

DELUGE JOURNAL

ISSUE: FALL 2018

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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.

Cover Art: Cloud Gods by Rhett Pritchard

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CONTENTS

- 9 From the Editors: Sue Scavo & Karla Van Vliet
- 11 Darren Demaree
Poem for Katie, Queen of Ohio #76 - poetry
Poem for Katie, Queen of Ohio #77 - poetry
- 13 Kelly DuMar
Charles River April Morning - visual art
Black River Fog - visual art
- 15 Aimee Lowenstern
Night Soak - poetry
- 16 Okeke Onyedika
Little Things - poetry
- 17 R. J. Keeler
Carthage, a Salted Plain - poetry
- 18 Kateryna Bortsova
Ultramarine - visual art
- 19 Kelli Tompkins
A Deer, a Hawk, a Snake in Nidra - poetry
- 21 Ksenia Panova
I Remember How We Spent
Yesterday In the Country - creative nonfiction
- 23 Nina Wilson
Girl on the Road - visual art
- 24 Brook J. Sadler
A Door - poetry
- 25 Sheila Black
We Begin with a Map of the Body in Motion - poetry
- 26 Wendy Spacek
Freshet - poetry
Swiftlet - poetry
- 28 Ashley Geiger
When Orchids Dream - visual art
- 29 Karalynn Moran
Lucidity - creative nonfiction
- 32 Caroline Shea
Her - poetry
- 33 Dana Sonnenschein
Tiger Sutra - poetry

- 34 Marieken Cochius
Icon - visual art
- 35 Simon Anton Nino Diego Baena
Gurs Camp - poetry
- 36 Wyatt Welch
Cartographies, HIV - poetry
- 39 Jonathan Endurance
The apparition - poetry
- 40 Rhett Pritchard
Neon Jesus - visual art
Cloud Gods - visual art
The Depths Below - visual art
- 43 Jolie B. Kaytes
In Garden I Alight - creative nonfiction
- 45 Ann Huang
Sparse - poetry
- 46 Michelle Brooks
Name Withheld Upon Request - poetry
- 47 Maggie Martin
Delaware Water Gap - poetry
- 48 Martha Nance
Darkness Intrudes on a Pleasant Dream - visual art
- 49 Dan Glover
Lunatic - cross-genre
- 52 Leslie McGriff
Day/Break - poetry
- 53 John Chavers
Driftwood Study No. 10 - visual art
Stone Walk Mosaic No. 2 - visual art
- 55 Claire Lobenfeld
Consolation Prize - fiction
- 57 Kasey Perkins
The Dead Room - poetry
- 59 Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer
A Case for Quietude - poetry
- 60 Lucas Hargis
Texture 15 - visual art
- 61 Mary Elder Jacobsen
Sleepwalker - poetry

- 62 John Penola
Like Tea Steam - poetry
- 63 Bella Pori
Conflict of Interest - poetry
- 64 John Mancini
Drawing - visual art
- 65 Heidi A. Howell
holding - poetry
- 66 Nolan Meditz
Waking Cantos - poetry
- 68 Kenneth Pobo
Three Tanka -poetry
- 69 Emma Sywyj
Barber's Roll, China
- 70 Bios

FROM THE EDITOR 2018

Editor: Sue Scavo

After and Before

Fold it in softly, a turning over and into, slow and steady, then turn and fold again, the one into the many, the one into the mixed and sifted and ground and chopped and blended, fold again the textures a swirl into not one or the other, turn again and again, turn and fold so delicately, so softly, turn and turn again, so you do not realize, so you do not guess. The light.

Editor: Karla Van Vliet

To Carry Drought

All summer I dreamt of rain. Rain like birds roosting on the roof, rain like apples dropping from trees, once, rain like forgiveness spilling over my open palm.

Mornings I stood looking into a sky that would not speak in the language of rain. Sigh, oh psalm, oh cerulean blue, such stillness.

The earth parched, so thirsty, the river bed gone dry. My own mouth dry, too. No song. Only the rustle of leaf litter.

To carry drought like an argument, like a cut out tongue, a kept secret. Come back, I scratched into the hard ground, it was I who always loved you.

