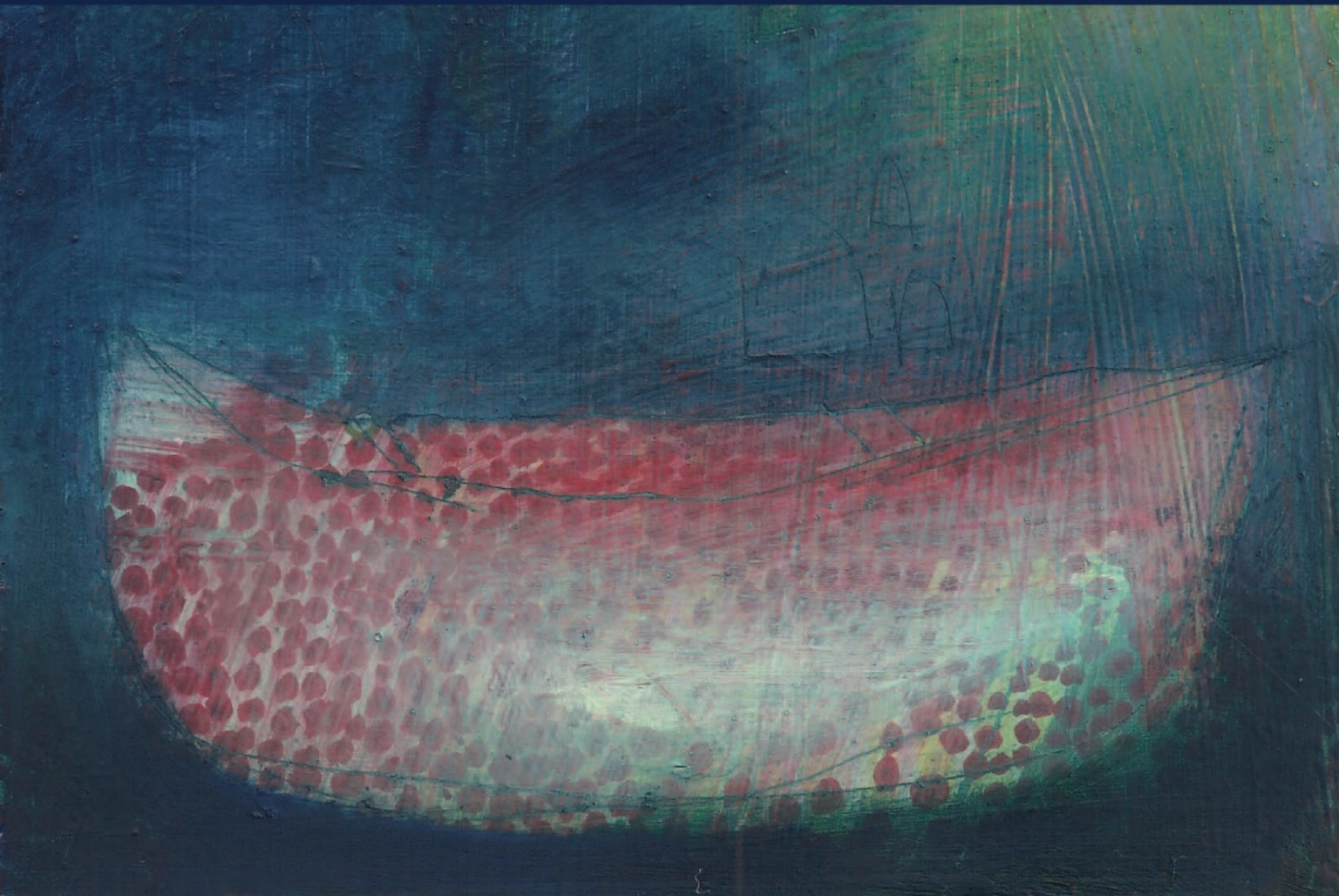




DELUGE JOURNAL

INAUGURAL ISSUE: FALL 2015



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deLuge is an online literary and arts journal devoted to the wealth of creativity that arises from dreams - directly or indirectly - and from the deeply felt/experienced life.

We present works that catches the breath, that resonates like the low hum of a bass cello. Work that dazzles slant or straight on, that brings us to epiphany, to the cliff's edge or that rises through quiet presence.

However each piece sings, we hope that it leaves you feeling the reverb long after each note finishes.

deLuge publishes strong, passionate pieces that excite and challenge. We accept work from new, emerging and established writers. Please see our submissions guidelines on our website at www.delugejournal.com before sending us your work.

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From the Editors:

by Sue Scavo

What stories do your dreams invite you to live? Old stories we have already lived, new stories. Stories that gesture to other stories.



Once, there was a land that had lost all of its birds. A girl stood at the edge of the land, in the silence, wondering at such a loss.

Nearby, there worked two men, stooped to the ground. The only sound, their work. The girl asked them, "Excuse me, but I was wondering, what are you doing here, stooped to the ground? At what do you labor?" The two men did not stop working, did not answer her. but they did look up long enough to smile at her.

Beside her, another man appeared. He said, "You can ask me anything."

"What are those two men who are working so hard doing? I cannot see and they will not answer my question."

The man answered her, "The land has many songs, some we can hear and some we cannot. One of the songs is a song of longing for the lost birds."

The girl asked, "What happened to the birds. Where did they go?"

"The question," the man answered, "is not where did they go, but when will they return."

The two stood, side by side, watching the other two men bent over at their task.

The man asked, "Well?"

“They have forgotten to rise,” the girl answered, surprising herself.

The two men stopped working, stood straight and looked at her.

The man asked, “Why have they forgotten to rise?”

She answered, “Because they have forgotten their song.”

“Now,” the man answered, “tell me. What are the men doing?”

“They are preparing,” she said.

“For?”

“For me?”

They stood again, the four of them. The two workers look at the girl.

“For me to remember. Not to ask. But to remember.” She looked at the man. “What I want most is to hear the songs of the birds again.”

And from the horizon, a blackness arises with a rush of noise. Like river, like storm, like earthquake. The girl stumbles back, full of fear, thinks, “It is like locust, come to destroy the land.”

But the men, all three, simply look up. The man says, “The song of the one lost bird is the call for the return of the birds and their songs.”

The girl looks up again and sees that the cloud is not locust, not plague. But birds. Millions of birds. All of them singing.

•

That is one story. Here are gestures of others.

From the Editors:

by Karla Van Vliet

I set out the bowl. Let it rain. Let the wet of the word fall. Let the bowl collect what falls. Let me drink from the bowl as if water was wine and wine was words on my tongue, so that when I open my mouth I speak the language of rain.

•

The dream comes at night like a flock of birds rising and falling, a clattering of wings. A boy of three or four years comes to me, looks me in the eyes and says, another way to open your heart is song. It wakes me and my mouth is filled with the taste of song, a river of words.

•

All summer I succumb to an urgent need to go to the river's edge; the long spit of sandbank on the far side of the oxbow. There I collect bits and pieces, sounds, smells, small stones and sticks. I fill my pockets with birdsong, susurrus leaves, the sultry sun. When I return to the page I lay them out, score them into poem.

•

Now, my face turned north to beaten sky, dark and purpled, heavy with rain, I wait arms spread wide. And then the downpour. I am the bowl. I am the collector. What I bring to you is song, is a river, is deLuge.

The Skull 009/100 the hamlet

poem by Michael Cooper

The desire of the skull is to replicate itself in endless variation through we transient layered on top and below as a simple conveyance to this end—and you, how often seen as an obstruction by it. The desire of language is to replicate itself in endless variation the forms of heaven seeking out the niche, the deeper adaptation—despite the hung-howl of Plato—and the closest way to the spawn-pool is we, flagellant writer, half-bulb owner of incompetence in the rendering of things—O improbable! Skull! O improbable! Language! Woe simpleton wielding the dome of good Yorick—resonate from below your too soon to be death-masque—this skull you address is neither you, nor he—two calcified actors—actuators driven mad to impress this self upon the soil about them—we, accomplice of thing-dom lie to thrust past this threshold, this marrow-bloom—piles of us buried between every village, every wilderness.

