

Gyroscope Review



Fall Crone Power Issue 2024



Gyroscope Review

fine poetry to turn your world around

Issue 24-4

Fall Crone Power Issue 2024

Copyright © 2024 Gyroscope Review

Constance Brewer

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage retrieval system, without permission from the editors. For information about permission to reproduce selections from this magazine, contact the editors by email at gyroscopereview@gmail.com.

Submissions: *Gyroscope Review* accepts previously unpublished contemporary poetry submissions through our online submissions system, gyroscopereview.submittable.com/submit. Please read our guidelines before submitting.

For further information, visit our website: gyroscopereview.com.

Editor:

Constance Brewer

Assistant Editors:

Elya Braden

Betsy Mars

Logo design, interior design, layout, copyediting:

Constance Brewer

This issue's cover art:

Unity ©2024 Constance Brewer

From the Editor

So nice to see everyone back for another fantastic Fall Crone Power Issue. We have an intriguing mix of previous and newer voices for you to enjoy. One of the Gyroscope Review editors' favorite things about curating the Crone Power Issue is the wonderful array of poetry that floods our inbox, and the heartfelt cover letters letting us know these are thoughtful, engaged women wanting to make their voices heard. We love when older women embrace all aspects of the crone. The word is not a negative. We've taken it back and wear the title proudly.

As usual, our older poets came through with an abundance of poems that reflect and explore, leading the reader through the intricacies of life, death, and the worlds in between. There are obstacles, but there are also triumphs. Crones handle both with poise and confidence, along with tears, for what they've lost, and what remains. Crones will not go quietly into the sunset—nor should they. We hope you enjoy the collective power of these poems and embrace the wisdom underlying the words.

Constance Brewer

Table of Contents

Section One	7
crone /krōn/	8
by Kellie Wells	
Walking Around	11
by Jodi Keene	
Zumba Class	12
by Mary Padgen Michna.....	
Aubade	13
by Melissa Huff.....	
Chaos Theory	14
by Christine Anna Marie.....	
Esther Writes Miryam of Nazareth	15
by Carol Barrett.....	
This Aging Agnostic	16
by Francesca Brenner.....	
Out Here on These Cliffs	17
by Jayne Relaford Brown	
Avanto	18
by Louhi Pohjola.....	
Apparition in Autumn	20
by L. Shapley Bassen.....	
Portrait of My Mother as Morning Clouds	21
by Gail Braune Comorat	
Spring Incantation	22
by Michelle Holland	
Fire-Proof Box	23
by Susan Kress.....	
Letter to My Unborne Child	24
by Helen Finney	
Prolapsed Uterus as Tidepool	25
by Alison Hurwitz.....	
Hummingbird	26
by Terry Hall Bodine.....	

Love Song: Port & Starboard	27
by Ann Chinnis	
Section Two	29
How to Treat a Witch	30
by Maureen Clark.....	
At Seventeen	31
by Jessica D. Thompson	
Twinkies	33
by Shaheen Dil.....	
To November	34
by Kathy O'Fallon	
Irresponsible	35
by Darlene M. Javar	
Like Cake Toppers The Groom And Bride Stand	36
by Robin Dellabough	
Then	37
by Kathy McGoldrick.....	
The Construction Workers on Summit Street	38
by Linda Carney-Goodrich	
Once Among the Stars	39
by Lisa Seidenberg	
Ode to a Reflection	40
by Seretta Martin.....	
Notes from a Long-time Marriage	41
by Sharon Pretti.....	
Heat as a Sentence	42
by Nancy Murphy	
We Were the Mushroom People	43
by Suzanne O'Connell.....	
Plantago major	44
by Karen Neuberg	
Abecedarian on Moving	46
by Jennifer Randall Hotz.....	
Portable Art	47
by Sarah Carleton	

Curriculum Vitae	48
by Donna Pucciani	
Section Three	49
On Assassins	50
by Heidi Joffe	
A Rue of Wishes	51
by Colette McHale Wisnewski	
<i>She</i> Would Not Want Her Name Banded About	52
by Mandy Beattie	
I choose to persist	53
by Marge Piercy	
Spinning My Wheels on the Eve of the End	54
by Kathleen McClung	
My Mother's Tinnitus	56
by Elaine Mintzer	
Through an Open Window	57
by Elizabeth Gauffreau	
The Broken Grave	58
by Serena Fusek	
New England Poets	59
by Tricia Knoll	
To a Hammock	60
by Lizzie Purkis	
which way to turn	61
by Catherine Edmunds	
Sacred Union	62
by Lori Zavada	
Feathering Spell to Become a Bird	63
by Lynette Reini-Grandell	
nonmigrating with black plumage reflecting extraordinary luster	64
by jane putnam perry	
No Path But What the Walking Makes	65
by Amy Smith	
Somewhere	66
by Carolyn Martin	

The Pause	67
by Murrell Hebert	
Contributors	69
Announcements	76

Section One

CRONE /KRŌN/
BY KELLIE WELLS

noun

From late Middle English, a term of abuse, via middle Dutch *caroonje*, carcass, corpse, old ewe, from old Northern French *carogine*, cantankerous old woman (Picard *carone*, Walloon *coronie*), from vulgar Latin *caronia* (see carrion, crony); see also Greek *kbronios*, long-lasting

1. a withered witch, a hag, an aging hellcat, harridan, trot, a carlin [chiefly Scottish]
 - a. a pugnacious beldam wearing a ragged headscarf made of magic snails
2. the shadow cast on a ruin by a gnarled tree
3. a long-haired, hobbled goat with a deep baritone bleat and a handsome beard
 - a. that remotest parcel of the goat's compartmentalized stomach into which a witch disappears when being pursued by an angry vicar who aims to burn her to cinders, reason being she could find no herbal decoction strong enough to reanimate the flattened muskrat dangling dead-eyed between his legs
4. that which causes Time to feel as though it is forever running late
 - a. the era about which the Precambrian age feels nostalgic
5. a jumble of rusted but unbreakable penny nails of varying lengths
6. the snow that collects in that part of the enchanted forest where only the tiniest tendril of light penetrates the gloom
7. an old ewe, a sheep whose teeth are broken by tough vegetation
8. a salty biddy who has nothing better to do than to pilot a broom across the sky so as to spook the many dullards in the world, for there is nothing more terrifying, is there, than an old woman gaily exceeding the speed limit
 - a. a woman, likely a dusty and wizened tatterdemalion living on the outskirts, rumored to have the power to level her gaze in the direction of a blustering man's naughty nether nonesuch and smash it flat as a one-eyed flounder; then, if she were feeling especially infelicitous, she'd filch the glower-trampled and gasping thing, pluck it free at the root, then loft it to a place where the air grows thin as an emptied lung, stash it in a bird's eyrie, and she'd watch as the rankled raptor needled the lamentable member with its tomial tooth then flung it to the wind, where it would be promptly lit upon by scavenging seagulls, who would find it a bit tough, a bit gamey, if you must know, but better than an empty stomach

9. a form of contagious fungal invisibility (incubation time: 60 years) that spreads across the body like an imperceptible rash and produces in the unseeable sufferer a compulsion to hurl invective in the direction of all tediously gape-mouthed, oblivious bystanders
10. the square root of a number known only to geese
 - a. an unsolvable equation from an ancient mathematics: the square root of all evil—sometimes said to be lucre or mosquitoes or men or idle hands, but only the Ur-crone knows the answer, and she has stashed it in a place no mere terrestrial would think to look
11. systemic sorrow
12. the padded part of a tapir's beautifully mesaxonic foot, where all suffering is eventually deposited
13. a rare gemstone found inside the honeycombed bones of a centenarian seahag
 - a. your own fossilized future
14. the spongey density from which ylem was birthed
15. what ghosts eat on their birthday
16. a kind of long extinct storytelling always narrated by a singing tortoise beneath a gibbous moon
17. all the things that children torment
18. a riddle, whispered in your dreaming ear, whose all-illuminating answer you can never recall upon waking
19. the charred remains after incendiary ignorance immolates a solar system
20. the wing-shaped bruise left behind by an angry swan
21. the morning after the end of the world
22. that pile of rags you sometimes see moving very slowly by the side of the road

transitive verb

1. to crone the ewe-flock: pick out and reject (the old sheep) from a flock
2. to crone the face: aid and expedite the formation of pendulous flesh, in the form of a wattle or dewlaps, on the face and neck of an aspiring battle-axe

3. to crone the cow: replace the daisy chaplet with a woven crown of spiny spurge on the head of the eldest and most cunning cow, in recognition of her acceding to the throne, the cow-croning ceremony taking place at the first sign of a shriveled udder

Collective noun: six or more crones in the same cottage make a cackle; six cackles make a hex; a gathering of sixty-six cackles will reverse the magnetic field and undo every knot ever tied. Best beware.

WALKING AROUND

BY JODI KEENE

—after Pablo Neruda

It happens that I'm tired
of being a woman
waiting for the light,
for streets to be peopled before
I can run to the store

or in the park. Tired of being
a woman having to stand
on the platform with a poker
face and then inside the car where I
need to be brass and steel.

On the sidewalk where I
pass lingerie boutiques, nail
salons, a poster of a woman
wearing a sexy Santa suit.

These fill me with dread

for daughters and nieces.
I'm tired of the smaller piece
of the wishbone, being
a music box, or a light rain
fall. I'm tired of being
a woman expected
to want to tend a garden.

It would be delicious

striding along the streets
at night, a hell-bent
Lilith with a blazing torch—
everyone scrambling to clear my
path, and crouching
in recesses and alleys
until I'd passed—
everyone knowing I
came to burn.

ZUMBA CLASS

BY MARY PADGEN MICHNA

The music rises and fills me
with longing and a fire
I didn't know was there.
Like a shy lover, I stay in a safe place:
no front line or full-length mirror.
I move my seasoned body to the beat,
twirling, kicking, shaking.
Two classes a week are not enough.
I walk my four-legged partner
on empty streets, adding
dance steps in the safety of night,
moon as stage light
and the yellow-eyed stare of an owl.
Trees toss their leaves in gentle applause.