In my dream, the air shifted, turned cool, carried the scent of dirt, fresh and strong. We stood on a bridge, you placed your forehead against mine. And the rain wet us through to skin.

Poem for Katie, Queen of Ohio #76

poetry by Darren Demaree

I know there is poetry
in the woods

behind our house
& I know Ohio

needs as much poetry
as it can get,

but more than that
Ohio needs poetry to be

wielded like a weapon.
We need beauty

or we need the new
blood to rise up.

Poem for Katie, Queen of Ohio #77

poetry by Darren Demaree

There are so many
easy-hearted

men in Ohio
& all of them

(including me)
are too fucking weak

to assert
that we have a soul

worth saving. There
are so many gods

here. We are
as useless as them.

Charles River April Morning

visual art by Kelly DuMar



Black River Fog

visual art by Kelly DuMar



Night Soak

poetry by Aimee Lowenstern

Strange night. Wind teaching you to whistle night. Cut me a chunk of that darkness night. Digging around in the freezer. You have never been more aware of your toes, fat and cooling on the bone. Your mouth is softer than anything in the world. Your breath floats like cotton seeds. The night is slipping through all the cracks in you. You can't see anything but you spent centuries seeing nothing at all. The night knows you. Strange night not a stranger. You are a glacier powdered with snow. You float.

Little Things

poetry by Okeke Onyedika

The boy prays with his heart clinging onto heavenly bodies
and his father's roof paints him blood and water,
there are times we sit on the arms of night to question the roots of God;
the number of times it takes to build up a shattered home.

How long will a body die to accept a new life?

He finds home at the darkest part of his skin
where he gave life to broken limbs.
I walk past the riverward with his heart sprawled on my palms
to show apology, and my legs become the greatest invention
that draws a shadow near the map where life and death and afterlife
struggle for existence,
where a man returns drunk to say, unto this sprayed rock my eyes will fall.

This is how we became sinners:

- i. We became lovers at the sight of the world
and read the history of stars: a man loses the shape of God.
- ii. Last night we opened our heart to see God through the lights
we stole from the sun and the moon painted our skin the
colour of love and pain.
- iii. We allowed our shadow to run faster than our mind.

The boy opens his eyes and his body becomes incomplete like his father's house.

Carthage, a Salted Plain

poetry by R. J. Keeler

When he came out of me, he took most of my heart.
Fresh, he tore it loose from its mooring.
His broadside cannonade in flight formed
Cupid's harpoon.
Rammed it into my belly.
Drew me gently back alongside.
Stripped away my innocence in layered spirals.
His dreams bloodied my pelt.

I recall now my sister's oldest name.

When Orchids Dream (from the series)

visual art by Ashley Geiger



A Deer, a Hawk, a Snake in Nidra

poetry by Kelli Tompkins

A self in the garden, pressed by heat. All I can think is how full my bladder is. Keep walking. Stay in the sun. Move to the shade. Roll over. Pull over. Stop here. I wish it would quit. In the desert is a garden. In the garden is a wake. Then a birth. Think of the bees, nestled amongst the blooms of flowers. I see you there. Find me there. Strawberries, toads, a river runs wild. Sunflowers and cotton stuck in my hair. I am free and full of love. It is hot but the sun is the birth of the life of force of starting what's good and bright and new. My yellow sun, scorched up dad, solar flares distorting space and flipping magnets. Make way for aliens. I welcome you. I find you here. My heart is full of love, drink this water, it's cold, crisp, clear. *We are in the gold room, in the garden, where everyone gets what they want.* The truth is we can't find ourselves long enough to recognize the pull of a want, desire's tiny tug on the hem of our worn blouse. The itch on my skin reminds me I'm alive, the discomfort of this earth-body sack of skin. I pale myself and hurt myself and think of times and things I've used to harm my body, the weight of my back, of past experiences, my belly, the veil over my eyes, the wet wool scratches my skin and mildews through any present good health. I cleanse myself in salt and maté, the rich green tea of earth swallows me. If I could bleed out memories that still linger, I would. Don't lose self in the valley of shadows, tribute to times lost with the boy with black eyes, his next great American novel, fighting the battle between pain and nihilism and wanting to hear. Nihilism and pain won. How much we miss when we move on. We lost Pluto, but gained missions to Mars and close-up shots of Jupiter from Juno. Are there messengers to come to light? I think of all who've

passed, my family and grandparents and mother. Who helps
and who hurts. A forced family to heal from and contend
with. Let me let go, let me move on. *I am loved, I am love. I am
holy, I am whole.*

I Remember How We Spent Yesterday In the Country

creative nonfiction by Ksenia Panova

The morning is made because my brother eats too fast and chokes, spraying gold flakes from his mouth and nose; this multiplies the light and I rub my eyes to make sure that I've seen correctly. Cream trickles into my tea and lace, entire nebulae, a mushroom cloud unfurls.

