tell myself.
The person I should have married
was blond and easy to get along with;
the person I wanted to marry
was brunette and hard to get along with.
Boxing fan that I am, I remember Emile
Griffith and Benny Paret. Griffith, years
after their third, fatal match in the ring,
said, "I couldn't get along with myself."

On the baseball diamond, shortstop
Luis Aparicio
tosses the ball to Nellie Fox,
who fires it to first
to get the out that ends the game.



The Hermit Observes

Living alone, monkish, I've no need
to lock my doors against the coming night.
The birds of Spring nest where they please,
iris and peony coming near.
The neighbor's cat, my only visitor,
uses my fresh turned garden.
Across the flood plain headlights blink
between the trees on off on off going home.

Trip Advisor

Here came the ocean sneaking back
after pulling out yesterday with no so longs
We will ignore its obvious infidelities
Sol the dehumidifier and Luna the water magnet
have worked together to create Thursday
and given the visiting eyes on the balcony
a glimpse of the cosmic flywheel everyone
will then go down to breakfast reassured

To This Waiting

I brought a book a moth at the window
coffee heated by red spirals
light wrapped inside a little twisted bulb
I brought patient expectation to a grid of tiles
spider head down as if six thirty
appliances assembled in rapt silence
the book so poignant its pages were tissues
in anticipation

Michelangelo Variation

If his figures awaited release from rock
then angels were probably already in the paint
It was just a matter of brushing them out of the bristles
and into the air above the apotheosis

Olympic

How to enter the water like passing through glass
without disturbing the surface a loving limitation
a perfected falling the simple parameters of height
and surface and how many twists between them
ending in tens and a kiss of no particular nationality

Texts

Writing is a hand book hand hand in hand
longhand taking hold of cursive like a rope
A book of hours in Carolingian Minuscule
testamentary evangelistic commemorative
calligraphy on skins indexing memories

Doug Raphael

Stand Tall

My front tooth
 is recessed
restless
maybe it has someplace better to be
like that
inflamed balloon
at the back of my throat.

It's scrawny
small
the kind of tooth
bullied and poked
and told to step back in line

I encourage it to
Stand tall
Be proud
Strong
Resilient

“Be yourself,” I say.

And when you've hit the wall
have the balls to
shout “fuck it, I'm
walking”

Peel yourself from the
grey decay
you're wrapped in

Hike the El Camino
Climb Machu Picchu
Drive an RV across the States,
writing about how hard it is
to dislodge yourself from
your family, your friends, your dog.

And if you're lucky enough
to be sprinkled with pixie dust,
Don't sneeze
Don't blow
Inhale
Snort
Breathe
Ride that high all day.



Hundred-Acre Brook

Its blue line on the map begins amid
close-together contour lines,
at 1900 feet, miles from any trail.

Must be a spring up there.
It'd be worth the bruises and scrapes
of bushwhacking to find out.

This one joins Shannon Brook
below the waterfalls. Afterward, it is all
Shannon Brook—like a wife

taking her husband's last name,
though still herself.
One stream, then, down to the lake.

The goal of working backward
to its source would be
to know the brook, beginning to end:

its lifespan, so to speak.
(Except that it still keeps on coming.)
If I ever did locate the spring,

I would kneel to drink,
and return refreshed for whatever day
the sea will receive me.

fire hall

i.

the man and dog are silhouettes
black ghosts against cobalt
trekking the high thin line
of a reservoir horizon
boundary water between ceded ground
and inverted native soil

it's an invented sky
free of crow and cloud
small trees
are instilled with imported birdsong

the man carries a walking stick
the dog is unleashed
stony banks
bleed afterbirth of snow
flushing into the creek below

power line derricks sprout
like giant weeds
like neo-totems that carry dominion
in this age of loss

the old man's silhouette throws
a frail shadow
from his vantage he sees
an invisible distant place
like the moment before lightning flashes
like white-collar thievery
like a promise

the dog sniffs and runs and jumps
carefree and agile

what was once hunted
no longer cowers

ii.

the traffic hums on chiseled ground
scuffing through scattered a-frames and ranch homes
the sun was always restless
the sacred dna: out-numbered