The Flooded Field

poem by Frances Donovan

Past the lotus-choked pond
past boulders, anxiety, signs
telling you to turn back
past sarsaparilla and mayapple,
you find a path

At the first gate, leave names behind
and find rustling
above the emptying mind

At the next gate, leave behind
clock-time and memory
Follow the paths of animals

At the third gate
a great gale of open space
a curl of wind
 that ripples the flat mirror
of the flooded field

Ankle-tipping on its edge you pause
to watch the gold and black wings
of a butterfly who takes flight
 as the Riverside Line
rumbles beyond the silent water

The Sunlight's Merciless

poem by Frances Donovan

the feathers of the shade touch every inch
of the courtyard
the sunlight's merciless
but cannot penetrate the dappling

how the wind shakes the trees
releasing music I proclaim a mystery
how it touches me, enveloping every hour

pre-dawn, the birds start. I rise, my mouth juicy,
my mouth full of the wings of blackbirds. the grackle
calls the same shrill again and again

Steps

poem by Larry Eby

Drift across an ice lake. Wait. The rumbling of glacial collapse. The bees swarm into the ground. *Wait*. Take one step. Amniotic fluid spills into a mouth. A moon ejects off a planet. *Wait*. Shift the body, right foot forward. A muscle tears from bone. The sun cools down. *Wait*. Left hand in air, spin. A nebula grows in my cup. Mold grows in my cup. *Wait*. Step with left foot. Grip waist. A season dies. Twist and bend. A thicket dries up and burns. An audience somewhere claps. *Wait*. Breathe. Don't forget to show those teeth.

Bridge from the Dream (an excerpt from Young Ramirez)

fiction by Christopher Woods

Some say heat killed Old Ramirez. Others say it was a great wave of gold that came crashing ashore that year. No one knows which is so, as there is a terrible problem with memory here. But long ago, I am certain, and perhaps before I was alive. Or later, though I could not tell you when. People here, on this island, are of little help in this, in knowing. When they speak of the wave, and some do with frequency, their eyes brighten. It is as though they are reliving some miraculous event, that they can still see remnants of that event down in the deep spirals of memory. For these people, I understand that the wave is still a kind of faith. And for the others? Well, what I can tell you is this. There are many faiths.

If it was a wave, then it was no ordinary wall of water. Rather, it was the kind of wave that comes without warning, with nothing but death on its mind. Then, its work done, it leaves. Some here say it lifted itself out of the sea and was done in a matter of seconds. Others say the great wave lasted for two entire days. But everyone agrees on one thing. The wave was made of gold.

Some few islanders, elders most certainly, believe that the wave carried the sun inside it. Those who survived that day can speak only of the gold itself. Not the gold of a coin or a tooth, but a rich, effervescent liquid that rose in the bay and then collapsed on this sandy place and everyone who lived here.

You may ask how I know all this. True, I was not here on the island at the time of the wave. If I am honest, I must tell you that I know very few things about the world by my own sight alone. Instead, I rely on what comes to me, what is reported, what others tell me. Memory being a liquid thing as well as a thief, what I am told often changes from one person to the next, from one day to another.

I have listened to a thousand tales, at least twice as many secondhand. I do not know, and cannot even guess, how many dreams I have been told. And endless number, no doubt, as the dreaming here continues unabated.

Dreams continue, repeat themselves, are forever ending or beginning once again. Dreams on this island are a multiplying bounty that disappears and reappears once more. Who knows what is to become of us here, or if we are better for the swarms of dreams. I take some of this dream and some of that dream and put it in my pen, and then I make my entries in the island ledger.

History is what I am about, history as best as it can be recalled. But history is not unlike dreams, starting and stopping, an overlapping fugue, or a tired old song that is carried on the wind in any direction for a thousand years. I grab pieces of that song when it blows through the window. I never close the window.

Wounded Deer

painting by Christina Kionka



Bull

painting by Christina Kionka



Cold

poem by Valertina Cano

She is a rattlesnake
soaking up refrigerator warmth.
She shakes her wrists,
twitching with bracelets,
sending them into a spasm of scales
as her earrings hiss the single warning.
Her smile is forked
and never misses.

O.

poem by Valertina Cano

My mind works like a jaw,
gnawing at a bite until it is
nothing but a gray piece of lint.
And still it chews,
grinding its own teeth
down to the gum.

Dystopia

poem by Valertina Cano

She dreamt of him, twice,
two night marbles tucked next to each other.
His face was liquid with solitude
and he promised her in both
to unstitch his mind and examine it.
He promised her he'd return
like a bird in spring.
The dreams have stopped,
the birds no longer migrate where she is.

Trigger

poem by Valertina Cano

It slithers through the covers,
this tapping rhythm.

A pulse on my fingertips,
spiraling inward.

My veins become slipknots
waiting for you to say the word.

The one that will spring me
forward to tear your throat
open like wrapping paper.

Cows & Bulls

painting by John Douglas



If You Forget Me

poem by Uche Ogbuji

The cell is ten dreams by ten nights;
I've paced forever through its zero
Si tú me olvidas, quiero
Que tú sepas una cosa: my light

Gutters against your fading picture.
The cell is ten dreams by ten nights.
As I flutter to reach you my flights
Stall in the humorless stricture

Of passing time, contrary winds,
My numb-struck fear of your cruel heights —
The cell is ten dreams by ten nights.
Sir warden's nearby voice rescinds

All penalty, restores my rights;
Why do I still sue for *souvenir*;
Reflections from you which bind me here?
The cell is ten dreams by ten nights.

Turn Slow

poem by Wes Solether

Lamb blood to feed the bats. Symbiotic. Motherbeasts.

The dark lines between the stars in Orion.

The obsession over comparing two unlike ideals.

The poet/translator/reader being a tri-cornered hat.

You can tell evil by the eyebrows.

Incapable of forming sense
though clearings are made throughout
clouds dissipate and the brain forms
coherent thought like it wants to
railways only wake in the forest
forced to use memory in a format
understood by human tongue
film reels, dialogue, speech, formal
gestures of humanity.

Turn slow the man knifed.

Footsteps down hallway; just turn the dawn he urged.

A dropped flashbulb noise.

wd6213

painting by M Landis



wd6066

painting by M Landis



wd6249

painting by M Landis



Monkeys In the Trees

fiction by Leslie Bohem

My father is dying. He is eighty-nine years old and because of the many advances in medicine, he is dying piece by piece. He had his first stroke nearly ten years ago. Since then, he has taken a medication to thin his blood. He also takes four different medications for his heart and a medication that works against some kind of seizure that causes him to projectile vomit. He takes medication for pain and medication to sleep. My mother keeps track of all these pills for him, putting them out on little green ceramic dishes at his meals and again before he goes to sleep. His kidneys are failing and last week he made one of the endless series of hospital visits that has occupied his last years, this time to begin dialysis. His memory is a shambles. Large portions of his life are lost completely, other pieces run together in an imaginary litany that has none of the shape or grace of fiction.

This last time, my father went into the hospital on a Thursday night. He was scheduled to stay over the weekend. My mother called me on Friday afternoon. She did not call to talk about my father. She called to tell me about a dream that she had had the night before. There is a loquat tree that grows outside the window of the breakfast room in my parents' house. Sometime after I moved away from home, my mother sprouted a loquat pit and my father planted it. The tree has grown from that seed. In my mother's dream, the tree had become huge and it was perfectly symmetrical, and it was full of loquats. My mother was worried that she would not be able to pick them all before they rotted on the tree. But then, as she looked more closely, she saw that there were many monkeys in the tree, and that the monkeys were devouring the loquats so quickly that she had no hope of saving any of the fruit at all.

My mother is fifteen years younger than my father. She's an active woman and, in a family where most live into their nineties, she seems, or at least I want her to seem, middle-aged and not yet old. She has always appeared to lead her own life, writing

for television when I was a boy, going back to school when I was a teenager, getting a degree in Library Science and working first in the Special Collections Department of a University Library and now, after her mandatory retirement from the University, conducting her own business from her home, a business which deals in collectable books and photographs. For a while now she has been talking about writing a murder mystery that would be set in a college library. My mother has always occupied her time.

The day after my mother told me her dream, my father came home from the hospital. I went to visit him. I didn't stay long. The dialysis had left him disoriented without making him feel any less uncomfortable. He is angry about getting old and he lets every bit of this anger out on my mother. To me, there is something depressingly familiar in this. When I was a boy living at home, my mother would often answer the phone for my father, telling people to whom he didn't want to speak that he wasn't in. Now, it is as if he truly believes that his age is also something that my mother should be able to fix for him.

That evening, my mother called me again. "I was watching you walk to your car today," she said, "and you reminded me of Irv Florman. Did I ever tell you about Irv Florman?" My mother rarely reminisces. My father used to have a dark room in the basement of our house. He will drag a photograph out at the least reason. A picture of him in short pants. Of an uncle who died of a wound he received in the First World War. Of me in my first rock band when I was thirteen, wearing a cape that belonged to my mother and trying very hard to look like one of the Byrds. It seems to me now that my father never left my mother any room to reminisce in, but maybe there was just so much of the past in the air of our house that she didn't want to add any more to it.