AUBADE

BY MELISSA HUFF

a half-moon hovers
a quiet observer on a backdrop of blue

I, too, make no sound
as the warm breeze skims my cheek
ruffles the tufted crest
of the nearby cardinal's cocked head

the birds have long since begun
their conversations

a mourning dove's cooing to lure a mate
the shrill call of a chickadee
sounding an alarm—hawk overhead
the cardinal's strong whistle
staking out his territory

their language is not mine

nor do I have wings to help me catch
a column of air
nor hollow bones to render me
almost weightless

and yet this morning
as I leave the moon behind

I try to coax a column of light
to fill my thirsty bones
I watch my spirit start to rise
on this day's updraft

and I begin to summon this song
to claim the whole wide sky
as my terrain

CHAOS THEORY

BY CHRISTINE ANNA MARIE

I. Question

Is this the sound of one hand letting go?

II. Ariadne

This labyrinth is dark with unexpected turns.

The thread to the tomb is slender, but true.

My eyes are open, the Minotaur calls.

III. Baba Yaga

Did you come of your own volition?

Or were you compelled to come?

Either way, I may eat you.

And I may not.

IV. Tongues of Trees

I once had a lover who seduced me
with equations of chaos theory.

His boat of teak a golden cave
rocking in the harbor,

Ocean slapping at the hull.

V. Danger

The dance is always with Death.

There is no other dance.

Raven at my fingertips,

instinct 'round my knee.

VI. Answer

If you ask, it will be yes.

ESTHER WRITES MIRYAM OF NAZARETH
BY CAROL BARRETT

Just think of me as a nice Jewish girl
who's walked the fields and knows
a donkey's rump. A few tips
for the journey:

1. Pack plenty of *matzah*.
2. Go with the flow. When G-d
makes up a mind, don't even try
getting out of it.
3. Keep a diary—
worth something some day.
4. Fame comes with the territory.
You can't sneak around much anymore.
5. The pedestal's permanent.
Kick off your sandals
while you've still got a chance.
6. You'll be a good *ima*.
Don't worry about it.
7. Tell Yocef none of this
was your idea. He'll get used to it.
8. When you have *tsuris*
repeat "for such a time as this ..."
9. Down the pike, they'll name
first daughters for you.
Try to think of it as honor,
this being set apart.
10. If you get lonely,
look me up.
I'm in the book.

THIS AGING AGNOSTIC
BY FRANCESCA BRENNER

The First sign was when I chose a religious man over other applicants. The man was wearing a necklace of a cross, but not just a cross, Jesus nailed to the cross. When I said, "I hope he's not MAGA," you said, "If he is, at least he'll have a positive experience with a liberal." Such loving faith in me.

The Second sign was a phrase that came to me while I was showering. It had to do, again, with Jesus, though I might have used the word God. I wanted to ponder it later, so I repeated it several times to anchor it in memory then lathered up and forgot it.

The Third sign came when I was driving in my neighborhood and a white car jugged out from the alley intersecting my path. My hand flew to the horn while I said "Oh, Christ!" I must have touched the verbal navigation command because my car's console typed "Navigate to Christ." Under that was typed "Nothing Found".

I can't stop thinking about you and your unkempt mane and this morning I texted you that I found one of your long, silver hairs by my pillow. And you texted back "the wild one, no doubt."

If there is a god, I love that she created silliness and contradiction. I'm certain she hid that last puzzle piece just to see how I'd react, just like she erases my memory when I walk into a room, just like in my sixties she introduced me to the man I wish I could have had kids with.

If there is a god, she likes tragi-comedies. Yesterday, rolling around naked with you for hours I understood the word bliss. Then I looked into your brown eyes and suddenly burst into tears. If there is a god, she even transforms joy into an enigma. But even if there is a god, I'll take it, whatever she dishes out, whatever I can tolerate, whatever significance is established in this blip of insignificance we mark as time.

OUT HERE ON THESE CLIFFS

BY JAYNE RELAFORD BROWN

The young woman, girl really, steps out,
past the warning signs, the flagstone walls,
the swinging chain she scissors across.
Where the slippery shale slides down the slope,
where the hard winds buffet in sudden gusts
and the wild surf gobbles the sandstone below,
she stands and lifts herself into a pose.

Willowy, tall, she's all thin stems, all relevés
and flexible bends. She's become a swan,
from her slipper-shod feet to the tilt of her head.
Up through her thick, luscious, pleated silk skirt,
through her fitted jacket, to her throat that extends,
like a heron, a crane, without craning her neck,
everything's smooth and curved and long,
from the curtain of satin composing her hair
to the brilliant eye turned up to the sky.

Now I see the young man she's brought to record her,
see how clearly she pictures herself.
So much beauty, so much youth,
all hers to squander, hers to destroy.

We shake our heads and file past,
busloads of grey-heads out on the path.
Nobody calls to her, "Sweetheart, Get back!"
Why bother? She doesn't feel mortal yet,
cannot imagine her body broken,
dashed to bits on the rocks below.

We shake our heads and turn away.
We do not want to see her fall today.
Knowing the body is all too perishable,
we're glad for the barriers,
glad for our windbreakers,
just glad to be walking out this far
over the ocean on grass-covered cliffs.

Glad for the slabs of slate almost as tall as us,
glad for electrified cattle fence
that marks the end of the public land
and keeps us mindful of the narrow path,
away from the dangers of looking down,
or looking back, of remembering
when we used to love daring our deaths.

AVANTO

—a hole in the ice used for ice fishing

BY LOUHI POHJOLA

I plunged through the *avanto*,
grabbed the handle of the vanishing
point, and opened
it where the horizon smacked
against the jutting edge of sea.

Then I travelled beyond
the thrice-nine lands near
the thrice-tenth kingdom
to consult with Baba Yaga
she of the clacking bony legs
and iron teeth.

Her hut's chicken legs twirled
wildly, and so I addressed her
in waggle dance code to inform
her of the Sun's position,
for she knew the six thousand ways
that dawn might break.

And so it cracked
and the Sun's yolk poured
over the forests until the trees
were tinged gold.
What do you wish?
I wish to know, Baba Yaga,
how to look through the bottom of a glass,
how to rearrange the proteins in my dreams,
how to learn what the future holds.

*Silly goose, you know how to look
through the bottom of a glass,
how to sort the proteins in your dreams!
But, if you return through the avanto
on my black swan's back,
you will find only the dead are left.*

Then, Baba Yaga, I shall go deep
into the mountains that lie under
the pine forests and search out Death.
I will fly there on the eagle's back
through these misty winter nights,
our breath contrails in the air.

*Then, if you insist,
take these sewing threads
and bind the four winds tight
to the northern lights so the clouds
part and your passage is clear.
Give to Death this message
I'll write on dried stock-fish
that he might turn to you his ear.*

I soared above her hut,
with threads and stock-fish,
tethered the winds to the borealis,
and found Death in his palace
busy at work. I offered
Baba Yaga's message
which he smelled three times
then swallowed whole.

*So, tell me, why have you
traveled this far? I have come
to ask for your help to remove
the splinters of glass in hearts
and grains of glass in eyes
so that my people won't die.*

*As Baba Yaga has helped you,
I will send you back through
the avanto with your new verses,
new songs, to remove pieces
of glass from hearts and eyes.
But, don't be surprised if you
find closed minds, for men feed
upon men, though they turn
on the same wheel,
and no longer heed the words.*

Death, let Rutu's hounds lead
me back through the *avanto*.
I'll burst forth before the people
with my reworked verses and songs
and challenge the firestorm of fear.
If my words are not heeded,
I will serve as your handmaiden
and mourn all those who pass
with no trace left behind.

APPARITION IN AUTUMN

BY L. SHAPLEY BASSEN

In autumn, after, I worked in the earth
planting bulbs for a season beyond belief.
Daffodils. Old English *affodyles*, jonquils.
A jet crossed the sky crowded with anonymous
and my anomie. I looked up to see
silence contrailed, sound waves white-underlined,
delayed by invisible air. Then, NOISE—
the fall of one small red sweet gum leaf,
the apparition on the tree's limb of five
red cardinals, fingers of a strange hand
waving at me in the garden. They stayed
there; I stared at them. I looked away,
back to work, back to them, on the branch.
Didn't fly away until I stood up to leave.
Mother had been planted in early October.
This poem was supposed to be about
the apparition of red cardinals
on the bough of a sweet gum tree above me
as I sat on the earth digging holes, daffodils
to rise in April. The cardinals stayed
so long I was comforted that I could believe
memory was the mystery outlasting loss.

PORTRAIT OF MY MOTHER AS MORNING CLOUDS
BY GAIL BRAUNE COMORAT

Daybreak sky. Nothing like Rothko's *rust and blue No. 61*.
I woke recalling a poem about color fields. But this sky
is a battlefield. Glowing clouds soar above an army

of licorice black. A hunter's moon holds to the west.
My mother loved to brag about late hours, how—before
I was born—she arrived home from parties at dawn.

This light is what she loved. I witness a pearling rawness
she called the silver hour. When she was named,
her grandfather misheard Sylvia as Silver, considered her

a child bound for glory. The woman I knew had already shed
career, had slipped free of her singing years. She clothed herself
in tailored creams and slate greys, disdained color. Declared

sunset's pinks and golds gaudy. Most of what I say about her
is true. In our later years, we both declared truce. Rothko said
his paintings signified human emotions: ecstasy, tragedy, doom.

Above me now, the clouds move like nuns headed to prayer.
Days go by and I don't think about my mother. But I do
remember now the way she once described how sunlight
behind nimbus can spark a cloud to gleam like steel.