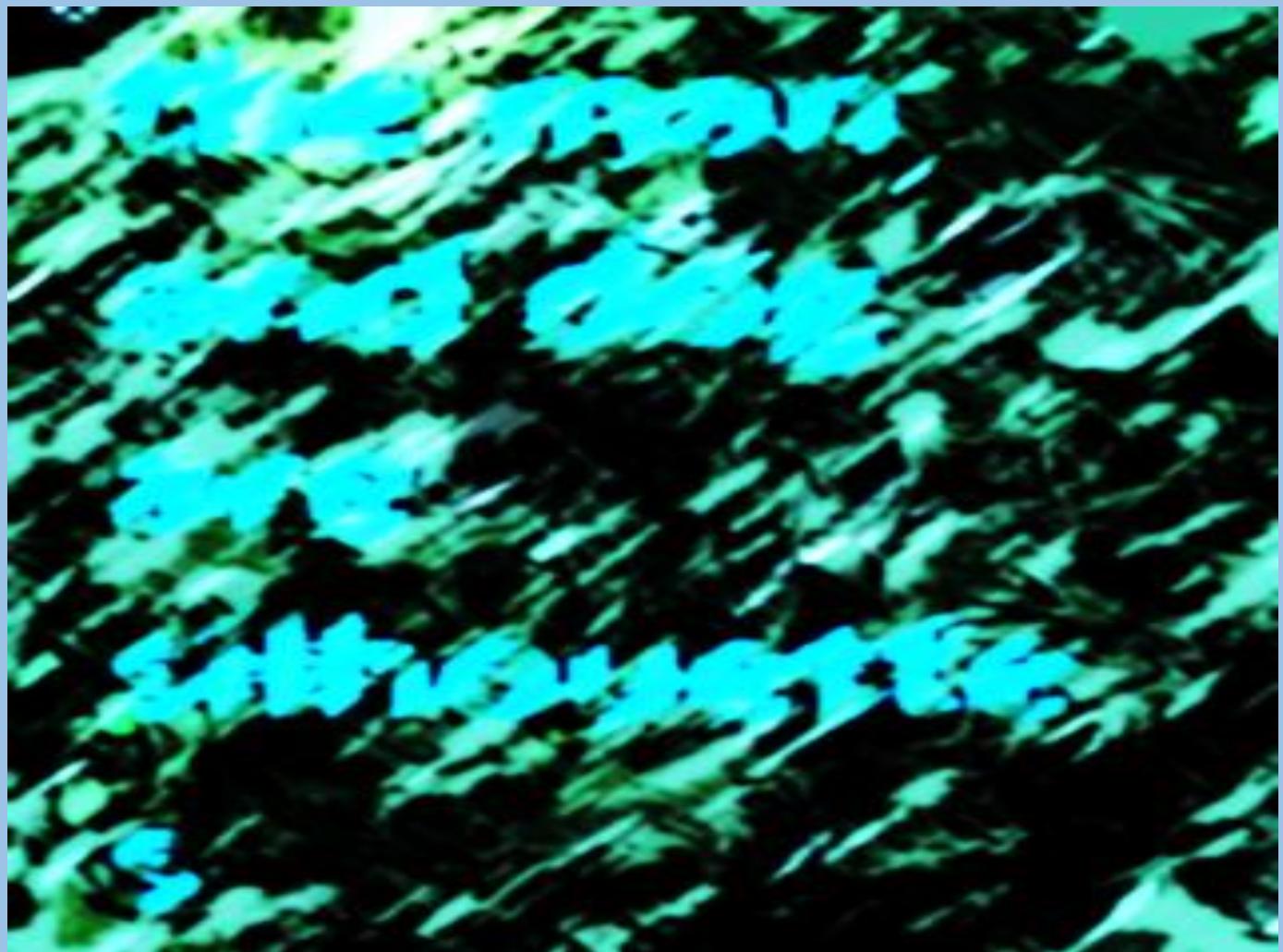
drenched in the color of our willingness
tainting decay with flowers
memory: a sacrificed intelligence

iii.

the silhouette floats
disguised as a human being
he steadies along with his veteran's limp
and his walking stick
the dog is as playful as the daylight allows

approaching the path below along the creek
the old man whistles a song with
a stolen melody
then pulls a small coin from his pocket

drowns lincoln like a stray seed
in an oily mud puddle
a hope that will never germinate



Pointing

motionless

staring at
the cemetery
she pointed
to each that
she once knew

one hand
to her chest
the other
to block the sun
as a gentle wind
slipped over
green leaves
touching her hair

waiting for the bus at the world's edge

i stand, rain tasting like unanswered prayers. behind, the station groans, its peeling paint a wound too ancient to mend. i wait, knowing the bus a lie. then, he arrives, a man assembled from some malignant elsewhere, his suit too clean for this squalor. cruel slits for eyes pierce the void. a stagnant puddle mirrors us. that's when it sees me, and i it—the thousand-eyed, thousand-mouthing thing, clawing at a non-existent door. an impossibility made real. i try to scream, but silence, iron-heavy, chokes my voice. the man smiles, a chasm splitting the earth, a smile that bleeds the sky. he nods, not to me, but to the rising thing, its hunger primordial. he breathes dust, bone, the air before the world's end. i watch. the thing emerges, slick skin pulling free like a lost nightmare, teeth gleaming in the gloom. i am paralyzed, mute. it grows, limbs elongated and warped. i blink. the puddle, the thing, the man—vanished. the street is empty. only the iron taste lingers, a swallowed secret.