• • •

My brother, sick from apple-picking, swells and pukes a golden, red delicious, crab and Granny Smith assortment of pastels between the trees. He wipes away the drab saliva from his chin and drops his cap as he runs off due south. There, over-ripe strawberries we neglected in the pasture were collapsing in a recipe for jam (our grandmother is not the type to waste a thing). There's the stereotype of Father swaying like a sprig of thyme, watching her crush dirty sugar and tip the shimmers into the pot. A tree-climb away, a cousin shouts I am sublime and stomps all god-like above our heads, performing Genesis through pantomime. He's knocking down hard summer pears (the reds still haven't started to creep in) and spreads his fingers like he's throwing stars and dreads his coming down. My aunt stops making tea and yells. She's brandishing the patchy heads of half-consumed sunflowers at the tree while Mother sits, a little sad to be so colorfully dressed. My baby gums aren't doing much, just moistening debris and granddad sits with his guitar and strums a wartime song and no one smiles or hums. My brother is a prince, a teacup on his head (a cloisonne crown), a scepter spoon and stolen sugar cubes tucked in his cheeks: he sucks the treasure, lords at all the birds, and thinks he sees a face made out of leaves that blinked its gooseberries at him.

• • •

A cup was smashed, a snarl from father, the window's splattered with the oats brother had been holding in his mouth for the last half hour. The cream in my tea rests, integrated, and is no longer unfurling.

And I remember yesterday in the country, the way my brother's fingers danced in front of his nose as he tried to organize the collection of lilac, bread, and river smells which have become tangled during the day; and I remember how he rubbed his ears with his palms to slow down the world of beating bird wings and hard metal chirping and chinking of the tiny ripples in the river down the road, and I remember how he tugged at his curls to distract from the concentrated dapples of heat the leaves sifted through onto his bare back, the glowing bug bites. And I remember the handfuls of strawberries my brother threw at our outhouse to watch them explode while he screamed and screamed and screamed.

Girl on the Road

visual art by Nina Wilson



A Door

poetry by Brook J. Sadler

And there appeared suddenly a door, here,
in the middle of my sonnet. It shut
unexpectedly, before the seer
could begin to see. Behind it lay what
lies behind everything: possibility.
Imagine! Imagine you are locked out.
Light from the keyhole, but you have no key.
You stagger, roaming the great rooms of doubt.
The mind wanders its labyrinthine halls
searching for the locksmith or architect—
where is she? The wordless voice calls and calls.
An echo, a shape you vaguely detect.
Vowels and half-formed words clamber about.
Against the silence, you begin to shout.

We Begin with a Map of the Body in Motion

poetry by Sheila Black

I can picture it sometimes, like a hollow in the skin where an infection has been. And the titanium tool used to dig it out. The pins bored through the bones and the traces of skin or blood or pus left in the cast when it was sawed off. Hard to feel a pretty girl when day after day they mocked you or walked like you or walked after you in order to laugh. Writing it out like this feels too raw, but also as close as I can get to fact: the cruelty of other people when faced with a body like mine. Odd sights or smells bring that season back-- peeling paint on a dented metal slide, ruts in the earth worn smooth by feet under swings, chains slipping past each other like silk or skin, crushed-foil-shine of a soda can discarded on a sun-hot curb. When I was young, I grew obsessed with where my body ended the world began. I loved best the green things—up in the fork of a tree with leaves that pattered against my face like rain. Now, in middle age with flesh stretched or sagged I think “I was beautiful.” This shocks me, and I don’t believe it, but why not, or why so hard to love the only skin you will ever breathe in? I carry that hollow space—that cut away or injured piece. It shapes itself like a bud inside me—sepal, fringed like daffodil, a deep bell with gold stamens inside, the scarlet-thinned poppies like a paper I might crush and put in my mouth. Such arcane rituals in order to recover whatever a body knows when it feels whole.