"Irv Florman was my boyfriend in my last year of high school," my mother told me now. "He was very tall and handsome. Everyone was so jealous of me when I was with Irv Florman. But he was a clutz, just like you. He walked on the heel of one foot and the toe of the other."

My mother was laughing and I was glad to hear her laugh. "You used to make me walk in front of you in the parking lot behind the Thrifty's on Laurel Canyon and Ventura when I was a kid," I said. "You'd make me say 'heel-toe, heel-toe' when I walked. You said I always walked 'toe-heel'. There was a Baskin and Robins there at the far end of the parking lot that gave you a free ice cream cone on your birthday if you

signed up.”

“Schizophrenics walk “toe-heel”, my mother said. “Anyway, Irv Florman was friends with Sid Luchman. Do you know who he was? He became a famous football player. He played for I think it was the Chicago Bears. I would go to the games with Irv. Sid’s father was a gangster of some kind. He had a trucking business. We all called him ‘Truckman Luckman’. He would give Sid twenty-five dollars every time Sid scored a touchdown. That was a lot of money then. And of course, Sid scored a lot of touchdowns.”

My mother grew up in Brooklyn. She went to a public school called Erasmus Hall. The school is still there and the students now have to pass through metal detectors as they come in. A few years ago, a teacher was thrown out of a second story window by his students. I don’t know whether or not he died. I was told all this once by a Police Detective who worked out of the Precinct that includes Erasmus Hall. I think that, up until the night when my mother told me about Irv Florman and Sid Luchman, the story about the metal detector and the teacher being thrown out the window was all that I knew about my mother’s high school.

“Irv played jazz piano, and I remember, he wrote me songs that he would play for me. We were pretty serious and of course my mother was worried about that. But I was going away to college. Irv made me promise that I wouldn’t go out with anyone else once I went away. After I went to college, I would see him when I came home for vacations, but then after a while, something happened... oh that’s right, I got married.”

My mother had been married to a medical student she’d met at the University of Alabama. This was years before she met my father. This is another of my mother’s stories that I know almost nothing about.

“Once, years later, I was back in New York for the Holidays. Irv had stayed friendly with the family, and when he heard that I was coming, he told Aunt Roy that he’d love to see me. We met for dinner. He’d gone into some kind of business and he was doing very well. But I was so disappointed. He’d aged so strangely. He had a little head. His body had gotten bigger, and he had this awful, little head.”

“And that was the last time you ever saw him?”

“Yes it was. Next time your Aunt Roy is out here you’ll have to ask her about Irv. If she knows what happened to him.”

For a moment, I could see Irv Florman, a man approaching his middle age with his too small head. I could see him and I knew that, by the time he had taken my mother out for their last dinner, he had given up writing songs on the piano.

“And of course I’ve told you about Aaron Lopez?” my mother said.

The name was vaguely familiar and I was ashamed, knowing now that this was not the first time my mother had at least tried to tell me one of her stories. “I think so,” I said.

“I met him on the subway. Well, I was picked up. I was with Roy and Lil, we were coming back to Brooklyn from seeing a play. Aaron was from the oldest family of Spanish Jews in America. Someone in his family helped George Washington finance the revolution.”

“You went out with him the same time you went out with Irv?”

“Oh sure, my mother didn’t want me going out with just one boy. You know, getting serious. She was always worried about that. Aaron gave me a book of Saki short stories. I must have showed it to you. In it he wrote, ‘thank God for the subways’.”

We were both quiet for a long moment, and I am certain that we were both seeing the might-have-been romances of every subway ride we hadn’t taken, and then my mother said, “Sid Luchman called me once. It was years later. I was living here, in Hollywood, I think I must have already been working as a reader at Paramount. By then he was a coach for the Bears, I think. He said he was just in town for the day. I asked if he wanted to get together for a drink or something but he said no, he didn’t have the time, he was just really in town for the day. Isn’t that strange, just calling like that, for nothing?”

A few nights later, my mother had another dream. In this dream she had gone to a bakery to buy some profiteroles. She was going to bring them as dessert to a dinner party that my wife was giving. My wife and I have lived together for more than sixteen years. We have never once given a family party, not even a small one. In the real world, my mother has never had any need to buy a dessert for this sort of occasion.

The bakery that she went to in her dream was in the middle of a huge park. She told the woman at the bakery that she needed enough profiteroles for a large party and

the woman took out a book from under the counter and showed her a photograph of a huge profiterole cake that was layered up on itself, symmetrically, in smaller and smaller pieces. My mother described this cake as looking exactly like a Christmas tree. She thought that she would need something that big for our party. She placed her order with the bakery woman and then she left the shop. In this dream, it was getting late, and, as my mother neared the exit to the park, she began to wonder if she had made it clear to the woman in the bakery that she needed the dessert for that night. She walked back through the park, retracing her steps. The bakery was closed by the time she came back to it. She didn't know what to do. It was almost dark. Soon the entire park would be closed, and she would be locked in for the night. Frantically, she hurried back for the gates, hoping that they would not be locked before she reached them. Even in her dream, her hurry made her forget the tree-shaped dessert, and how important it had been to her to bring that dessert to our party.

This Rare Dream

painting by W. Jack Savage



Dreaming of Winter

poem by Danny P. Barbare

Balled
up
like
a
snow
ball
lobbed
like
the
moon
all
night
long
the
North
wind
blows
like
the
fan.

Ocean Poem

poem by Diana Decker

How can I stand the glare
of the ocean's edge

the hot sand
the stinging salt
the bleached driftwood
that once was my ship?

I Know That Sound

poem by Matthew Raymond Curiale

The patterned habits of her needs
are clouds over clouds over-
the way her hands chase her hands
in worry.

She's always looking
for the sound the sun makes.
A reedy, hung note like the tail end of a dirge.

The urge is in my fingers.
She was born with a message curled inside her fist.
I try to pry it loose.

My knuckles pledge
to the valleys of her spine-
like a handle-

a grip where my touch can listen
can take. Can push. Can listen. Listen,

I know the sound-
rain falls loudly
like fingers pressed to lips. Shhh-

She could tell me.
She could tell me what she hears.
Birds blast the sky in flocks,

pepper the bruised places
that the sun can't reach.
She's well enough to eat-

But she won't eat.
Between us, the glow from the lamp
is a circle to wash in.

I keep telling her:
I want to see you
Out where the night is greedy with black

cluttered with a sparkling
cosmos of clenched eyelids
tight as jaw

Her eyes are mouths.
I want to be devoured
Look at me.

Her eyes are.
Look. At me. Mouths.
I want her eyes are mouths. I want. Look.

She speaks
and I am destroyed
by her Yes.

Primal Bear

painting by Laura Smith



Dream of Para-gliding

poem by Barbara Meler

In nights of dreams, the clouds fly high above
barn steeples, grazing hay, and toeing trees,
as westward blades of windmills list, shove
the wisps amongst the limbs. The lee
of slope running on shingles gray with age.
The step I take : a foot launch, lifts the wing.
I kettle up the core, Vario gage
beeping . Dew creates bases. Arms I fling
to catch my cloud quay. Unstable as Geier
in flight. I fear not dreams of flying high
to heaven. Gravity of dust, flyer
in hell of airfoil collapsing. I die
of trees and rooted rock, awake and bound
once more, in beds of iron, and chains of ground.

Visitation

poem by M.R. Baird

Made of flesh
Your face
Beyond my face,
Softening chorus
Of alteration
Of surrendering will,
Each of us
Forming new feral sounds
That dissolve into breath,
Pass over,
Appear unchanged.
I lived inside this body, once
A slip of black stone,
Hard edged and cutting
On the outside,
Every word torn down to fissure
Then turned;
What strange language
At any time allows another
Fist to open,
Cast the yellow bird off palm
To fly,
Begin.

Forgetting to Close the Gate

poem by M.R. Baird

When the clouds grew heavy
I gathered
With the others, to watch
In silence,
Those ponies and white goats
That go unclaimed on this island,
They are the wild things
That touch the mountain
Without effort or knowledge of what they hold.
I can hear them running in the night
When my eyes are closed in sleep;
The herd grazing by the gate
Just outside the flower garden,
The ponies running past
Close enough to touch,
You and I laughing a little too loud,
Following the small brown sheep,
Finding their fleece in clumps on the path,
Stopping just short of the square house.
In the storm I dream of trees falling backwards
Against the old stone wall,
Laid down to make a bed for
All our moving shadows,
Freighted hooves sounding in the dark,
Like the prayers that cross my lips,
Go unheard into that black rain path,
Those clouds.