SPRING INCANTATION
BY MICHELLE HOLLAND

The full moon in April, the Pink Moon, I repeated on paper with tempered blood, a thumbprint smudge to call the quiet ones with promised rain, because lilac blossoms and their lilted fragrance are simply not enough. Branches of the ancient apple trees, unpruned for as many years as you have been dead, spray heady and full with soft white petals, a contented buzz constant in mid-afternoon warmth, while the green gage plum blossoms already shrivel to sport their little knobs of potential. Last year's pansies open their expectant faces, as if I'm not grateful, allowing dandelions to spring up where they will, tall, yellow bright attractions leaning next to their fluffy, gone-to-seed heads wafting in the prevailing breeze. But all that new and beautiful is not enough. There will be more, columbine, salvia, purple sage, echinacea to come. Mexican primrose already sprouts from between rocks. Hollyhocks grow their huge leaves before shooting up stalks. Russian Olive and honeysuckle next in the days of lovely spring, abounding. The scrub jays are never satisfied.

blood and water
blot a spring mirrored moon
call the ashes home

This spring of incantations I'm daring to say out loud. The dead need a good talking to as they clamor for their due. They are buried on this property of grave sites and good-byes, under my feet when I pull the hose out to the acequia, feel the light of white apple petals on my cheeks, or nod on the trail to my left, where the slanted rock marks your appaloosa thoroughbred whose head you held as he stroked out, his big heart's pulse left no more building clouds, no thunder. So, I decided not to bury, sent all I loved off to burn instead, to keep ashes like favorite books on a shelf, side-by-side – my horse, two dogs, and you, in your beautiful urn, and the small framed portrait our daughter took the last time you visited her, the last time you wore your cape and red converse high tops, the garb of memory and witness, to be grandfather to our youngest daughter's first and only born, your eyes in hers. Though I conjure a pact with each warm afternoon, stay my heart with all that's promised, the hope of spring will never be enough.

mimic full pink moon
talk to the wind and the dead
you spring eternal

FIRE-PROOF BOX

BY SUSAN KRESS

You need one, the daughter says, checking burners on the stove, having caught from me the faith in imminent calamity. *What if the house burns down? Turns everything to ash?* So we send the husband out to Walmart for what looks just like a little suitcase— but now I'm not sure what to pack and what to leave behind. Whether to fold or roll up doubts. Whether to use those handy cubes to separate the facts from fiction. *Put in only things you can't replace* the daughter interrupts. I point toward the stained-glass window that turns the hallway blue and purple. The smooth gray stones I stole from Margate beach. And mother's good wool coat, of course. I wish I had her ashes, too, but she is buried in a wooden box in another country, making conversation quite impossible. *Your will. Insurance policies,* the daughter urges, spilling drawers of the maple bureau. She's strong-willed, like me. I can count on her to file the proper paperwork for any journey across borders. *What about the grandchildren?* I ask, not revealing yet my plan to slip them in somehow.

LETTER TO MY UNBORNE CHILD
BY HELEN FINNEY

I don't miss you,
for which I am not sorry.

I don't wonder who you would have become,
which of the few your father would have been,

what you would have looked like,
had his nose or mine.

I watch the world around me implode
and rejoice at the lack of your existence,

taking pleasure
from the end of my line.

The space you would have taken, I keep vacant,
a wilderness in which to plant a tree.

You may have done some good, who knows,
you may have been a scientist, cured cancer,

solved the energy crisis,
I doubt it though.

You would have, more likely,
followed my lead,

dreamt of a better world,
but not known how to make it.

I made it
by not making you.

PROLAPSED UTERUS AS TIDEPOOL
BY ALISON HURWITZ

Time-turned hourglass. You wake me
with your restless gravity, your rising tides.
Late night, when I come stumbling from bed,
I know the feel of floorboards texturing
to tile. They give way.

I have met this metamorphosis in shadow.
My declivity now magnets a quicker moon,
mother-cave descending with all its undulating
anemones and whelks, that worried tunnel
I must Kegel-clench to keep inside.

I do not recognize your lowering inversion,
your heavy heated mouth. I sit to pee, blue
lighted, shivering, a mid-life changeling. If once
you were internal shrine, the place of all
beginning, you've now sunk down to grotto.

You tidepool motherhood has flooded. You
wave-strewn changing tangle. You wrung reverberation
where I learn my letting go. How I wake
and wake again, count time inside me siphoning;
this rite of passage witnessed only by the dark.

HUMMINGBIRD
BY TERRY HALL BODINE

The first time I swallow
a hummingbird whole

*you say it's easy, like eating
an oyster raw—a dash*

of Texas Pete and it slides
right down your tongue.

The needle of its beak
nicks my throat

but I do not bleed, then
a flutter in my stomach

like the flip-turn
of champagne. *Let's swim,*

I suggest. Your neighbor
has a salt pool; we strip

and slip in, buoyed by feathers
and a frenetic beat.

The night-slick sky is littered
with millet, but I crave

sugar. With an eye
dropper you dispense

agave in my mouth.
Close, I come

close and closer
to your hips, my thighs

lifting like wings,
limbs distorted

by water's lens, persimmon
and teal. Light flickers,

dips. I say *another*.
I say *again*.

LOVE SONG: PORT & STARBOARD (for my wife)

BY ANN CHINNIS

As I try to dock our boat
I boast, "I've got this" —
while from the dock you laugh
and say, "It's hard, alone,
to snug a boat for every wind
and tide." When I let the port line
droop, the starboard strains
against its mooring. As I
secure the bow, it leaves
the stern cords warring. I
cannot tether rope to cleat
without a fray, a chafe,
a sudden jerk that renders
our boat squirming
in its berth like dead leaves
hedged in tidal eddies. I pretend
I am the captain. I bought
the three-strand nylon line myself. I tied
the knots myself. I coiled the extra rope
into a pleasing spiral. I danced
a drunken sailor's jig when I made fast
our boat, high on my own
drug: self-reliance. Our boat
held tight. When northeast breeze
shifted, our boat slammed
both dock and piling. Through high tide
and low tide and flood tide and riptide,
I tied and untied and retied my knots,
a tug-of-war—two sets of hands
required to even up the play.
But I wouldn't have it. This is
misery, but it was I who chocked
the stays, who hitched
the cleat. I was the one who dangled
fenders, and I will keep
tying and untying this boat until
it sinks me. I can cinch
the knots around the piling, but
you are right, I can't double hitch
a stubborn ship to my left wrist.
I need a second left hand
to snug that throw. More,
I need a rock, a dock, a knot, a cleat,
a mooring. I need you, my love, my wife.

Section Two

HOW TO TREAT A WITCH
BY MAUREEN CLARK

walk into her presence backwards
shave all the hair off her body

so she can't give you the evil eye
to look for a devil's mark

have herbs and salt with you
(unless you're Puritan)

that were consecrated on Palm Sunday
then forget the salt and Palm Sunday

do not let her touch you
mirrors/wax figures/medallions

and watch out for bottles/rags
give her the water test

if she lives put her in the ligature
don't let her utter a spell

try the red-hot poker until her legs fall off
she can curse the penis off a man

don't let her touch you
hang a pouch around your neck

especially your bare skin
made of bees' wax consecrated salt and herbs

it will protect you at the trial
make sure your salt is consecrated

she might bring a magic talisman with her
on Palm Sunday as well as the herbs

(unless you are Puritan)
walk into her presence

then forget the salt and keep her at arm's length
backwards once all her hair is shaved off

AT SEVENTEEN

BY JESSICA D. THOMPSON

I will wade out until my thighs are steeped in burning flowers.

— e. e. cummings

A child, I fell in love with my own voice, performed one-act plays
in the backyard—a neighborhood boy for a stagehand. I wanted

to touch his perfect buzz cut with my fingertips. But, I did not.
It was summer. In the valley below, dragonflies mated in thin air.

The wildflowers were too beautiful to be picked—goblets
of scarlet clover, fire pinks, maiden-hair ferns, the dog-toothed

violet. Always running free—boys with trunks made of rough
bark. I was not allowed. I was not allowed to climb trees.

Still, I thought, my knees have bled before, yes—
I have lifted the asperous scabs, watched as new skin grew back.

The beginning of scars. With alabaster bodies, boys
lived in forts, carried shields, and drew boundaries. I lived inside

books. When my girlish body changed, I became a dressmaker's
mannequin, my mouth shut. My heart a stone hut.

All too rapidly, the second-hand of mother's wound-too-tight
watch, all her fears—transformed into a wedding dress.

Like a ballet of swans, young girls hovered nearby, swooning
over freshly dyed baby-blue pumps. Then came the many buttons,

a veil I fought to see through, flowers I threw, rice in the air—
given away, at seventeen, by my father. I bled the first time

it happened while lying on a slice of honeymoon bed.
Proof that I was good.

In time, I learned to focus on grandmother's lace handkerchief
draped over a lamp shade. *Grandmother, why?*

I have heard it said that tears can split wood. Let us gather kindling
into the folds of our dresses. Let us carry it inside stone huts.

We can build a fire that will never go out.
We will feed it wildflowers.

Sweep away the ash from our crinolines, our paper dolls,
the petals of ox-eye daisies—*I love him. I love him not.*

TWINKIES

BY SHAHEEN DIL

My three-card spread says there's a twinkie in my future,
 since Mercury squares Saturn and conjoins the Sun,
or is it the Sun marking the Solstice?

In any case, it's a good day for spiritual activities
 and connecting deeply with cream-filled sponge-cake,
the kind you remember from your high-school lunch bag,
 the kind which will outlast the apocalypse.

Born from the lack of strawberries and refrigerated trucking,
 and the need to keep factory equipment fully utilized,
changed from banana cream to vanilla cream
 to some indistinguishable goop.

But if I'm honest, and I try to be,
 there's a corner of my taste buds
which longs for that mushy sweetness,

as if it could make me fifteen again—
 lithe, lean, and full of promise—
as if I could reach out and touch the stars,
 as if the universe were not whirling away.

TO NOVEMBER
BY KATHY O'FALLON

You were once just holiday anticipation
and Saturdays at the stables. All shovel
and spit, I was the fetid sweat of puberty.
Lake Surprise and miles of trails, the grit-
grey of stolen land, Watchung's. Perfume
of wealth in leather tack, paddock boots,
upholstery. Earth-brine from the stalls—
the smelling salts of urine, with dung-steam
that rose as if from a thurible. Seventeen
hands of *Equus ferus*, each Eye of Brahma
like a heavenly body, tracking.