Freshet

poetry by Wendy Spacek

When the water came, I was standing
at the window. It was hardly dark,

I was tired. From behind the house,
a rushing, and where the cinderblock

met the bull thistle, little rivulets lapped.
Then faster, these small streams,

steadily carving the dirt.
Then the scream of the trees.

Swiftlet

poetry by Wendy Spacek

Swaddle me in spit. We taste each other.
You dip your egg-tooth. Chip with your white spike.
Your mouth is not for spooning but your bristled beak
traps drops you lap with your boned tongue. I watch
you flit about the kitchen while I fuss with dashes
to slake the broth. Find a chasm. A narrow shaft
where my blood pumps, where you roost and wail.

Ultramarine

visual art by Kateryna Bortsova



Lucidity

creative nonfiction by Karalynn Moran

I.

Buckling metal, yellow funeral lights and cracked mortician's makeup on the body that was now just a body—oh no. I'm not remembering right. Try again.

Wooden dance floor, scuffed Converse shoes and dusty cowboy boots. Sweating hands and warm bodies and dancing, rough fingertips tracing the curves of hips. Crumpled notes on lined paper—he had beautifully irregular handwriting—and the glare of the sun beating down on the high school's athletic fields as I watched, as he watched, the way our bodies grew closer under brilliant blue skies. And I will keep trying, keep going back to the beginning.

I fell in love with a boy who disappeared in the fall. I was sixteen, and the fracture went something like this, with fog that clung to winding backroads and splintering wood, metal folding like aluminum. The truck on the road one second, the next moment veering off the pavement, the tires overcorrecting, rubber crossing road and double yellow lines, roaring over the embankment and into the fence, slamming into the tree, flipping, flipping over, the top crushing, crumpling like a soda can. A classmate heard the boom around six in the morning, and she ran out from her home, still in her pajamas.

She told me how she knelt down on the wet grass and heard him breathing, how she heard his last breath, told me, it sounded like a balloon deflating.

II.

—three months *after*, sitting in the passenger side of my ma's blue car, an entire Styrofoam cup of gas station hot chocolate slipping from my hand, falling to blue jeans and soaking through the fabric, singeing pale winter skin. The dumb look on my face, *oh god, you didn't really feel that, did you?* My father goes inside to fetch napkins while I sit, watching warm, dark circles spread across my thighs. A voice, a frowning face, one of my friend's

mothers, is now kneeling down into the car, studying the dripping drops that fall off slush-colored shoes, and says, *You have to pull yourself together*—

III.

—sometimes, I think the dead can return. It happens in moments, little bends of thought and reality. It passes, and I go back to those tasks, focusing on my breathing, avoiding eye contact, concealing my shaking hands. But still I think.

I believe that they can come back: that if I sacrifice my future to god, to the devil, to whichever deity responsible for my current position, that if I plead long enough, then the dead will come back. When that fails, I hear a theory (an idea, a far-reaching hope) that the people in our dreams are living bodies in other worlds, unfathomable realms. Crazy, right?

That's what I feel lately, that fuzziness in my head and hurt in my heart. I cling to anything. My ma tells me that the recently dead visit the strong ones in their dreams to say goodbye, and I go aha! That happened! The night he was killed he met me, and we hugged, and he said he had to go now, and I begged him to stay and I woke up. And the next night it happened again, but this time he had broken a rule, and then, I hadn't seen him in dreams since. I can't feel him anymore.

I train myself to lucid dream, to know I am dreaming when I am unconscious. Three months of adjusting sleep patterns and strengthening my memory skills by writing them down every morning, I have a breakthrough, but I still fuck it up.

In this dream I am angry; a girl from high school has thrown ketchup at me, and I am trying to hit her, but the blows are like hitting a pillow, slowly. I become so angry that I tell myself, *goddamn, I hate these dreams because I can't punch anyone*, and then aha! I understand the gravity of my surroundings, and suddenly, I am pummeling the girl who threw ketchup on my shirt. I fall away from this episode happy, completely forgetting why I wanted to control my dreams in the first place.