No Thing

poem by Ellen Metrick

I am sage and coyote, canis artemesia.
I am only what you see, and then less. El Rio de
Doloroso is a mantel, San Miguel a belt
I tighten. Reconstructed flume, the face
I show the world -- see, I was useful once, but now, it's just show, a
reminder, connecting person of the past with people of the present, a site
of heritage... of what's left behind, of what's empty, passed on ... And we
keep it to remind us of the innovative, creative, indomitable human spirit--
of what we do when we want something, be it wealth, gold, a home or a
heart.

Scent of fresh sage, dusty road at mid morning, river. Rain in the desert,
snow drifting across sun-blue sky, manes flying in a redrock wind, cliffs
rising more solid than life, translucent at dusk.

There's nothing here. I feared it all along, without words. Today, after a run
through the canyon heat and shade, dust, coyote track, sage scent, dog in
and out of the river, shaking his blessings on the dust and me over and
over, today I see, nothing is to be feared because there's nothing here.

I wanted a trauma, a haunting, a conflagration, some snapped fist, blinded
fury, bleeding genius to appear, a driving force to which I could hitch my
wagon and ride, flaming across my own sky. I hoped to show you some
gaping treachery, a wound that would make all of us swoon, sway, or
some long-hidden power with which I could light our universe. But the
truth, I see now, is what I most feared -- so, move along -- there's nothing
here. Nothing here to see. I am, like you, simply sage, coyote, a fading
scent and ...perhaps ... some trickery to trade.

Why Birds Matter *a found poem*

poem by Whitney G. Schultz

They can't be valued by dollars and cents alone.
Birds matter because they do.

What do birds do for us? We can count the ways.
Birds can take care of themselves.

Birds matter for their own sake. They add
up to a chorus of praise. We have to be there for the birds.

Some things weren't meant to be tamed, for example:
there are urban birds, rural birds, winter birds,

mountain birds, sea birds...

The flying creatures influence haute couture.

With their leathery faces, ominous silhouettes, and enthusiasm
for carrion, vultures aren't nature's most lovable birds.

They'll just as soon tuck into a human corpse,
breaking ribs and scattering skeletons.

The vultures can reduce a corpse to bare bones
in just five hours—a process that usually takes months.

What feathered jewel might drop out of the sky next?
If you sully the environment, the birds will know.

Looking within the beautiful blue plumes of a blue jay
is the solution to a physical mystery, a mission of mercy.

Birds matter because they matter.
Every damn one of them.

Altered State

photograph by Barbara Ruth



Hymn to Kali #41

poem Barbara Ruth

I will tremble again
will go down in anguish yet again
pleading with the nameless demons
to unchain me, set me free now
release me
from my battered dreams
that I be not assailed
another time
that I be delivered
from the inner terrorist.

The Dream Comes

poem by Annie Perkins

The dream comes
and you waken
still wrapped in the ether
and the blue
like the sky or the sea or
the aquamarine gemstone
you once wore
on your left hand
long ago

And the dream comes
to settle
in the tiny hollow
just below your heart
each beat
a remembering
too strong to feel
all at once

And the dream comes
and you know that
this time
you are done for
crumbling
falling
weeping
turning
again and again

And the dream comes
and the crack widens
and you fall in
or is it the other way around
what was up
is down now
deeper, softer
more real
than light or gold
or the truth

And the dream comes
and he is standing beside you
holding out his palm
showing you a tiny bird
that still lives in
the tree
that was your home
in another time
a long time ago

And the dream comes
and you are lying naked
beside him
inside him
and he inside you
and you cry out
everything breaking across
the shore of this new love

Drowning Might Be a Nice Change of Pace

poem by Zebulon Huset

Some wake, sheets
 skinned

with sweat or drool,
 screaming

or crying or feeling
 bewildered

when they dream of drowning.

They talk about it all day at work — *the sinking!* — and switch the TV quick when *Jaws* surfs the channels by them.

Not me. Drowning
 never seemed

the issue. Quicksand,
 buried alive, meh.

My worst nightmares I am not drowning,

I am water. There is no line between me and non-me so I never know when I'm bumping my neighbor, or even if there are sentient beings around as well within that mouthless sluicing silence.

Without the jarring
 of drag or wave,

recognition continues
 to slip

first edges and taste
and smell,

the good old boys,

but then I lose the nervous pop of knuckle as I try, knuckleless to remind myself of sound, of
feel. I can only guess that want went next —

yearning before breath,
 as we'd assume.

The moment my mind immersed my molecules in that simple binary everything changed,
which is why time seemed to be t

he second to last to go,
 before volition.

Then I wake up but who cares?
 Sheets and pillows

and blankets and nothing
 and nothing and nothing and nothing.

Winter Fog

poem by Steven Bucher

Two horses graze absently
Through thinning snow
And deepening fog
As I too grow absent
In winter's thick
Idling through wisps of dreams
Not my own

Like dislocated echoes
Off surrounding mist
Your voice within
Shepherds turns
That wind the winter's thick
And engrave the rounding year

What form the house
In which to dwell
What path to walk
Toward your hand
And how honed the edge
To cut the beckoning brume

On Fire

painting by Katherine Bell



Burlesque, Dante-Style

poem by Amy Irvine McHarg

Act I: Inferno

She'll tell you she's a Phoenix
A resurrection already risen
From pale blue ash.
And indeed, her swirling vortex
of heat and light
Makes it look that good.

She'll tell you the flavor is
muy picante
Savina Habanero

Half a million units of Scoville heat.
She'll tell you the feel is
Slick molten lava,
Krakatoa,
One thousand degrees
and climbing.

I know:
How you will yearn
To plunge
into that caldera.
I know:
How you are tempted

To dip your wick.

For she is no Hestia, virgin goddess,
Tender of home's warm hearth.
Passions roll off her
Mount Vesuvius
Like wheels of fire
Casting words and stories as sparks,
Ablaze with meaning you want to mine
with bare fingers, wet tongue.

She speaks of causes, ideas, quests for justice
And trust me, when she's through speaking,
You will want to take up the sword.
But once she lures you into battle,
You watch:
She'll cross enemy lines
And turn
on you
for full combat
These killing fields
Still wet and warm from the last slaughter.

Do not even think of dousing her.
Regardless of your most valiant efforts,
You will be burned.

For what fuels her
Is obsidian rage.
Its cool dark geology,

Her breastplate.
Armament for the heart.

At some point, ask:
Friend. Boss. Lover.
Especially the Lover.
Ask if the winds will shift.
If the fire will turn,
And burn, back the way it came.

And you Amigo, Hermano, Mi Corazon,
You will be left
standing on scorched earth,
Your feet bleeding on
That cold black substrate
Sharp as glass
Now exposed.

You will see:
How everything in her path
Is reduced, apocalyptic.
Nothing then, not a thing
is left
Save the raven
To scavenge the charred remains.

Act II: Purgatorio

You have dreamed
of women, on a train
Who were once—
Before that shadow stole across the land and

devoured the men—
Teachers, furriers, poets.
Mothers, sisters, wives.

You were there in the kitchens
When their delicate hands built bombs,
And in the open market
When they picked up pistols
Buried in baskets of pommes de terre.

You were there when they tucked under sweat-glazed arms
Hollowed-out baguettes
Stuffed with secret papers, writ on them
The language of defiance—bread
Swallowed suddenly and whole
If someone stared too long.

You were there, when the food ran out,
When the firewood burned up and with it the hope.
The children, were bony and opalescent.
You learned to feed them
By lifting your skirt for the golden-haired, blue-eyed men
Your only pleasure
The intel gleaned between grunts and thrusts
Then passed on for the sake of liberte—
A right, by every measure you knew.

You have dreamed of that cattle car
Into which 230 of your female comrades
were loaded
Their faces etched with disbelief.
Some said with nonchalance,

“Don’t cry, mes enfants...
Maman will be home soon,
For there is no star on my blouse.
This punishment is nothing but a slap on my derriere.”

But that train took you east
In the dead of winter,
With teen virgins and grandmothers
Into the heart of darkness
To the place where fires
Were stoked around the clock
Where the air hung
black and oiled like a raven’s wing
From the bodies that burned.

There, you were branded
Not with a yellow star, but a red triangle.
And you understood: You, were an exception,
To be treated differently. Except
You wore the same insufficient cloth. Except
You received the same shorn head. Except
You slugged the same thin broth
Once a day, in the same bowl
You shit in the night before.

Except, you weren’t even like
your sisters of the Resistance,
Who did in fact get what the starred ones got:
199 of them died while you were fed and clothed
And how they hated you for that,
They, who were sent to dig trenches until they fell in
Wasted, hopeless, and the dogs tore at their necks.