You were the trail's first snow-dust,
decay a honeyed backdrop like a painting
from Monet: magenta, saffron, burgundy.
Of woods thick with age and a teen not yet
sure-footed. No way out but through.
Between my legs, quiver of horse flesh,
the rise of rhythm a virgin blush. Cold-
breath gallop stretch around the bend—
Duck, look out for the low-hanging!—
nature bowing to its season, bats
of maple leaves diving for our faces,
snagging our manes, outgrowth leeching
our calves. The blood red of poison ivy
trampled—hooves, foot-sure, carrying me
forward. The finish line once so far ahead.

IRRESPONSIBLE

BY DARLENE M. JAVAR

My kids don't laugh
when I tell them I made it,
arrived, survived;
stories and snippets of adventure—

the nine-mile bike ride from Old Town
Alexandria Harbor, along the Potomac River
past the Washington Monument,
on my way to Georgetown—

that I used my elbow
as a brake pad on a concrete wall
while peddling along Something Street,
the intersection approaching too fast,

cars speeding up to beat the light;
when I found my hotel from the River Walk in Texas
by walking toward the Tower of the Americas
and the tallest hotel— markers visible

between the silhouettes of buildings at 1 AM,
that as I approached blue lights
officers handcuffed a man outside the lobby;
that I couldn't convince anyone to board the train

from Sorrento Valley, San Diego to go anywhere and back,
each long blast in the distance calling me.
Between here and the horizon there's always
a building, a park, a place, an investigation.

"It's not funny," they chastise
as I chuckle about running to planes, last admissions,
lack of minutes, moments before disaster,
and how I often forget to Stop, Drop, and Roll.

LIKE CAKE TOPPERS THE GROOM AND BRIDE STAND
BY ROBIN DELLABOUGH

Their skin blooms, blushes, becomes molten,
pours into the mold of a groom, a bride. They want
to make a small likeness they'd call *mine*.

What if we freeze them there,
letting them love each other as fervently
as they think they do right now.

The man does not know that slow creep
toward a red door. The woman does not feel
like an empty carton of brown eggs.

Statues, forged but not finished,
they stop walking into armfuls of flame.
The man builds a fire, the woman puts it out.

THEN

BY KATHY MCGOLDRICK

The way perfume
would drift onto my skin
and make some magic

and the buttons listened,
attentive, steadfast,
never a pucker,
straight up from my waist.

The way I set the forefoot first
and the long heel followed,
icicle slender,

and my calves crouched,
then loped like cats
across the savannah.

The way the dim night light
made my cheekbone come certain

and a martini
languished
on the tip of my tongue,
then set a small fire.

The way,
occasionally,
a smile
would win my lips.

THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ON SUMMIT STREET
BY LINDA CARNEY-GOODRICH

don't ogle my legs anymore
I glance behind just in time

to see them looking at my backside
measuring how it stands

How worthy is this one divorced from the face

Oh, the men still
open doors, compliment my dog

Their eyes don't meet mine full on
with those irritating twinkles

that once set me popping hot kernels all day
someone wants to devour me

skin and juice
chops and tongue

Ah to amble untouchable
hungered after

a dressed-up cake contained
in round transparent glass

I admit
it once gave me a buzz
dripped me like honey drops

to feel wanted on the same street
that put me out with the trash

I still live in the body
I am the one who knows

Blossoms shoot
from my every finger, my every toe.

ONCE AMONG THE STARS

BY LISA SEIDENBERG

Just who does she think she is?
Striking a pose in the antique mirror
Admiring herself from across the room
she'd rented for the week
a bumpy bus ride from Cannes,
the glamour of the film festival
shimmering down the hill.

She liked what she saw—
the white cotton shirt with puffed sailor collar
eyelet ruffles that curl down the front,
a wide band around her waist
held tight in a preposterous bow,
worn with cigarette pants, tapered
like the Cypress trees
along the Croisette.

People rarely said she was pretty,
a gangly young American in France.
But today she would wear that outfit,
twirl for the inn's proprietors,
Madame and her husband,
and they would smile and coo—
Oooh la la...so young!

Later that week,
she would stroll among crowds
of the star struck and star wannabes.
She would almost meet, but not meet,
a famous Yugoslav director.
But that's another story.

That billowy white blouse
kept stashed away for thirty-some years,
the crisp white cotton
still felt like a fleeting dream of happiness
in her fingers.

ODE TO A REFLECTION

BY SERETTA MARTIN

Sister to a simple mirror,
I've seen you hold a lover's face
in a raindrop, frame a cloud in a pond.

Trickster of light and shadow,
you play with reality tossing
chandelier glow through windows

to a eucalyptus tree, charming
the canopy into a pagoda of lights
perfect for a ceremonial tea.

Nothing is too large or small,
no one can escape your willful ways
as you take in whatever you please.

Fleeting forensic, you capture
a peeping Tom in a dressing room mirror
as the femme fatale slips off

her red sequined gown, lets it
pool around her ankles—her reflection
captive in a glass of champagne.

NOTES FROM A LONG-TIME MARRIAGE

BY SHARON PRETTI

—After Dean Young's *"Delphiniums in a Window Box"*

Each persimmon, the skin
of what was and wasn't eaten.
Each scoop-neck and button-down,
its paisley or jewel tones undone.
See how the sky brims wide,
how everyone says we're well matched.
The back roads and Brussel sprouts—
you've convinced me
to love them—the leaf curls
and edible buds.
Every window and tongue print,
the notes rising from a spoon.
How often have we filled up
a mirror, then laughed?
Tulips unbidden, every magnet
clicked to the fridge.
Even your earlobes ring new.
I've stopped counting the years,
the grass blades and synapses
between us, the unfinished
lines in a map. I'm drunk on forearms,
each pronator, each vein.
Tonight is here. Do you taste its sum
and its parts? Isn't that lightning
escaping through the holes in my sock?

HEAT AS A SENTENCE
BY NANCY MURPHY

I'm reading a book about a middle-
aged woman in heat.

She's afraid

this won't last, that she'll lose
libido. I want to tell her desire
doesn't go away, it just sleeps

late. It can be a little lazy
like a person who has already
done so much and feels like
the rest of her life is a kind of
sentence. Not a grammatically
correct one either. Just scraps
of words strung together
with no predicate, only
predictability. I'm not talking
about the book anymore.

I'm thinking about how many
more times I will wash towels,
roast a head of cauliflower, shop
for apples, milk, salmon.
None of this

belongs to desire.

When California desert heat slows
me down, its punishing weight,
there is nothing else to do
but feel into this body. Cherish
how many ways it can be
touched.

Make a siesta

out of a catnap, ask your lover
to join you. (This part can be real
or imagined.) For an afternoon,
you can escape this prison
of poisoned thoughts,

float on your back,

in the cerulean blue waters
of your body's birthright,
its promise still lighting the dark

like a lantern.

WE WERE THE MUSHROOM PEOPLE

BY SUZANNE O'CONNELL

We were the mushroom people
longing to be tomatoes.
Underground, in our portal,
we wore dirty grey
like the castoff clothes of mice.
We smelled like cheese spread
and too much March rain.

Tomatoes, we thought, held
the secret to happiness.
They lived celebrity lives!
Limber on the vine,
they sprang to life from blossoms
not mold like us, their flowers
like yellow cleats reaching for sun.
Sinews always awake,
ready for action, their rosy plumpness
stuffed with juicy affection,
and just enough seediness
to make life interesting.

We weren't saints.
Voted number one among losers,
we huddled under the dirt
for many dark months,
complaining, swearing, comparing,
wishing the tomato people
a season of boiling in marinara sauce.

PLANTAGO MAJOR
BY KAREN NEUBERG

1. Weed

Four years old, I wander the yard
around the country house. My passion:

find the weed my father has told me
is *plantain* and grab its long seed stem

hold it in one hand
and with thumb and forefinger

of my other hand, strip seeds
from stalk.

Hard work. My fingers hurt.
I kept at it—was it for a day

or days or only an hour?
The house was sold that fall,

and though I met *plantain* many times
again, I paid it no attention.

2. Reacquaintance

Years tumbling past—
school, marriage, baby, career, retirement—

and here I am in Manitou, NY, an eco-field day
of looking, meditating, writing

and there, on the packed-dirt drive,
I step on you before I notice

you underfoot and, then, everywhere. Some of you
with seed stems. I leave you

to yourself, then circle back,
touch you. Say, *Hello, old friend*.

3. I learn

among your many uses, you can be eaten
in salads, in stews, and your crushed leaves
applied to skin draw out toxins, promote healing—

*Ribgrass, ripple grass, waybread, snakeweed,
doorweed, old man's toes, broad-leaved plantain,
greater plantain, roundelay plantain ...*

I plant you in my garden.

ABECEDARIAN ON MOVING
BY JENNIFER RANDALL HOTZ

Accept the move you've been fighting against for years.
Break down your life: letters, pictures, memories;
count how many boxes you'll need for things you just can't leave behind.
Discard your dream to return home,
escape into episodes of *House Hunters International*, binge
four or five shows at a time: while you watch, you can
go anywhere! Amsterdam, Paris, Tokyo....
House hunt in the place you don't want to live;
idealize living anywhere but there.
Jettison your wants—at least the new home's
kitchen delights you—but the
lights from the cars on the freeway strafe the blinds,
Mack trucks accelerate/decelerate at all hours & no one mentions the
noise from the George Clay Fire Company just down the road, how their piercing sirens
obliterate peace day & night. When your priest urges you to
pray as they blare, you (no longer cowed by a collar)
quickly
reject that suggestion, say you need
silence to think & when you say that out loud, you realize
truth is the only thing you care to unpack now—not those years spent seeking
understanding from others (how you tried to explain, explain, explain!); not your
vast yearning to please people; not the slow creep by which your
whole life had become a faded
Xerox of others' desires. So when the time comes for the next move a few
years later, you insist on what you really need: a quiet town, a small house,
zinnias—pink, purple & peach—charming you into each new day.