I Know That My Redeemer Liveth

The hour is announced short,

Westminster Chimes missing
a middling B, ringing

in our heads, remembered,
duller, less loud,
than the struck G, F, and E

No one is fashionable today.
The count comes in too soon,
off-beat; vanities burn
out of time, in the difference,

smoke

the color of lungs
drying, sucking
raw air between buildings,

history breach born

before the first chime
of the series on a fixed scale
of what must be noon.

we were both nickelodeon kids

perhaps both the stoop kids,
the squids and fillburts of
our generation. asked by classmates
why we're *so quiet* but deadpan existentialists
in our real worlds, when the uniform
sheds and we stare into the
glowing portal of somewhere else
from the sanctuary of our beds.
you cope with humor, he tells me
as we couch-lock and doom-scroll
together in harmony.
in therapy, i learn that my inner
child is being silenced and exiled
by all the other parts of me,
the drinker, the judge,
the caretaker, the obsessor—
my therapist tells me
there are no bad parts in me,
while i wonder if she was a disney
kid or a cartoon network kid,
leaps and bounds different
views on the world
(especially those courage
the cowardly dog kids).
my inner child may be in exile
from myself, but his can see
mine through a heart's glued-together
pieces. they find each other somewhere
among all the adults in the room

and sneak away to a pillow fort
with cinnamon toast crunch and
reruns and laughing and—

somewhere else we're still waiting
to know if we'll ever leave the stoop.



A Simple wine reduction of the muse

You wish
for something
smoother warmer
than hands
with velvet gloves
to run over legs
wilder than hips.

For once
she's willing
and tongues
run along roads
forking in every
direction.

He's Not My Dad's Friend

Uncle Li's yellow teeth flashed through the stainless-steel gate to our apartment as I opened it. Every time he came, he'd tell his wife he was visiting a friend.

In his hand was a bulging red plastic bag. Through its translucent layer, I saw apples pressed together, forming a heart shape, and bananas tracing wavy lines. But these weren't the fresh fruits from the market; they were unsellable ones from his store.

I didn't like his fruits—the banana peel was covered in tiny black spots, overripe and tired, the apples were dotted with brown spots, sour to the taste and soft, losing their crispness, and the oranges' skins were wrinkled, their once-plump moisture gone.

I took the bag and turned toward the kitchen. As I removed the imperfect parts, the fruits made a fine fruit salad. Mom told me not to be picky about Uncle Li's fruit—they were better than the packaged and neatly cut supermarket fruits. Those, too, were no longer fresh but presented in their best form.

Mom's eyes curved into crescents, her smile holding the sparkle of stars. She wore crimson lipstick, green tea-scented perfume, and her favorite red dress. I knew it was time to return to my studies.

In the living room, Teresa Teng's song flowed like a gentle river, the melody of *The Moon Represents My Heart* drifting through the air. I didn't need to open the door to see they were waltzing. Before Dad got sick, I'd never seen Mom dance. She said Dad didn't like her dancing; he didn't like many things about her. Yet, he encouraged me to learn Latin dance, no matter how hard it rained, he always took me to the studio. Whenever they fought in the living room, with the sound of

breaking teacups filling the air, I'd dance the tango in my room. After he passed away, I stopped, but Mom's steps began to move, with Uncle Li.

The numbers in my math textbook moved across the paper, infected by the melody. I put down my pen and walked toward the door, opening it a crack.

The oak table was pushed aside, now resting against the edge of the sofa. The curtains were drawn. Mom had turned off the ceiling-mounted lamp and switched on the recessed lights. Under the warm yellow light, everything looked cozy, tender.

“Today is my birthday,” Mom whispered as she twirled.

“Wish you’re happy every day.”

“Can you stay a little longer?” She looked into his eyes.

He held her tightly, one hand caressing her back. “My wife will become suspicious.”

They continued to spin with the music, Teresa Teng’s voice echoing in the air: “You ask me how deep my love for you is, how much I love you...” Mom rested her head on his chest and closed her eyes.