No, your youth and good looks
Earned you another kind of labor.
In Block 24. Where a madame took
two reichsmarks
for each officer
trained in torture and shame
to have his way with you
every twenty minutes
Until you died of exhaustion or disease or
forced scrape of the womb.

Who knows which way it ended.
The dream did not reveal that.
But you remember:
How you smiled to dazzle.
How you fanned flames
In the delta of Venus
So the river ran warm and wet
to be favored enough to solicit:
A crust of bread smuggled to your sister.
A piece of newspaper with which to wipe
your bloodied backside.

And now:
You waken in that soft bruise of sky before dawn,
Where light licks night.
Through the fragrant steam
that rises off your tea cup
You google, then gaze
At images you already know:
Block 24's hard gray angles.

The stone cell, trussed up
with curtains of white muslin, a real bed.
The black uniforms, smoking, waiting in the hall.
And the small barred window
Through which you could see the alternative,
That told you there was never a choice at all.

Science says that collective memory
Entwines with our mitochondria
A serpent of knowledge that slithers
Along maternal bloodlines, held in the vessel of the body.

How instinctual it seems then,
The way women survive in tyranny
Like birds, singing prettily
For their supper,
Which is really a scavenging
For the next crumb.

As a young girl, you did not understand
What you get now:
That thing that lurked around the edges of
Your mother's voice, her barbed, shrill insistence
that you, and your sister,
Dress up, be sweet:
"For if we charm the man that is coming
for a drink, he just might take us out
For the dinner we cannot otherwise afford."

Red triangle. Pretty dress. Black rock rage.
How this tangles and darkens and
Makes combustible

Your desire. Your notion
Of what is violence
And what is pleasure.

On the chests of the women in the Nazi brothel
They tattooed the words
Feld Hure. Field Whore.

And this, is what you want him to see:
This banner above your breasts
Across the topography of your broken heart
When you go down on your knees
Before your lover.

Act III: Paradiso

At night, the veil falls
No longer is there a stage
Nor a fiction to be flung.

I fly through a door
hidden behind coats
My arms, now wings, vast and blue, brush
Past scent of cedar and stored wool
My body, carried on currents of wind
Delivered to a shoreline,
Its curvature, like a woman
Kissed by the mouth
Soft and frothing,
of a green and glittering sea.
This geography of soul,
How wild. How unclaimed.

And yet:
There are no waves.
No turgid smack of sand and surf
No place in which to lose
my footing.

This water, a font.
It douses the inferno.
This mud, a bandage
It softens the severe black scar.
There is no need now to wield
this forked and croaking tongue
as weaponry.

Notice, these feet,
Not webbed, but taloned:
Bird of Prey. An “e,” not an “a”!
How they unfurl in this salty marsh,
In this primordial protozoan pool
How they dance among the squirm and wriggle
The beginning, and end, of all things sacred and vital.

Notice, this beak:
The shamans named it
The Holy Spear —
An instrument of precision and grace,
a shaft impaled with messages
thrown down by the gods.

Here, I hunt.
I see the eye of the fish,
But already, I am sustained.

There is no singing for my supper
No unveiling for the other.
Watch the steel-blue flash of me,
A storm cloud shivering
With heat and light.

The horizon stitched with angels,
Or are they pteradactyls?
It is hard to say, but the sky beats anyway
With more wings
Both ancient and otherworldly.

Here, I can see forever:
Beyond surfaces and stories
Through mundane into mythos
for behind me
in the cattails sits a lion
whose velvet breath licks
my back, my neck,
I am so tender and exposed.

In another world
I am fire, smoke, obsidian, memory
There, he would pounce
Tear the tender meat of my breast
from a fine latticework of bone,
fragile casing of my heart.

But here, he is another kind of king.
Here, I am
another kind of girl.
The water bird the pharaohs knew

As the new life that rises
After we die
to that
We have become
in our nightmares.

Dream

photo by Christopher Woods



Bridge from the Dream

Photo by Christopher Woods



Always Better, Never the Same

non-fiction by Charles Crowley

The turtle was missing both of its front legs, and its back-left leg hung mangled and damaged, incapable of returning to its shell. The turtle's head was unscathed, suggesting that it had been able to retreat before suffering further abuse.

I found the turtle upside down by the front gate, five yards from the pond in my front yard. Large rocks marked the pond's perimeter. Their purpose was two-fold. Their primary function was to keep the turtles and fish in the pond. Their secondary function was to keep other animals out. Next to my house was a canyon from which raccoons, coyotes, and other creatures often came. For this reason gates had been erected and walls had been fortified around the perimeter of our yard. But the position from which I recovered the turtle and the condition in which I recovered the turtle clearly said to me, "Through all this work and all this preparation, you have failed. You failed this small creature who depended on you."

Entry One: I was alive, a child alive at the start of a dream. But, by the end, I was never quite sure. It always started out just me. Just me in the backseat of my parents green 1996 Ford Explorer. The car sat parked in the driveway and I sat in the backseat alone. My parents had gone into the house to argue. I didn't know what about, because I couldn't draw words from their muffled voices. I understood that I shouldn't have been able to even hear their voices by natural laws of physics. But by the distorted law of my dream's physics, I was able to hear their swollen screeches and the gurgling of their words as they bubbled up from their throats and onto the floor. I could hear the *drip, drip, drip* as their words echoed from their lips, through the dream air, and in to me, through the car's shuddering air vents.

I looked down at the car's carpeted floor. I didn't like to look at my parents when they fought. And just looking at the curtained windows I could imagine their faces as they twisted into tortured shapes—their mouths opening like black holes, begging to

consume the other's words. I looked down at the inside of the car's belly, trying to block out the image, trying to focus on the gray carpet. Then the vehicle began to move.

The Ford Explorer's engine came alive and it carried me from the driveway to the street. I could see only slightly above the dashboard, as the car carried me forward, as the streetlights turned from green to yellow to red and back again. The car bent itself forward with speed. It jolted and swerved through intersections and around other vehicles.

"Mom! Dad! Where are you?" My small words never made it beyond the glass.

The car responded with revving anger and a quickening pace. It was compelled forward, and I couldn't see what was ahead. I saw the lights disappear and then a blurring blue sky and clouds. The city birds turned to smudges in the sky as they disappeared to the edges of my entire view. Everything turned to noise my young eyes struggled to take in all the stimulus of my sleeping world.

I felt the pressure of increasing speed and then a crash. The car sent itself through a gray wall. There was a pause as the aftershock settled in the seats and the rubble settled on the glass. Slowly, I left the car's interior; I floated above everything to see weeds and vines wrapping around the wheels as if the car had always been there. Terracotta pots lined the scene. They were filled with rampant color, and slowly these colors bled together, until I couldn't recognize the car or the gray wall or the dirt floor that held it all in place.

I was on my way to the studio in North Hollywood where my band was recording their album. This was at a time when I didn't drive. I had relinquished my rights to car insurance and therefore the luxury of driving from Azusa to the studio in an hour.

I bought cheap fast-food coffee and then burned my throat trying to swallow it all down at once when I saw the 187 eastbound bus already pulling up.

"You could've brought it on. I wouldn't have minded," said the bus driver as I stepped up and into the vehicle.

"Thanks for the heads up," I said.

I sat down and began to doze off as the bus rode on and away from my apartment. I wouldn't be in Pasadena for at least another forty-five minutes. Once in Pasadena I would take the Metro Gold Line to Union Station in LA. And after reaching LA, I

would have to take the Metro Red Line to Lankershim in North Hollywood. Though the ride was long and tedious, I enjoyed having an extra two hours on the weekend—time where I had nothing to do but read.

I had brought Dante's *Inferno* with me.

Sitting on the Gold Line, I opened the book and began reading:

"In the middle of the journey out of life I came to myself in a dark wood where the straight way was lost."

I looked up. There was a man sitting in front of me in a wheelchair. His wheelchair was framed by a small blue tarp. The back of the tarp read, in light pink letters, "Da Future iz now Leeving."

Indeed, we were compelled to move forward on tracks of light into the future.

Entry Four: Somehow I knew it was already in the house. The dream started off with me in the hallway. I stood there and I listened to the slow exhalation of a body not too far off. At first I imagined it was my dog, but within a minute of listening, I knew better. A mass of white fur, seemingly distended and out of place, stepped into clear view from the darkness. There was a polar bear in my house and it was hungry.

My legs couldn't carry me fast enough away from the lightless hallway. They were heavy and numb. My muscles were like sacks of pudding, good for nothing in a chase scene. By strength born in pure fear and terror, I made it to the kitchen and I ducked into the island at its center.