PORTABLE ART
BY SARAH CARLETON

My mom is giving away kettles and couches
and tablecloths

before moving to a two-room unit.
Paintings have sticky notes with the names

of whoever is adopting them.
She's philosophical—the trove must be dispersed

and she must leave her greenhouse
with hibiscus bursting,

her kitchen teeming with glazed plates and garlic,
and her sunny barn studio with its dry-wood smell.

I admire a ceramic bowl emblazoned with two women
leaping, Matisse-like. *Oh, you like that?*

Take it, she says.
I tell her she should keep it because it's joyful,

and she can't argue with that.
The useful treasures she'll take with her

—Italian mugs, French press, green teapot—
proclaim her mobility

just as my son's rooster tattoo struts his jubilation
even when he's still.

I'm uninked, but tawny spots sneak from my hairline
like leopard paws printing sunlight.

CURRICULUM VITAE
BY DONNA PUCCIANI

A life's work on paper,
sifting like fast-moving clouds
on a night when tornado warnings
set off the local sirens
and folks with any sense
head to the basement.

And yes, I have always been
sensible, doing what was required,
from the schooldays of blue uniforms
and all A's, certificates of merit,
now moldering in the basement.

Tonight, I sort the files,
discard old transcripts of grades
hard-won, the jobs that came and went.
I underestimate the courage needed
to throw out the résumés and awards
of a barely remembered self.

I chase pages, then let go,
knowing they scatter in storms
of time and space, scraps of the past.

Winter is here. It is time for migration
to a different clime, to wing the distance
into new skies. I take flight,
the shreds of a life fluttering
behind me in the wind.

Section Three

ON ASSASSINS

BY HEIDI JOFFE

—for Coleman and Hayes

a waxing gibbous moon peers between the firs,
her profile glows at me or glowers at my bad
attitude, my leg on table, my ashtray half
filled. I'm supposed to think about sonnets,
but the moon gathers my thoughts, the twisted
bits, caught on psalms and amens, ancient strings
strummed under this moon, watching all,
spy on prophecy and pyres, nuptial to grave,
and my dog, who snores, bored with this story,
her tides turn towards my pillow, to dreams of dirt,
grass, maybe the neighbor's cat in her grasp,
not to the sky. or a book on the table—it holds
me prisoner, caught in blush-inducing memory,
oh, moon, how to assess the damage I wrought.

A RUE OF WISHES

BY COLETTE MCHALE WISNEWSKI

I wish I'd bought the yellow pajamas

the ones with brown branches bearing muted orange
blossoms flowing on soft folds of silk.

I wish I'd come home, put down my heavy bags,

undone my braids and brushed out my long thick hair
letting frizzy waves fall across my tired shoulders.

I wish I'd poured a glass of wine, put on our song, sipped slowly

and stretched out on the couch with no list of what to do
except wait for you to walk in that door and fall in love again.

I wasted my wishes instead,

assessed the morning mess you left behind
damp towel dropped on the floor, dirty dishes in the sink.

I started a list, licking the taste of char on my lips,

forgot the dinner reheating in the oven
and burned our feast once again.

SHE WOULD NOT WANT HER NAME BANDIED ABOUT
BY MANDY BEATTIE

Milky periwinkle eyes cast their net
into seconds ago and yesterday's retrograde
days. Her mind-map sonar blipped
beneath searching tides for memories who's-who
words. She would fumble
dust figurines, chimneysweep up crumbs. The carer
slurped tar-tea from forget-me-knots on fired clay
nibbled garibaldis before hobbling her over lips
of porcelain; elbow-testing hot water like a baby's bottle
She was locked-in-syndrome in a dark cellar with her
sister's last asthma gasp; brother-in-law blown high
by a Messerschmidt emptying its bowels. Did she
remember puréed peas, prunes, rhubarb and custard
lights out
rubber soles and trollies scuffing vinyl? I prayed
in memory's-attic she still toe-wriggled sand
pocketed sea glass, giggled soprano to
scorries and crustaceans. Standing tall
as a blue delphinium with fox tail
pin tuck curls

I CHOOSE TO PERSIST
BY MARGE PIERCY

In old age, days blur into each other as they did when I was a little child. I can't figure out if something happened yesterday, today.

So much is the same now. I travel little after my years were spent running through airports dragging a carry-on, never knowing what

arrival would bring: what was expected of me, how my performance would go where would I be put up, would I be fed, transported?

My car died during Covid. Housebound, lacking wheels my world has shrunk. So have I, too short to reach shelves now. Dependent

on others, I do so much less. Most friends are dead with ex-husbands, dear cats. Sometimes I think I've survived too much.

But the alternative? No thanks. I'll take old age.

SPINNING MY WHEELS ON THE EVE OF THE END
BY KATHLEEN MCCLUNG

Surprising gusts tonight: light rain, clean wind
in our pandemic city. I mean wind

that teases moths, lifts scraps from the bins on wheels
near the curb. Years ago, at 18, I knew wind

assisted me, buoyed me as well, helped steer
the car across I-80 between Wend-

over, Utah and everywhere else west.
I drove with Mom, her migraine, pristine wind-

shield caked so soon with dragonflies and sand.
That steering wheel better, by far, than a Ferris wheel.

I like what I can grip, what I can wield in my hands.
I hate the little bucket, the puny bar they strap in place

supposedly to prevent catastrophe. I hate the giant wheel,
especially when it pauses and we're at the top,

Tom and me. And Tom, class clown even at 72,
grooves on rocking the little bucket back and forth,

back and forth, but it's not like rocking in a rocking chair,
not soothing like a canoe on a lake in the middle of July.

When the wheel rotates finally, I breathe again,
find the words to say: "Stop it. Stop talking about Trump."

We talk about pets instead, the way I chatted with the nurse
at the Injection Clinic about the photos on her desk.

Two cats and a whippet in FRIENDS FUREVER frames
soothed me while I waited for the needle's prick. My BP

dropped despite her grim list of side effects: fatigue,
and fever, aching arm. No matter. All just hypothetical.

That nurse was a virtuoso. She knew how
to wield that needle, make it sing. Sleeve up, I decided

I want to be swarmed by butterflies—orange and black
monarchs, blue swallowtails, cabbage whites.

I want the damn pandemic over, want to stand still
in a forest, surrounded by thick shafts of light

and flocks of butterflies fluttering their wings
and, okay, singing. I want them to be singing,

those butterflies, like whippoorwills, like the nurse's needle,
like Aretha Franklin on the radio a long time ago

when Mom and I drove across the endless desert, heading
toward California, toward the start of the rest of my life.

MY MOTHER'S TINNITUS
BY ELAINE MINTZER

is the flapping of a thousand cranes
rising off the morning lake,
a stampede of wild mustangs,
the static of the last dry leaves
rustling in the late autumn winds,
and she is grateful to hear them
as her world grows more silent.

New hearing aids add the flute
of her urine against a porcelain bowl,
the thunder of lawn mowers and trash trucks,
the melody of someone humming a blue tune,
but they do not quiet the accompaniment.

There are so many things I'd like her to hear—
like my half of the conversation—
not her imagined version.
To know me as I am: another woman
with my own sirens
and silences.

There's a hole in my life
my mother can't mend.
A wound that can't be kissed better.
It makes a noise I hear
when no one is there.
Ghost.
Static on a late-night TV.
A wind with nothing to resist.

THROUGH AN OPEN WINDOW

BY ELIZABETH GAUFFREAU

—for Katharine

Through my open window, an unknown bird sings.
No greater power, for a child, than naming.

Power in the chickadee, the gold finch.
You gave me cardinal call, sparrow song.

But what of liquid trill, cascading water?
Water always seeks its own level.

Scent of lilacs level with my window.
Overgrown lilacs once breached the porch roof.

Fragrant bower, peeling painted floor.
Bag of rock salt on the floor, propped snow shovel.

Winter never faraway, even in May.
I pick a bouquet of May lilacs.

Arrange them in your fluted emerald vase.
Through my open window, an unknown bird sings.

THE BROKEN GRAVE

BY SERENA FUSEK

In the forgotten,
overgrown cemetery
the roots of the maple tree
spread unchecked

until they break into her grave.
They split her cheap pine box,
slide over
under and around
her bones. A century
without touch
now the roots embrace her.

They sip her skeleton's calcium
lap up their phosphorus
lick the DNA from her dried marrow.

She becomes
bark wood golden sap
that rises through the trunk
spreads into the branches
seeps into the sweet-smelling leaves

and gives her back
the sun.

NEW ENGLAND POETS

BY TRICIA KNOLL

love rock walls, red barns, pick-up trucks, and paths
through the woods to the creek swelling with spring's
snow melt. Occasional daffodils, a steepled
white church. A cardinal on a naked branch,
maybe sugar maple or white ash. Fall oranges.

But the old poet who has written and taught poetry
for fifty years doesn't think about these now.
She thinks she has said what she has to say on
love in each color she can name. And its smells.
Her blog has no entries newer than two years old.

Oh, she still sees clouds romping over meadows
laced in behind log fences, birch trees shedding
bark like wind-blown poems, but to be fair,
a diagnosis caught her. Tremors. Stiffness.
As if her working mind no longer wants to work.

Her fans, like me, said *amen* and dragged out
that word's final hum when she wrote two
new poems, tributes to men she loved and lost
that turned flat paper into a round of grief.
We know there's no shortage hereabouts

of old graveyards studded in granite,
adorned with stone angels in snow,
veteran's medallions, errant day
lilies every summer, and tolerant
beach roses for the honeybees.

TO A HAMMOCK
BY LIZZIE PURKIS

I thought you belonged to another time and place
—another life—one of verandas, sundials, hidden driveways.
I didn't know there was room for you in the city.
We swiped at cobwebs, swept aside fallen masonry
to hang a pair of hammock chairs from lumber porch beams,
mine a turquoise blue.