I picked up a slice of apple with a toothpick. It made a crisp sound between my teeth, and the sweet juice burst on my tongue. Surprisingly, it was delicious.

Contributors

Azure Brandi graduated from NYU. Publication history: “Style” in *New Croton Review*’s Spring 2023 Volume; “You Can Deny” in *October Hill Magazine*’s Winter 2024 Issue; “Persona as Art” in *Virgo Venus Press*. Forthcoming: “The Currents” in *The Underground* Volume 30; “On Beauty” in *Afterimages* by Thirty West Publishing House; “Earl” in *Alien Buddha Zine* #76; “Bowie Effect in Blue” in *Soup Can Magazine*.

Jeff Burt lives in Santa Cruz County, California, with his wife. He has contributed previously to *Big Windows Review*, *Willows Wept Review*, *Heartwood*, and *Williwaw Journal*.

Alan Catlin has a new book out, *Landscapes of the Exiled from Dos Madres*. Coming soon, a new long poem *Unattended* from Cyberwit and Work Anxiety Poems from Roadhouse. *His Still Life with Apocalypse* will be published by Shelia na gig Editions in 2026.

Lynne Curry, Ph.D., is the author of “Real-life Writing,” <https://bit.ly/45INbVo> ; “Writing from the Cabin,” <https://bit.ly/3tazJpW> ; www.workplacecoachblog.com ; Navigating Conflict: Tools for Difficult Conversations (<https://amzn.to/3rCKoWj> ; Managing for Accountability: A Business Leader’s Toolbox (<https://bit.ly/3T3vww8>); Beating the Workplace Bully: A Tactical Guide to Taking Charge (<https://amzn.to/3msclOW>) and Solutions 911/411, (<https://amzn.to/3ueSeXX>)

Jakima Davis has been writing for almost 25 years. She’s been published in underground publications such as “The PEN,” “Big Hammer,” “Marymark Press” and many more. She has also been involved in mainstream publications such as “Hanging Loose,” “Trajectory,” and “Iconoclast.” She’s had poems translated into German, Portuguese, and Spanish; she’s posting her poems on Facebook to gain a fanbase.

Marco Etheridge is a writer, occasional playwright, and part-time poet. He writes in Vienna, Austria. His work has appeared in one hundred and fifty reviews across Canada, Australia, the UK, and the USA. He is an editor for *Hotch Potch Literature and Art*. Author website: <https://www.marcoetheridgefiction.com/>

Jesse Hamilton writes, “I am a writer from Michigan who enjoys dabbling in many genres and going wherever the ideas take me. I have only been writing prose for a few years, and have only been published in a few small publications, but I aim to keep finding my voice and experimenting with it.”

William Heath has published four poetry books: *The Walking Man*, *Steel Valley Elegy*, *Going Places*, *Alms for Oblivion*; three chapbooks: *Night Moves in Ohio*, *Leaving Seville*, *Inventing the Americas*; three novels: *The Children Bob Moses Led* (winner of the Hackney Award), *Devil Dancer*, *Blacksnake’s Path*; a history, *William Wells and the Struggle for the Old Northwest* (winner of two Spur Awards and the Oliver Hazard Perry Award); a book of interviews, *Conversations with Robert Stone*. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Hiram College. He lives in Annapolis. www.williamheathbooks.com

Erren Kelly writes, “I am a Two-Time Pushcart nominated poet from Lynn, Massachusetts . I have been writing for 32 years and have over 300 publications in print and online in such publications Hiram Poetry Review, Mudfish, Poetry Magazine(online), Ceremony, Cacti Fur, Bitterzoet, Cactus Heart, Similar Peaks, Gloom Cupboard, Poetry Salzburg and other publications. My most recent publication was in Pyrokinetion Literary journal; I have also been published in anthologies such as “Fertile Ground,” and Beyond The Frontier.” My work can also been seen on You Tube under the “Gallery Cabaret,” links. I am also the author of the book, “Disturbing The Peace,” on Night Ballet Press. I received my B.A. in English-Creative Writing from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. I also love to read and I love to travel, having visited 45 states and Canada and Europe. The themes in my writings vary, but I have always had a soft spot for subjects and people who are not in the mainstream.”

Robert S. King, Athens GA, is cofounder of FutureCycle Press. His poems appear widely, including *Chariton Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, and

Southern Poetry Review. He has published nine poetry collections, most recently *Developing a Photograph of God* (2014), *Messages from Multiverses* (2020), and *Selected Poems* (2023).