I put my head between my legs and clasped my ears with my hands. I tried hard not to breathe; but just as I felt myself learning to control the erratic pace of my lungs, the deep and swollen breathing returned behind me.

The dream always ended with its claws tearing through the cabinet doors. The bear exposed me. I sat staring into the sullen beast—its hair matted, its teeth dirty and sharp.

I knew how things would go from that point on. I didn't need to stay asleep to find out. Dismembered fingers and limbs would be scattered around the kitchen. My parents and sister would wake up in the morning and ask, "What happened here?" But there would be no substantial piece of me for them to uncover. There would be only an arm or a leg or a finger—something the bear had forgotten or left behind.

•

The turtle poked its head out of its shell and looked at me. Though I knew it was severely injured, there was no way for me to know what unbearable pain it may have been experiencing. I looked at its yellow eyes. Their centers were a swirling black that eventually collapsed to a pure point of darkness.

I tried not to look at its legs.

“What are you doing?” my dad said.

“This turtle was attacked. Its legs are almost all gone—” I said.

“—Do you think the raccoons got it?”

“What do I do?”

“Put it back in the pond. I’ll refortify it later.”

“That sounds unsanitary.”

“Turtles lose limbs in the wild all the time. What do you think happens then? They heal and move on. They don’t have us to take care of them all.”

“I guess...”

“Put it back on the rock. It’ll heal,” he said.

I took my shoes off, walked into the pond, and put the turtle on the rock at its center.

Using its only good leg, the turtle made its way down the rock and back into the water. I watched it plunge face first into the familiar green muck. It paddled forward slowly, falling down a little each time it made a stride forward. It came closer and closer to the bottom of the pond with each stroke.

I realized that there was no way for it to pull itself back onto the rock because it had no legs to pull itself forward. The turtle would hopelessly paddle in circles forever until its tiny organic engine burnt out and left it stranded at the bottom of the pond’s stomach.

I jumped into the pond again. Water splashed higher up my pant legs.

“I can’t do it, Dad. I can’t leave it there.”

My dad looked at me as I grabbed the turtle from the pond.

I held it in both hands. “I’m sorry, Dad. It’s just—”

“—Do what you’ve gotta.”

Entry Sixteen: I was at the bottom of the ocean. There were rocks lining each side of me. They made frames like windows almost. There were hundreds of other people there too, walking at the bottom of the ocean. We had no facemasks. We had no oxygen. Only after waking later would I realize that we had been living breathless.

Half of a starfish floated from behind one of the frames. It floated in front of me and I noticed that its stomach—that its entire inside—was completely hollow. Despite its lack of substance it swam, alive and well, past me and then past some others. Sharks swam overhead, but they were halved too. I realized that all the sea-life was cut in half and entirely hollow. And though the sight should have been startling, it wasn't. Each half-creature flourished with the life of one that was full. And each creature's exposed and empty inside gave off a different shade of a different color. The colors pushed against each other in the water as the creatures swam. The sight was consuming and beautiful—close to dropping different shades of food coloring in the clearest, purest bath.

“Good job,” one of the people walking by me said.

“This is really something!”

“I can't believe you actually did it.”

I sat down with crossed legs at the bottom of the ocean floor. The colors swirled in a torrent around me, and the people slowly began to leave the scene. They walked far off beyond the frames and rock windows.

The people left and the light that had seeped through the ocean surface began to fade. Slowly the colorful scene blackened, and the halved fish and sea-creatures disappeared beyond the darkening water. But I stayed—with pressure in my ears—I stayed in the swelling darkness.

I ran the turtle under a light stream of cold water. The dirt washed from its shell. I did my best to avoid eye contact. It hurt to look it in the face. I couldn't fathom the pain of having my limbs chomped and torn from me. I had no idea what sort of psychological trauma the turtle may have experienced. I knew that dog's could suffer from OCD and anxiety. Maybe the turtle had PTSD. Or maybe it was in so much pain that it couldn't even think. Maybe it had been trying to kill itself at the bottom of the pond...

What if I had stopped it from quietly drifting to darkness? What if I had shaken it from the brink of death only to bring it into the house to suffer in an old blue popcorn

bowl?

Regardless of what I did or didn't know, I realized that the turtle had become my responsibility. I sat at my dying Dell desktop and I put my fingers to the keyboard:

"Can turtles live without limbs?"

"How many legs can a turtle lose before it dies?"

"How to suture a turtle's wounds..."

I searched for twenty minutes with the turtle sitting beside me in the blue bowl that rose wide and tall around it. Again I wondered how much pain it was in.

"How can you tell if a turtle is in pain?"

I found a bunk thread on some animal lover's blog. I quickly skimmed the page and found a link to another site. The second site seemed legitimate. It had pictures of limbless turtles swimming in the water, diagrams showing how to sew up a turtle's wounds, and pictures of turtles in little wheel chairs.

"There's hope," I said to the turtle.

I read on and it said something about how I'd never know how much pain the turtle was in—because although it seemed fine, it was likely in unbearable pain. It said that after accounting for infection and blood loss, the turtle's chances of living were slim unless I took it to a veterinarian...

"How much does turtle surgery cost?"

I didn't make those numbers after two paychecks.

I looked down at the turtle and it looked up at me and I imagined something ripping my arm from my body.

I got off the train at Union Station. I made my way down stairs to the bottom of the station, to the Metro Red Line. There I crouched down by a large pillar whose ends met both the ground and the ceiling. I leaned against the pillar and I continued to read Dante:

"...so my mind, which still was fleeing, turned back to see the pass that no one ever left alive."

I looked up because I thought I heard breathing, heavy, above me. I slowly turned my head to the right and saw the leg of a man in gray sweatpants standing beside me. I looked up and saw white hair and then two beady black eyes staring down at me. The man wore a fraying red sweater, completely filled out by his chest, and he stood erect

with excellent posture. His hands were veiny, and his fingers were woven tightly into fists.

When we made eye contact he laughed to himself and walked forward towards the train.

My throat was dry. I had seen him once before. I thought that he had followed me from the train station once — but then I also thought I could be overreacting, succumbing to irrational paranoia.

The train pulled up and I noticed him waiting by the car in front me. Everyone was boarding and he was waiting with his back turned to me. I walked forward like I was going to board and he looked back and saw me. When I was close to boarding he got into the car and sat down. I jolted away from the front of the train and I jumped in three cars back. I didn't want to leave. I had made an obligation to record that day, and I had already spent an hour and half just getting to Union Station.

I settled in that last train car and let my mind ease. My anxiety and adrenaline fell slowly into themselves and my muscles relaxed once again.

“Thou must take another road,” he answered, when he saw me weeping, ‘if thou desirest to escape from this wild place...’ ”

I looked up from the Inferno when the doors of my train car opened two or three stops later. I had to take this train to the end of the line, so I wasn't worried about missing my stop. Rather, I just wanted to see the people who got on. There was a tall man in a trench coat, a boy with a studded belt, and at least three cyclists. Then there was a man with a red sweater and white hair. He forced himself through the doors and through the people, swinging his head from side to side, scanning the crowd for something. He stood in the center of the car and we made eye contact again. He had been searching the car for me.

I grabbed my work uniform and loaded the turtle and bowl into the passenger seat of my Explorer. We drove down the 210 east until it ended and emptied onto Del Mar. I made a left and then eventually a right down Raymond. The turtle watched me the entire ride. It looked up over the ridge of bowl; I couldn't help but look down to see its face. It was inviting me into its pain.

I parked my blue 1999 Ford Explorer. It was much like the one my parents used

to drive, but this was the only Explorer I knew anymore.

The turtle tried to wiggle forward but its body was too big for its single hind-leg to push.

I got out and went around to the passenger seat.

I picked up the turtle and its bowl. And then I brought us both into the Humane Society's office.

"Hi, can I help you?" the lady behind the counter said.

"Yeah, I don't know if you guys do this sort of thing...but I found this turtle in my yard. I think raccoons ate its legs."

"Are you dropping it off here then?"

"Yeah, well... I want to know what's gonna happen, before I leave it here."

"Well, we can try to operate. But if you relinquish the animal to us, then we have the right to put it down if we can't help it."

"But you might be able to help it?"

"That's always a possibility."

I put the bowl on the counter.

"Alright then."

A man came out of the side room and grabbed the turtle haphazardly as if he was in a hurry. He grabbed the turtle and slid it into a tiny crate.

"That little thing is messed up," he said, before walking out of the room.

"Alright sir, here's the paperwork," the woman said. "Put your number there and we'll call you when we know what's going to happen to the turtle."

They never called me.