You catch me in your soft cotton weave as I let go—
feeling you cradle my head, hug elbows, sway me gently
from side to side. I could never sit on a swing without feeling giddy,
but somehow you coax my middle ear into acquiescence.
Containing, not confining, you urge me to dance in mid-air,
toes pointing above my face or turn on my side for a nap.
You let me rest, never tiring or slackening your hold.

Spring stretches into summer, and you receive me still,
free me from gravity, keep my pens, and books in your folds,
wait patiently while I steady myself with my foot to bring onboard
a mug of tea to take off the slight chill.
When rain threatens, I unhook you,
balance you lightly on my shoulder and bring you inside.

Mistress of proprioception, I praise you now,
because I sense that, one of these days, besides
enveloping shawls, plush throws, and God knows what else...
I will need you to hold me so entirely,
through the long silent hours before me,
when your natural companion
hangs empty.

WHICH WAY TO TURN
BY CATHERINE EDMUNDS

she lived in a circular house—
it solved the problem
of never knowing which way to turn.
around the house she planted lobelia
purple and white and poisonous

and when she died
she left a note, a candle, a rose,
a block of stale cheese
(which might have been soap)
and a map of how to get out

SACRED UNION
BY LORI ZAVADA

Last night you placed a spoon to my lips
to taste the marinara,
velvety and bold, the perfect hint of oregano.

The moment reminds me of the mockingbirds
I see this morning
in the White Lightning Crepe Myrtle.

He pokes suet into his wife's trusting mouth.
Fat from drizzle, nonplussed by thunder,
they feel safe as a pair.

They flutter and tug
in tiny wet branches,
a cozy treetop kitchen.

They float to the ground,
where they hop and probe for loose seed,
then shake dry their wings.

I watch their rapture,
all morning long,
fueled by only a teaspoon of love.

Much like the day we drove
to a neighboring city
to visit a history museum.

We laughed doing quizzes,
surprised by events
we remembered.

You took backroads home,
and on the longer, playful drive,
I learned new things about you—

after so many years.
We fell in love
all over again,

your foot pressing the gas,
our mischievous grins,
fully prepared to fly away together.

FEATHERING SPELL TO BECOME A BIRD
BY LYNETTE REINI-GRANDELL

I remember stars for eyes, the melody
of wind, white-throated sparrows calling,
the thicket runes of ash.

Oak is here, and pine, and cedar,
maple reaches with its palmate leaves like hands.
Tendrils, stamens, something pollen, stain the stairs
to some transparent tower, resin rises
to the lips, the sap one dribble at a time.

I wasn't sorry when that other body
thinned with longing and sharp teeth. I closed
my mouth and hummed the wondrous melody.

Can you hear it yet? A celebrant
held up a cudgel, so I stepped forward in the river,
former fists held open, so much daylight
flowing into me. Someone spoke in tongues.

Then the air consumed me, and I
sang the windows open, then the doors,
and all the hatches slipped their metal hinges.

When I set my empty cup among the briars,
I no longer felt my fingers. Were they claws?
My mouth opened with this whistled, wheeling tune,
this beak of melody, this voice a low epistle
lodged forever in my throat.

NONMIGRATING WITH BLACK PLUMAGE REFLECTING EXTRAORDINARY LUSTER
BY JANE PUTNAM PERRY

leaves fall rain drops voices drop snow falls boobs drop eyes drop gaze an anchor drops heavy
Covid particulates drop 1692 Salem girls drop temperatures drop unravelling conversations drop a
curtain drops a drop kick restarts play but a raven does not drop suddenly from the sky unless they
do passing in front of my windshield and hood and laying in a commercially-trafficked street a brute
turn marked by exceedingly agitated caws coming through my open window

two U-turns get me back alongside the fallen overhead the air full of frantic unceasing anxiety a car
speeds uphill passing over Raven blinks eyes yellow another and another and another car
repeatedly the wheels never hitting glossy dark ending that is not night but blocking the sun my
stomach-turning relatives in raw cuss Raven blinks

into the thoroughfare with nearby broken-down cardboard attention on scooping all I can do is roll
Raven over and over you swiveling your neck to adjust until we reach the curb you now lifting your
wings trying and failing to scale the curb I scoop you up onto the sidewalk again you trying your
wings to lift across the sidewalk to an adjacent bush your legs are useless I get you to your sheltered
shield the sentinels now quiet all pointedly positioned

Water from the car offers a trickle to beak not taken so a bit on the cement and into a leaf I lay
beak-side to you and your family I offer deep apology that this harm has happened and hoping all
stay safe with everything you need distressing disquiet rises in the audible air a dog-walker with
earbuds does not hear I approach and alert earbuds come out dog passes crows calm I leave nature
to take your course these protectors of an elder in full-skirted lavender occupying the middle of the
roadway

NO PATH BUT WHAT THE WALKING MAKES

BY AMY SMITH

—after Antonio Machado, “*Caminante, no hay camino*”

After boundless fields of green wheat grasses and golden rapeseed, after vineyards and silent winds and wide-open breath, the path, as paths do, changes. Moisture in the sky mingles with mist in the ground. Leftover rain, saltless ocean. Deep mud strains feet, calves. Bright browns, muffled reds, tan. A hint of lemon. Lungs reach deep on a steep hill, legs ache with effort. A dull dank rhythm of walking sticks meeting earth, echoing footfalls. Fog deepens, dampens thought, sharpens an edge of memory. Dark forest, as if formed from fables, appears, drawing the walker inward. Into the forest or into the mind. Scent of pine, wet earth, unnamed wildflowers-to-be, elusive other-than-human kin. A salt taste of myth. A witch might be a wise old woman, or a shrewd old tree. Stories and thickets and ancient snails, ancestors of ancestors, faded footprints. Long silent stretches. Spring, not quite here. Winter, not quite gone. Nothing to do but walk on.

SOMEWHERE

BY CAROLYN MARTIN

out there stars are wishing on you tonight.
That constellation to the North urges
you to dim the skyglow of city streets
and unveil the Milky Way. The clusters
to the South insist horoscopes lie.
They challenge you to recognize the fault
is not in them but in every choice you make.
See that brightest star in the East? Its warning?
Don't play God ... although, you're convinced,
your playful God has always played you.
Next to the planet holding court in the West,
another one sings, *Someone's thinking of you
and loving you tonight*. Take it as a prayer.
What if it were true that every breathing
and non-breathing thing—sparrows, dolphins,
mice, magnolias, tulips, moss, granite, sand,
and cobble stone—is only starlit dust?
Then nothing's without kin in the universe.

THE PAUSE
BY MUREALL HEBERT

Whispers of spirits
trail around you,

and I find you
in the woods, in a copse,
in an evergreen castle
with turrets of pine trees
and a moat of silver-
twigged ferries. Rain

mops a slurry of wet dirt
through battlements.
A landslide.
Creation. Destruction. We are

both of us erasers on
sheets of slate, each of us carving paths
through fomented letters
and ideas bred sometime after
sunrise.

Could it be that we remember each other
from long ago? How hard is that to imagine?

And now, in this stand of noble trim poles, where
the gray squirrel's tail is a flash under
hawthorn bushes, studded berries
fall to your lips, now

we assemble, trying to capture
a feeling, but light is hard to hold onto
in the dark and we stare at each other,
tongues numb with empty

words. I can feel where the shape of you used to be, like a prisoner
groping through dark
tunnels, the empty space
devoid of dirt, devoid of space,
just

empty. But now here you are and I'm here,
and the copse waits, as trees tend to do,
with its evergreen castle,
knowing we come and go like sparrows caught
in a hard-blown breeze, and the rain, having

found its home in a glacier-
fed waterfall, opens its mouth to speak. We
listen, hands cupped as
we drink

CONTRIBUTORS

Carol Barrett began writing poetry to support the widowed women she was counseling. She has published three volumes of poetry, most recently *Reading Wind*, and one of creative nonfiction *Pansies*. Carol's poems have been anthologized in venues in nine countries.

L. Shapley Bassen's grandmother was a telegrapher on Wall Street over a century ago who taught her to read and tapped messages to her in Morse Code. A New Yorker living in Rhode Island, she is a multi-published & prize-winning author of fiction, poetry, & drama. Her 2nd novel *Blue Monkeys*, was accepted for Fall/Winter, '24 publication by Shy City House (Chicago). Her other novels include 2014' *Summer of the Long Knife*, (Typhoon Media-Signal 8 Press) 2014's *Lives of Crime & Other Stories*, (Texture Press) 2017's *Showfolk & Stories*. (Inkception Books) Her 2019 collected works of poetry is *What Suits a Nudist?* (Clare Songbirds Publishing House) Website: <https://lsbassen.com/>

Mandy Beattie's poetry appears in *Poets Republic, Drawn to The Light, WordPeace, Crowstep, Full House Literary, Verse-Virtual, 5 Words, Abridged* and many more. Winner of Words with Seagulls and City of Poets Competitions. Shortlisted: Creative Future Writer's Award; 10th International Five Words and Black Box Competitions. Several short story publications and Best of Net poetry nominee, 2024.

Terry Hall Bodine is a graduate of the College of William & Mary in Virginia. Recent publication credits include *Plainsongs, Broad River Review, Pine Row, and Litmosphere*; her chapbook *The Something We Make from Nothing* was issued by Seven Kitchens Press in February 2024. Terry lives in Lynchburg with her husband, Bill, and works with academic advising at the University of Lynchburg.

Francesca Brenner's poetry has been published in many online and print poetry journals including *Talking River, Cutthroat, OxMag, Common Ground Review, Sanskrit, Slab, Writing In A Women's Voice*, and she has been anthologized in *The Best of the Poetry Salon*. Originally, a New Englander, she currently lives in Southern California though her heart remains bi-coastal.

Jayne Relaford Brown is the author of *My First Real Tree*, a book of poems from Foothills Press. She was the eighth Poet Laureate of Berks County, PA, and taught creative writing and composition in California colleges, and at Penn State Berks until retiring in 2014. Brown's poems have appeared recently in *Persimmon Review, Passenger, and Cider Press Review*. Her poem "The Patient Presents" was published in the Fall 2023 Crone Power issue of *Gyroscope Review*. She lives in rural Pennsylvania with her partner of 35-plus years and five rescue cats.