Tom Laichas is author most recently of *Three Hundred Streets of Venice California* (FutureCycle Press, 2023). His work has appeared or is forthcoming in the *Hawai'i Pacific Review*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Plume*, *The Moth* (Ireland), the *Irish Times*, *BarBar*, and elsewhere. He lives in Venice, California.

E. P. Lande, born in Montreal, has lived in the south of France and now, with his partner, in Vermont, writing and caring for more than 100 animals. Previously, as a Vice-Dean, he taught at l'Université d'Ottawa, and he has owned and managed country inns and free-standing restaurants. Since submitting less than three years ago, more than 100 his stories — many auto-fiction — and poems have found homes in publications on all continents except Antarctica. His story “Expecting” has been nominated for Best of the Net. His debut novel, “Aaron’s Odyssey”, a gay-romantic-psychological thriller, has recently been published in London.

Marcelo Medone (1961, Buenos Aires, Argentina) is a medical doctor, Pushcart Prize, and Best Small Fictions nominee fiction writer, poet, essayist, journalist, playwright, and screenwriter. He received numerous awards and was published in multiple languages in more than 50 countries around the world, including the US. He currently lives in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Peter Mladinic’s most recent book of poems, *Maiden Rock*, is available from UnCollected Press.

Ben Onachila is a trail runner, avid gardener and reader. He is the author of two chapbooks with the Orchard St. Press, *Homecoming* and *Anubis Stands Close By*. His poems have most recently appeared in *Quiet Diamonds*, *Creosote*, *Abandoned Mine*, *Heart*, and are forthcoming in *Trajectory*. He lives in Pisgah Forest, N.C.

Poet and visual artist **Allan Peterson**’s most recent book is *This Luminous, New and Selected Poems* (Panhandler Books). A recipient of the Juniper Prize and an NEA

Fellowship, he lives and writes in Ashland, Oregon. Website: allanpetersonpoetry.com

Doug Raphael practices architecture in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he lives with his three children, wife, and Wheaten Terrier. He has been published in “Studio East 94-95” (Dalhousie University Press), “The Affordable Homes Program” (McGill School of Architecture) and “Planning Housing For Change” (McGill Affordable Homes Program). He is currently enrolled in the creative writing program at Dalhousie University and is struggling to figure out how to make writing a full-time gig.

Russell Rowland writes from New Hampshire’s Lakes Region, where he has judged high-school Poetry Out Loud competitions. His work appears in *Except for Love: New England Poets Inspired by Donald Hall* (Encircle Publications), and *Covid Spring*, Vol. 2 (Hobblebush Books). His own poetry books, *Wooden Nutmegs* and *Magnificat*, are available from Encircle Publications.

Dan Sicoli lives between two Great Lakes in New York State where he co-edits *Slipstream*. He will have a new poetry collection out from Ethel Press in 2026. Recently he’s had poems included in *Abandoned Mine*, *BlazeVOX*, *Evening Street Review*, *Hellbender*, *Hobo Camp Review*, *Home Planet News*, *Loch Raven Review*, *Ranger*, *Rye Whiskey Review*, and *San Pedro River Review*, among numerous others. On weekends he beats on an old Gibson in a local garage rock band. <www.pw.org/directory/writers/dan_sicoli>

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.

Marvin Smith is a poet from Ohio. He prefers to let his work speak louder than his bio. His poetry is inspired by the absurd, the uncanny, and silence.

Matt Thomas is a smallholder farmer, engineer, and poet. His recent work can be found in *Ponder Review*, *The Thieving Magpie*, and *Common House. Disappearing*

by the Math, a full-length collection, was published by Silver Bow in 2024. *Cicada, Dog & Song*, a second full-length collection, will be published by Serving House Books in 2026. He lives with his family in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia.

Writer, professor, and dancer, **jessie caitlin ventulan** (she/they) resides in Southern California with their partner and kitty. In addition to writing poetry, they write fiction, study ballet and contemporary dance, fangirl over drag queens and professional wrestlers, and enjoy making soups and cakes.

Richard Weaver volunteers with the Maryland Book Bank, CityLights, and the Baltimore Book Festival. In his spare time, he's the official writer-in-residence at the James Joyce Pub in Baltimore. Previously, he was an Assistant Professor at the 3rd oldest Jesuit College, where he taught in the English Department and was the Head of Library Circulation, and acting Archivist. His first published poem appeared in *Poetry* magazine, April 1975. In his less-than-spare time he reads for *Slant* magazine.

Huina Zheng is a college essay coach and an editor. Her stories appear in *Baltimore Review*, *Variant Literature*, and more. Nominated three times for both the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net, she lives in Guangzhou, China, with her family.





The Big Windows Review

Issue 40 · Summer 2025