Entry Eight: My friends were suddenly faceless gun-toters dressed in black. Nothing was said, but I instinctively knew to run. Luckily this was one of those dreams where my legs didn't give out and my muscles didn't feel like Jell-O. I ran through yards and jumped over fences. The faceless men, like bulls, ran together after me. They tore through hanging laundry and barreled through shapeless suburban backyards.

I shot around a corner and ducked into a random house's open crawl space. I thought for sure they'd run further down whatever alley we were in and miss me.

But there they were: the faceless men crawling under the house.

“Where’d he go?”

“Down here. Down here. Where else?”

“Further down the alley?”

“No. No. No. He’s here.”

I couldn’t make for the crawl space’s opening. It was too far away. I was hidden enough in the corner. They couldn’t see me for the moment, but I knew eventually they’d find me.

I found a rock beside me. I chucked it to draw their attention outside. But I missed the crawl space opening and the rock bounced off the wall. The faceless men all looked at me.

“You’re really something. That was too good.”

I sat up to try and get away from them. The moment my stomach and chest came to light, the faceless men laid into me. I remember the dream feeling of bullet’s entering and exiting—filling me with substance and then retreating to the empty space and darkness behind me.

I remember for the first time, the dream feeling of dying. I’d seen God in dreams. I’d seen devils in dreams. But I’d never died in a dream. I fell flat and forward on my face.

The men all shuffled out of the crawl space.

After lying there in my cadaver for a while, I sat up. I sat up and looked down at my stomach and chest. Light exited the wounds the faceless men had left in me. I illuminated the crawl space, the dark underbelly of the house.

Where my dreams normally faded to dark, everything turned to brightness. My dream eyes could see nothing but vague lines and colorless substance. I slowly shook to wakefulness

The red sweater man was banging his fist on the wall of the train, sometimes making stabbing motions in the air with a pen.

I looked down and into the *Inferno*. I thought that maybe it was dream. Maybe it was a nightmare. Maybe if I looked down he would just go away. But he didn’t disappear, because it was all really happening.

He sat on the chair adjacent to me. He stared straight inside me, and he mumbled

profanities under his breath.

The red sweater man had been yelling and punching walls for six stops now. No one did anything. But I didn't do anything either.

The train stopped at the Hollywood/Vine station.

In one motion—one profound collaboration of muscle and willpower—I was out the train door and running up the stairs. I heard him behind me yelling, but I was compelled forward by my fear.

“Where are you going? You have three more stops! Union Station boy—I just wanted to say hello!”

How did he know how many stops I had? Why'd he call me Union Station Boy? I ran out of the Hollywood/Vine station and into the light of the streets of Hollywood, bustling with life and traffic.

His voice billowed behind me. It took on substance and filled the station's stairwell. All the escalators and ticket booths were bathed in his voice.

I ran down the street to an empty parking lot where I found a cop flirting with the parking lot attendant. She let me sit beside her parking booth in a blue collapsible chair while the cop drove around and pretended to look for the red sweater man.

I sat, gripping the *Inferno* in my sweating, shaking hands, and I scanned the streets for the man in his red sweater.

Entry Forty-One: I stood on the beach looking up the side of a cliff. A giant purple octopus sat up and against it. Its tentacles twisted through the sand making paths and mounds.

In this dream I just stood and stared at the octopus. There was no running. There was no pain. Nothing hurt and nothing scared me. I didn't feel the need to look over my shoulder; I knew that there was no one else around.

I just stood and stared up the cliff. I stared up at the octopus. And the light slowly left us as it dipped behind the water.

Cloud of Light

painting by Lily Hinrichsen



Lifeline

painting by Lily Hinrichsen



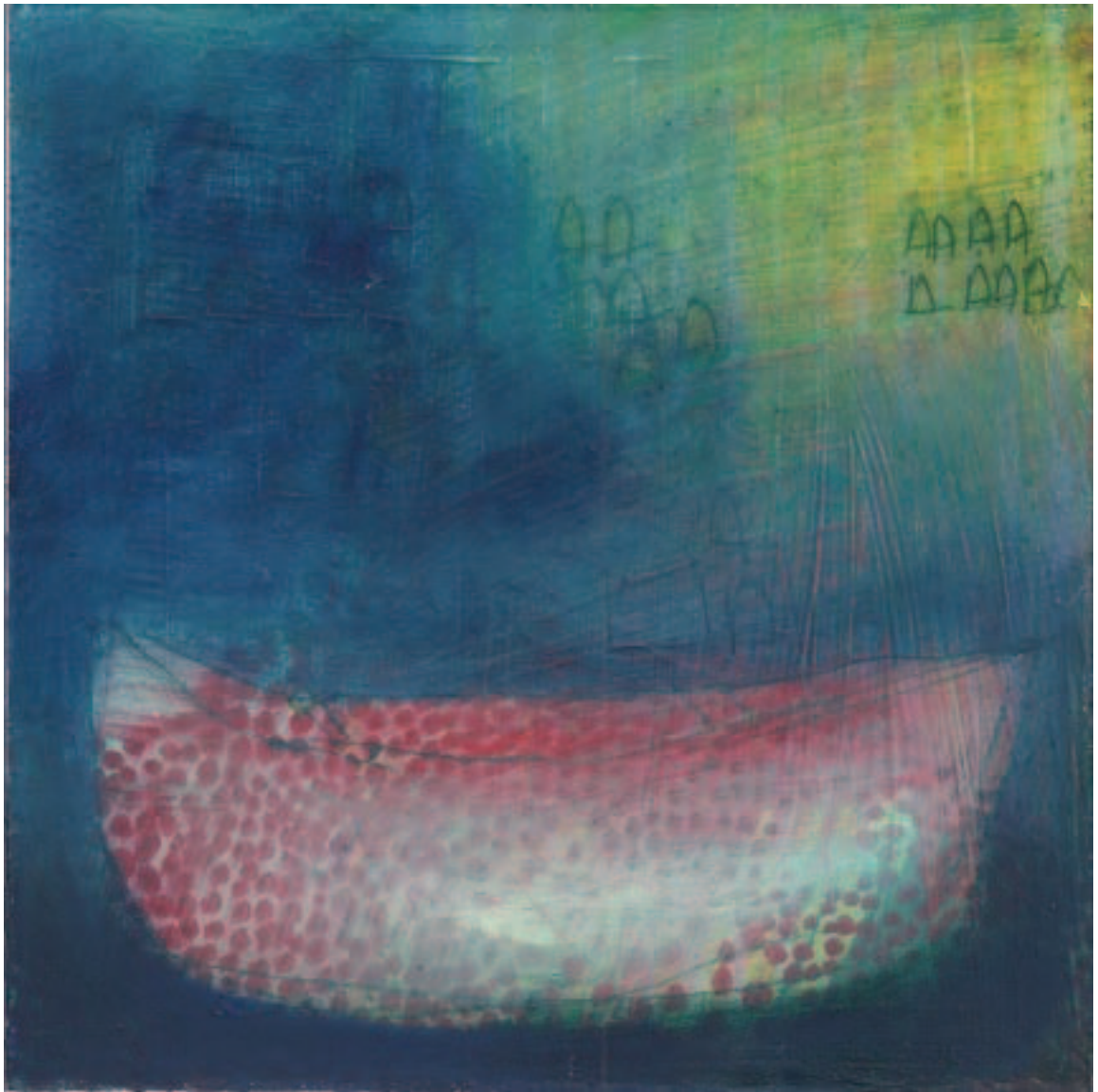
Nothing to Hide

painting by Lily Hinrichsen



Asea

painting by Lily Hinrichsen



Fullness of Life

painting by Lily Hinrichsen



Biographies:

M. R. Baird was raised on the pabulum of the San Francisco Renaissance literary movement. In a style uniquely her own, indelible images form the poetic ground—bare this deeply confessional and evocative work. “Put language down on paper and stone—for stories raise the storm, breath the place of meeting, humanity—drawn and pieced back and forth between the dreamtime and earth to shed the heavy mantle of skin and let the light prove our making.”

Danny P. Barbare has recently appeared in *Doxa*, *Blood and Thunder*, *Dewpoint*, *Friends Journal*, *Rhubarb*, *First Day*, *London Journal of Fiction*, and *Antarctica Journal*. His poetry has won The Jim Gitting’s Award and has been nominated for Best of the Net. He has a small book available through kindle and in print titled *Christmas Poems*.

Katherine Bell lives in Santa Cruz, California with her eleven year old son. She has done Dreamwork for seven years and now has clients of her own. She has a PhD in astrophysics and worked for NASA for eleven years studying the formation of stars and planets. She paints and writes songs about her dreams and hosts a yearly dream retreat in Santa Cruz where she is building up her Dreamwork practice.