Sarah Carleton writes poetry, edits fiction, plays the banjo, and knits obsessively in Tampa, Florida. Her poems have appeared in numerous publications, including *Nimrod, Tar River Poetry, Cider Press Review, ONE ART, Valparaiso, SWWIM Every Day, and New Ohio Review*. Sarah's poems have received nominations for Pushcart and Best of the Net. Her first collection, *Notes from the Girl Cave*, was published in 2020 by Kelsay Books.

Linda Carney-Goodrich is a writer and teacher from Boston whose work appears in *Lily Poetry Review*, *The MacGuffin*, *Nixes Mate Review*, *Anti-Heroine Chic*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Literary Mama*, among others. Her poems have been displayed at Boston City Hall through the Boston Mayor's Poetry Program judged by the Boston Poet Laureate. Her first book of poetry, *Dot Girl*, was published Feb 2024 with Nixes Mate Books. You can find out more about her at lindacarneygoodrich@yahoo.com

Ann Chinnis is the recipient of a Pushcart Prize. She is author of two poetry chapbooks—*Poppet, My Poppet*, released by Finishing Line Press in March 2024, and *I Can Catch Anything*, to be released in April 2025. Her work has been published in *The Speckled Trout Review*, *Nostos*, *Sky Island Journal*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Crab Creek Review*, among others. Ann studies at The Writers Studio with Philip Schultz. She is an Emergency Physician and lives with her wife in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Maureen Clark is retired from the University of Utah where she taught writing for 20 years. She was the president of Writers @ Work 1999-2001. Her poems have appeared in *Colorado Review*, *Alaska Review*, *The Southeast Review*, and *Gettysburg Review*, among others. Her first book *This Insatiable August* was released by Signature Books February 2024

Gail Braune Comorat is a founding member of Rehoboth Beach Writers' Guild and co-author of *Walking the Sunken Boards*. She served as editor for *Quartet*, an online poetry journal by women fifty and over. Her work has appeared in *Gargoyle*, *Grist*, and *The Widows' Handbook*. She lives in Lewes, Delaware.

Robin Dellabough is a poet and writer with a master's from UC Berkeley Journalism School. *Double Helix* (2022), her debut collection, includes a Pushcart Prize-nominated poem. Recent poems have appeared in *Gyroscope Review*, *Yellow Arrow*, *Stoneboat*, *Halfway Down the Stairs*, *Mom Egg Review*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Negative Capability*, and other publications and anthologies.

Shaheen Dil is a reformed academic, banker, and consultant who now devotes herself to poetry. She was born in Bangladesh, and lives in Pittsburgh and Manhattan. Her poems have been widely published in literary journals and anthologies, including in *The Atlanta Review*, *Gyroscope Review*, and *CALYX Literary Journal*. New work is forthcoming in *Constellations* and *Uppagus*. Her poem "River at Night" was a winning entry in the 2021 Passager Poetry Competition. She has published two full-length books of poetry, *Acts of Deference* (Fakel 2016) and *The Boat-maker's Art* (Kelsay Books 2024.) Shaheen is a member of the Pittsburgh Poetry Exchange.

Catherine Edmunds is a writer, artist, and musician from North-East England, whose published work includes two poetry collections, six novels and a memoir. She has had numerous short pieces published in anthologies and journals including *Aesthetica*, *Crannóg*, *Poetry Scotland*, and *Ambit*; has been nominated three times for a Pushcart Prize, shortlisted in the Bridport Prize four times, was the Platinum Prizewinner in the 2015 Creative Futures Literary Awards, and the 2020 winner of the Robert Graves Poetry Prize.

With an MA in Fine Art, **Helen Finney** spent most of her adult life working as an artist in Swansea, South Wales. Having been unexpectedly stranded in Thailand during the pandemic, she turned to her second love – that of writing. Still living there several years on, her work has been published in the likes of *Ink*, *Sweat and Tears*, *Poetry Wales*, *Dreich Mag* and *Morecambe Poetry Festival Anthology* among others. Her fourth collection has just been released on the subject of turning 50.

Serena Fusek is a writer, teacher and editor. She has three full length poetry collections published: *Alphabet of Foxes*, *Ancient Maps and a Tarot Pack*, *Heartwood Dreams of Blossoms*. She teaches poetry for her local Life Long Learning Society.

Elizabeth Gauffreau holds a BA in English/Creative Writing from Old Dominion University and an MA in English/Fiction Writing. Her work has been widely published in literary magazines, as well as several themed anthologies. Her short story “Henrietta’s Saving Grace” was awarded the 2022 Ben Nyberg prize for fiction by Choeofpleirn Press. She has published a novel, *Telling Sonny*, and a photopoetry collection, *Grief Songs: Poems of Love & Remembrance*. Find her online at <https://lizgauffreau.com>

Mureall Hebert lives near Seattle, WA. Her work can be found in *trampset*, *Tab Journal*, *Arc Poetry Magazine*, *Qu*, *The Normal School*, *The Adirondack Review*, *Carve*, *Hobart*, *[PANK]*, *decomP*, and elsewhere. She’s been nominated for Best Microfiction, Best New Poets, and a Pushcart Prize. Mureall holds an MFA from the Northwest Institute of Literary Arts.

Michelle Holland, Poet-in-Residence for Santa Fe Girls School and treasurer of NM Literary Arts, lives in Chimayo, NM. Her poems can be found in literary journals, in print, online, and anthologized, most recently in the *2023 New Mexico Anthology of Poetry*, UNM Press, and The Common Language Project: Ascent. She has two book-length collections of poetry, *Chaos Theory*, Sin Fronteras Press, and *The Sound a Raven Makes*, Tres Chicas Press.

Jennifer Randall Hotz’s work has appeared in *Burningword Literary Journal*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Connecticut River Review*, *Literary Mama*, and *Hole In The Head Review*, among other publications. She won 1st place in poetry for the Virginia Writers Club 2023 Golden Nib Awards and was nominated for a 2024 Pushcart Prize. Find her at: www.jenniferrandallhotz.com

Melissa Huff feeds her poetry from the power and mystery of the natural world and the ways in which body, nature, and spirit intertwine. An advocate of the power of poetry presented out loud, she twice won awards in the BlackBerry Peach Prizes for Poetry: Spoken and Heard, sponsored by the (U.S.) National Federation of State Poetry Societies. Publishing credits include *Blue Heron Review*, *Amethyst Review*, *Persimmon Tree*, *Halfway Down the Stairs*, and *Green Ink Poetry*. She has been frequently sighted making her way between Illinois and Colorado.

Alison Hurwitz is a former cellist and dancer who now finds music in language. A two-time 2023 Best of the Net Nominee, she is the founder/host of the monthly online reading, Well-Versed Words. Widely published, Alison’s work is forthcoming in *Sky Island Journal*, *South Dakota Review*, *Raven’s Muse*, and *Writing in a Woman’s Voice*. When not writing, Alison officiates weddings and memorial services, takes singing lessons, walks in the woods with her family, and dances in her kitchen. Find her at www.alisonhurwitz.com

Darlene M. Javar, from Hawaii, is published by *Bamboo Ridge Press*, *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Chaminade Literary Review*, *Into the Teeth of the Wind*, *The Distillery*, *Earth’s Daughters*, *Storyboard 8*, *Kaimana*, and *Tinfish*. Her poetry is recorded in “Rural Voices Radio II,” National Writing Project, and “Aloha Shorts”, a co-production of Hawaii Public Radio and Bamboo Ridge Press. Her work is cited in the *Bloomsbury Handbook of Contemporary American Poetry* (Svonkin and Axelrod, 2023).

Heidi Joffe (M.Ed.) is a published poet and multimedia artist who crafts meaning with fibers, clay, and words.

Jodi Keene completed an MFA in Poetry at the Vermont College of Fine Arts and currently lives and writes in Manhattan.

Tricia Knoll is a Vermont poet whose work appears widely in journals, anthologies, and nine collections. Her recent chapbook, *The Unknown Daughter*, highlights an imaginary Tomb of the Unknown Daughter. Knoll is a Contributing Editor to *Verse Virtual*. Website: triciaknoll.com

Susan Kress, born and educated in England, now resides in Saratoga Springs, NY. Her poems appear in *The Southern Review*, *New Ohio Review*, *Salmagundi*, *Nimrod International*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *New Letters*, *South Florida Poetry Journal*, *Third Wednesday*, and other journals.

Christine Anna Marie wrote her first poem at 13 lying on the forest floor in Alaska, USA. She has worked as a secretary, counselor, and priest and raised two sons. She is writing full time now that she is retired, currently working on a book about women and spirituality. Christine has had poetry published in *The Sun*, *Timberline Review*, and a chapbook for Alaska libraries, *Song for a Mountain*.

Carolyn Martin is a recovering work addict who's adopted the Spanish proverb, "It is beautiful to do nothing and rest afterwards" as her daily mantra. She is blissfully retired—and resting—in Clackamas, Oregon where she delights in gardening, feral cats, and backyard birds. Her poems have appeared in more than 200 publications throughout the U.S., the UK, and Australia. For more: www.carolynmartinpoet.com

Seretta Martin, poet, artist, professor, managing editor; San Diego Poetry Annual, a finalist in Philip Levine Award, Washington Prize, holds an MFA, appears in anthologies including *Poetry International*, *Serving House Journal*, *Web Del Sol*, *Modern Haiku*, and *Frogpond*, and on ITV. She curates library readings and is author-illustrator of *Foreign Dust Familiar Rain*. Her most recent book is *Holographic Reality, Poems of an Eclectic Life*. She lives in San Diego, California with her musician son.