Les Bohem was part of the great Los Angeles Music Scare of the 1980s. After his burgeoning career in rock and roll stopped burgeoning, Les found a job writing screenplays about rock and roll musicians whose careers had stopped burgeoning. He’s written some movies and some television, including the miniseries *Taken*, for which he won an Emmy. His short novel, *Flight 505* has just been published by UpperRubberBoot, and his new album, *Moved to Duarte*, will be up and out any minute. He is currently producing his series, *Shut Eye*, for Hulu.

Steven Bucher is a new poet living on a small farm in the Virginia Piedmont. He is an active member of the Poetry Society of Virginia. Steven's poetry has recently been published in the Spring 2015 issue of the *Smoky Blue Literary and Arts Magazine*, the *Artemis Journal*, *Calliope Magazine*, the *Blue Heron Review*, and in the upcoming anthology of northern Virginia poets, *NoVa Bard*, published by Local Gems Press.

Valentina Cano is a student of classical singing who spends whatever free time she has either reading or writing. Her works have appeared in numerous publications and her poetry has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Web. Her debut novel, *The Rose Master*, was published in 2014 and was called a "strong and satisfying effort" by Publishers Weekly.

Michael Cooper is an inland empire poet, PoetrIE member, CSUSB MFA Graduate, Veteran, and parent to two great sons: Markus & Jonathan. More of Cooper's poems can be found in *The Berkeley Review*, *The Portland Review*, *The LA Review*, *H_NGM_N* among other fine publications. Cooper's new book, coauthored with good friend Cindy Rinne, *Speaking Through Sediment*, is now available from ELJ Publications. M. would like to make you aware that the splash zone includes the first 11 rows.

Charles L Crowley IV lives in Pasadena, CA, where he survives both Soledad Flores the curandera and Charles L Crowley I the Arkansan moonshiner. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Pidgeonholes*, *Unbroken Journal*, *Whale Road Review*, *Gravel Magazine*, and more. He also enjoys Godzilla films and comic books.

Matthew Raymond Curiale is a father, husband, educator, poet and freelance journalist living on or in Long Island (depending on whom you ask). His work appears in *The Long Island Quarterly*, *Paumanok*, and *PULSE Magazine*. He is incredibly honored to be anywhere- always. matthewcuriale.com

Diana Decker is a poet whose work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Silver Birch Press*, *Poppy Road Review*, *Verdad Journal of Literature and Art*, *Mothers Always Write*, *The Avocet*, and KY Story's anthology *Getting Old*. Diana writes, sings, and counts the birds on the small farm in Western New York that she shares with her husband. Follow her on Twitter at @diana_decker.

Frances Donovan's work has appeared or is upcoming in such publications as *Marathon Literary Review*, *825 on High*, *Isbka Bibble*, *Oddball Magazine*, *Incessant Pipe*, *Lyrical Somerville*, *PIF Magazine*, *The Writer*, *Chronogram*, and *Gender Focus*. She curated the Poetry@Prose reading series and has appeared as a featured reader at numerous venues in the Northeast. She once drove a bulldozer in a GLBT Pride parade. You can find her climbing hills in Roslindale and online at gardenofwords.com.

John Douglas began looking through the viewfinder more than fifty years ago, making films in Mississippi, and during the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago and then in North Vietnam in 1969 with Newsreel... and the list goes on. He has continued work in film, video, computer modeling and animation, and most recently digital photography. He has struggled to bring the world about us into a clearer focus... trying to expose the social and economic contradictions that plague our lives... perhaps making the choices for change clearer and more pressing. johndouglas.us

Larry Eby is the author of two books of poetry, *Flight of August*, winner of the 2014 Louise Bogan Award from Trio House Press, and *Machinist in the Snow*, ELJ Publications 2015. His work can be found in *Forklift*, *Passages North*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Thrush Poetry Journal*, and others. He is the editor in chief of Orange Monkey Publishing, a poetry press in California.

Lily Hinrichsen makes art and teaches workshops in Bristol, Vermont. Creating things is how she processes her inner and outer movements as she travels through life. She's a keen explorer of the natural world, and wholly dedicated to nurturing her inner world as well. You can learn more about her at: LilyHinrichsen.com

Zebulon Huset has been teaching a community creative writing class in San Diego since receiving his MFA from the University of Washington where he was the coordinating editor of *The Seattle Review*. His writing has recently appeared (or is forthcoming) in *The Southern Review*, *The New York Quarterly*, *The North American Review*, *Harpur Palate*, *Spillway*, *Westview*, *The Cortland Review*, *The Portland Review*, *Bayou*, *Permafrost* and *The Roanoke Review* among others. He was once nominated for a Pushcart Prize and once did not receive the honor. He also publishes a writing prompt blog at <http://www.NotebookingDaily.com> where he posts new writing exercises every day at 12:01am in a variety of categories.

Christina Kionka lives in the upper peninsula of Michigan, south of Lake Superior. She is a retired jack of all trades - forester, artist, elementary teacher, bilingual teacher of the Ojibwe language and culture. The best thing she has ever done is to practice Archetypal Dreamwork.

M P Landis makes visual artifacts that help him understand his life and the worlds around him. His work is often directly inspired by music and collaboration with other visual artists, musicians and poets. Landis lives and works in Portland, Maine, with his wife, their 2 children and a pair of cats.

Barbara A Meier teaches kindergarten at Riley Creek school in Gold Beach, OR. She has poems published in *The Poeming Pigeon*, *Cacti Fur*, *Miller's Pond Journal*, *River Poets Journal*, and *Poetry Pacific*.

A longer version of *No Thing*, written by **Ellen Metrick**, was performed at the May 2015 Telluride Literary Burlesque show in Colorado, where she lives, dreams, relates, writes, teaches. She tries to remember how to play and love. She is always learning.

Uche Ogbuji was born in Calabar, Nigeria. He lived, among other places, in Egypt and England before settling near Boulder. A computer engineer and entrepreneur by trade, his poetry is published worldwide, and his chapbook, *Ndewo, Colorado* won Colorado Book and Westword awards.

Annie Perkins has been writing poems since she was young. She remembers the joy of learning haiku in sixth grade – the structure thrilling in its simplicity - how the words of each of my classmates evoked feeling in her even then. And later – in junior high, the discovery of ballads and sonnets, epics and odes – the pleasure of rhyme and form in her first sonnet – all fueling her deep and life-long affinity for the power of words. These days she writes poems provoked by the images and feelings from her dreams. The powerful play of dark and light in our psyche that challenges us nightly to step into an older, perhaps forgotten but more authentic story of ourselves. Places of love, grief, terror and remembrance. She is an Integrative Dreamwork Practitioner and teacher, writer and art-maker.

Barbara Ruth is a housing justice warrior living in Silicon Valley, a published photographer, poet, memoirist, fiction writer and essayist, a marriage resister in a long-term relationship, and a lesbian everywhere she goes.

W. Jack Savage is a retired broadcaster and educator. He is the author of seven books including *Imagination: The Art of W. Jack Savage*. To date, more than fifty of Jack's short stories and over four-hundred of his paintings and drawings have been published worldwide. Jack and his wife Kathy live in Monrovia, California. wjacksavage.com

Whitney G. Schultz completed her MFA at UNC-Greensboro, and she now lives in and teaches literature and creative writing outside of Baltimore. Her poetry and flash fiction has appeared or is forthcoming in *End of 85*, *Bluestem Magazine*, *One for One Thousand*, and *The Light Ekphrastic*, among others.

Laura Smith is a Archetypal Dreamwork Practitioner in private practice. She paints the images of her dreams as part of a dialogue with the dream-soul, to explore the beauty, harmony and dissonance of the personal and the collective. Her work has been published in several literary and arts publications and on-line galleries including *Still Point Arts Quarterly*, *Collective Magazine* and *The Light Ekphrastic*. archetypaldreamworks.com

Wes Solether teaches English and lives in the Midwest. He runs Bitterzoet Magazine and Press with his co-editor. Wes has been most recently published in *Samizdat Literary Journal*, *Meat For Tea: The Valley Review*, and *Ossuary Whispers*.

Christopher Woods is a writer, teacher and photographer who lives in Houston and Chappell Hill, Texas. He has published a novel *The Dream Patch*, a prose collection, *Under a Riverbed Sky*, and a book of stage monologues for actors, *Heart Speak*. His work has appeared in *The Southern Review*, *New England Review*, *New Orleans Review*, *Columbia* and *Glimmer Train*, among others. His photographs can be seen in his gallery christopherwoods.zenfolio.com/ He is currently compiling a book of photography prompts for writers, *From Vision To Text*.