Kathleen McClung's newest book, *Questions of Buoyancy*, is forthcoming this fall from Longship Press. She is the author of four other poetry collections, most recently *Temporary Kin* (Barefoot Muse, 2020) and *A Juror Must Fold in on Herself*, winner of the 2020 Rattle Chapbook Prize. Her work appears widely in journals and anthologies. She teaches at Skyline College, OLLI-San Francisco, and privately. From 2021-23 she served as guest editor for *The MacGuffin*, a print journal based in Michigan. She was a 2024 finalist for San Francisco Poet Laureate. www.kathleenmcclung.com

Kathy McGoldrick received a BA and an MFA decades ago from the State University of New York at Buffalo. At that time, she was published in various journals. Kathy raised two daughters on her own, and in so doing had a career in social work administration. It was difficult to find time to write. But she is retired now and has tried to pick up where she left off, writing poetry again - and growing pumpkins.

Mary Padgen Michna was a closet poet since childhood. She married and raised a family while working as a journalist and a public relations specialist. After retiring, she focused on poetry. Her work has been published in *Bullets into Bells*, *A Time for Singing*, *The Bluebird Word*, *Passager*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Tiny Seeds Anthology*, and is slated for an upcoming issue of *Calyx*.

Elaine Mintzer lives in Los Angeles. Her work has been published most recently in *Anacapa Review* and *Sheila-Na-Gig*. Her work has been featured on *Moontide Press* poet-of-the-month page, *Cultural Weekly*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, *Beloit Poetry Review*, *Panoplyzine*, *Slipstream Press*, *Silver Birch Press*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Last Call*, *Chinaski*, and *LummoX*. Elaine's first collection was *Natural Selections* (Bombshelter Press 2005).

Nancy Murphy is a Los Angeles-based poet whose work has been published in *The Baltimore Review*, *Louisville Review*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *SWWIM*, *Anacapa Review*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, and others. Her chapbook, *The Space Carved by the Sharpness of Your Absence*, was published in 2022 by Gyroscope Press. She was recently featured in the Dublin-based podcast, "Eat the Storms." More at www.nancymurphywriter.com

Karen Neuberg is the author of the full-length poetry collection, *Pursuit* (Kelsay Press), and three chapbooks including *the elephants are asking* (Glass Lyre). She has work in numerous journals and anthologies, is associate editor of the poetry journal *First Literary Review-East*, and lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Suzanne O'Connell is a poet living in Los Angeles. Her recently published work can be found in *Drunk Monkeys*, *Wrath Bearing Tree*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *North American Review*, *Poet Lore*, and *Summerset Review*. Her two poetry collections, *A Prayer for Torn Stockings* and *What Luck*, were published by Garden Oak Press. Website: suzanneoconnell-poet.net

Kathy O'Fallon's poems have been published in journals and anthologies such as *Rattle*, *Orchards Poetry Journal*, and *Ladige*, along with three chapbooks. Her full-length manuscripts have been finalists for the Backwater Prize, the Inlandia Book Award, and the Henry Morganthau Award. O'Fallon is a psychologist in Carlsbad, CA.

jane putnam perry, she/her, guest on Lisjan Territory (Oakland, CA), auntie, member of 1000 Grandmothers, colonizer and Salem Witch accuser writes and creates art to recognize harms done and alive and pathways to mend with *White Snake Diary* and in *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*, *The Oaklandside*, *Gloucester Times*, *Paper Dragon*, *Alluvian*, *Still Point Arts Quarterly*, *The Ravens Perch*, *The Bluebird Word*, *Glacial Hills Review*, *The Mail/New Yorker*, *The Mantelpiece*, and several academic publications including *Outdoor Play*. Jane's "Echo Bridge" was a 2021 audio poetry finalist in *The Missouri Review* and "The Liminal Diary" was a 2023 Nonfiction finalist at *Choeofpleirn Press*.

Marge Piercy has published 20 poetry collections, most recently, *On The Way Out*, *Turn Off The Light* [Knopf]; 17 novels including *Sex Wars*. PM Press reissued *Vida*, *Dance The Eagle To Sleep*; they brought out short stories *The Cost Of Lunch*, *Etc* and *My Body, My Life* [essays, poems]. She has read at over 575 venues here and abroad.

Louhi Pohjola was born in Montreal, Canada, to Finnish immigrant parents. She was a cell and molecular biologist before teaching sciences and humanities in a small high school in southern Oregon. She tends to write poems focused on the intersections of human behavior and the natural world, in particular, with black holes, the cosmos, and octopi. She is an avid fly-fisherwoman and river rock connoisseur. Louhi lives in Portland, Oregon, with her husband and her temperamental terrier. The latter thinks that he is a cat.

Sharon Pretti lives in San Francisco, CA. Her work has appeared in numerous journals including *Calyx*, *The MacGuffin*, *Spillway*, *The Bellevue Literary Review*, and *Canary*. She has received multiple Pushcart Prize nominations and will appear in the Best New Poets 2024 anthology. She is also an award-winning haiku poet and frequent contributor to haiku journals including *Modern Haiku* and *Frogpond*. Sharon is a retired medical social worker, and, for many years, she had the pleasure of teaching poetry workshops in a nursing home and at assisted living facilities. Her website is sharonpretti.com

Donna Pucciani, a Chicago-based writer, has published poetry worldwide in *Shi Chao Poetry*, *Poetry Salzburg*, *Gradiva*, *Meniscus*, *ParisLitUp*, *Gyroscope Review*, and other journals. Her seventh and latest book of poetry is *Edges*.

Lizzie Purkis is a British-born poet, who has made Chicago home. Her work has been published in journals in the UK, Canada, and the US. She is a lifelong linguist, a social worker for humans across the lifespan, and a university educator for fledgling social workers. Through various life stages, she keeps returning to poetry. For glimpses go to IG: @kammermuse & <https://our-verses-our-voices.square.site>

Lynette Reini-Grandell's books include the memoir *Wild Things: A Trans-Glam-Punk-Rock Love Story* as well as two poetry collections: *Wild Verge* and *Approaching the Gate* (winner of the 2015 Northeastern Minnesota Book Award for Poetry). She has been nominated for a Pushcart and received grants for her work from the Finlandia Foundation and the Minnesota State Arts Board. She performs with the Bosso Poetry Company and the jazz/poetry collective Sonoglyph. Often inspired by Finnish folk culture and song, she frequently collaborates with Nordic Roots artists in multimedia performances. She lives in Minneapolis on the ancestral homeland of the Dakota people.

Lisa Seidenberg is a writer and filmmaker living in coastal Connecticut who brings a cinematic sensibility to her poetry and literary criticism. Her documentary and experimental films have been shown at the Berlin International Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, Doc.London, Athens Poetry Film Festival and many others. Recent work was published in *Atticus Review*, *Asymptote Journal*, *NewVerseNews*, and *One Art: A Journal of Poetry*. She is currently a peer poetry editor of *Whale Road Review*.

Amy Smith finds poetry in the tiny cracks between things— between hand and pen, between paper and ink, between oddly connected kin. She writes because writing roots her into spaces that feel like home. Some of her poems have been published in *First Literary Review-East*, *The Poeming Pigeon*, and *the Wee Sparrow Water Anthology*. She published her first poetry collection, *Composting the Moon*, in March 2022. Amy is currently pursuing her MFA degree in poetry through the low-residency program at the University of Nevada, Reno at Lake Tahoe.

Jessica D. Thompson is the author of the full-length poetry collection *Daybreak and Deep*—a finalist in the American Book Fest Best Books of 2022 for narrative poetry. Her work has appeared on *Verse Daily* and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her poems have been published in numerous journals and anthologies, including *Gyroscope Review*, *ONE ART*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *The Southern Review*, and *Next Indiana Campfires: A Trail Companion* (Indiana Humanities). Her newest book, *The Mood Ring Diaries*, will be released in 2025. She writes in a log cabin in the middle of a hardwood forest.

Kellie Wells is the author of four books, *God, the Moon, and Other Megafauna*, winner of the Sullivan Prize for Fiction; *Compression Scars*, winner of the Flannery O'Connor Prize; *Skin*; and *Fat Girl, Terrestrial*. Her story "My Dog Lenny Bruce" won the 2022 Kurt Vonnegut Prize in Speculative Literature. She is currently at work on a book about magical crones, entitled *A Cackle of Crones*. She teaches in the MFA programs at the University of Alabama and Pacific University.

Colette McHale Wisnewski writes from rural Monee in Illinois. She has a background in journalism and outreach ministry and finds writing poetry helps her process life, her own as well as the world around her. Her most recent works appeared in *Humana Obscura* and *Canary Literary Magazine*.

Lori Zavada writes poetry and prose steeped in insight and imagery of nature and the human condition. Her poems can be found in *Halfway Down the Stairs*, *Amethyst Review*, *Macrame Literary Journal*, *Oprelle Poetry Collection*, *WayWords*, *Emerald Coast Review*, and her chapbook *First Flight*. In her small coastal town of Pensacola, Florida, she engages with a community of talented, supportive writers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We can't believe that Winter 2025 is almost upon us. Time to hunker down and keep submitting. The Winter 2025 Issue is an open issue, no themes, just fine, contemporary poetry. Winter Issue 2025 submissions open October 1st, 2024, and run through December 1st, 2024. We'll close early if we get all the poems we need. We also close early if we reach our submissions cap for the month.

Put 4 poems in one .doc(x) or .rtf document, page breaks in between poems, normal fonts like Times New Roman, or Arial, and an up-to-date bio for the magazine in the Submittable bio section of no more than 100 words. Use the name in the bio you'd like to be published under.

You can put your Poem Title under it—"by Author WXYZ,"—but we don't need addresses, headers, footers, or page numbers on the pages. Please, no weird formatting or underlining. It makes the editors drink. Sometimes coffee and sometimes not. Concrete and form poems are fine. If you submit more than 4 poems in a doc, we will read the first 4 and ignore the rest, feeding the 5th poem to the feline editors along with their kibble.

We welcome poems from new and established poets. The editors have eclectic tastes, so give us a shot. Rhyming poems are a hard sell, but we still make room for a good one. We'd love to see what you've been working on.

Please read our full guidelines on Submittable: <https://gyroscopereview.submittable.com/submit/>

Thank you for Reading!



Gyroscope Review

fine poetry to turn your world around

gyroscopereview.com