When I dream again, another sleep cycle in the same night, I can feel the barren ground beneath my feet and the sun on my face. But I do not know I am dreaming. This time, he has come back for a day, and I must wait my turn as he visits other loved ones in their dreams. My time comes and passes; he does not return. When he does pull up in the blue Dodge he died in, he is ignoring me. I tell him, "Stop doing that. It's not working." He

looks sad, nods his head. He knows, and I love him for trying. He opens the door and I hop in, and I ride the rest of the dream, feeling my hands intertwined in his.

I wake at five in the morning, three months after the accident. I don't lucid dream anymore.

IV.

Fracture, the rupture of brain and membrane, the state of being broken, that hazy sort of consciousness where you know *something* is happening, *something* big cannot be repaired, cannot be reversed, will not be the same. The fracture looks like a girl with chipped neon-green fingernail polish in dusty funeral black, looks like a boy's coffin in October. Right about now, she still thinks the connection between her and her lover's body is not, could not possibly be severed, that the silver ring given to her by a grieving mother, and her tarnished mood ring (she had nothing else to give) slipped on his left little finger, the deep violet color indicating cold exterior skin, the crystals projecting another meaning entirely, one of love and heat and the body sensuous, can and will transcend that irreparable gulf between aching, living body and battered, dead body under the ground.

V.

The fracture looks like you, feels like the disparity between before, after, the black hole that is *and*.

Her after Kiki Smith

poetry by Caroline Shea

you will know me
a fuzzed tongue by this nakedness dun brushing against breast
a reed bowed by wind will pacify itself her neck bending back
and why & who will be blamed, later
hunger me mother me suckle and bite
milk-warm and sour in the cheek
as mid-morning sex listen the light leaks
from me yes something like
a confession
wanted for a moment to crawl inside her pelt
to re-womb to be a soft wild thing again
instead an offering is this what you wanted
the two of us entombed by desire her neck snapped
a struck match
when you see the creature wearing your old skin
you will know her

Tiger Sutra

poetry by Dana Sonnenschein

Open for a final kiss, the coffin drifts and rises from the pallbearers' hands—
and despite her father's grief, eyes clouded, the maiden floats out of his reach.

Miaow, miaow, a striped cat cries over an empty rice bowl, and the monk
strokes his ginger back, stares out over the fields, and sighs, caught between earth
and heaven. *Miaow miaow*, Tiger cries, and the monk looks up—across the road, a
coffin hovers, trailing cirrus shroud, a delicate hand caught between heaven and earth.

Ears pricked, the cat disappears among rustling grasses.

The monk stands, sleeves flapping, and chants, *Here, Tiger, here.*

Sleek and streaked and clawed, caught between earth and heaven, a tiger
watches over him. The soft paws of the wind set the girl's body at his feet.

Icon

visual art by Marieken Cochius



Gurs Camp

poetry by Simon Anton Nino Diego Baena

the lamp burns in the distance

but no Achilles
nor his black clad myrmidons

I see only a plain man
burying his dead

out in the open
the rain falling
where he is kneeling

the man is a house
no one enters a door
no one opens

the man always remembers the light
before that fall
but his memory —

here each stone/slab protruding
a reminder

of every fear
when the sky remains

a barbwire

that crow

Cartographies, HIV

Poetry by Wyatt Welch

I

Rainclouds,

come from California shallow ones, a feminist in my thirties
that's a lot of misfortune today, I want to be younger in this poem.

He buys a house with a hot tub, installs a

satellite TV

I kiss his face, kiss his

Do what I feel is right? Another time a little more my voice

says Lauren's

high-heel strap cuts

so grown up in her black dress but the black

to walk stairs

into her foot and it hurts

she says.

For years I

didn't tell anyone or him.

One night that fear woke me from the other side of the house,

I seen it "in the room" with us,

upright sitting a mass on the white ottoman

my mind wild with seeing it: :dark laceration, presenceless

looking back.

The next day,

there's talk of going to Washington,

his mom has cancer bottom left lung

& her trachea in a place they can't operate.

II

You're positive: :I'
m negative

I stand up in midsentence when we fuck we no longer fuck, we're contemporary.

I am not where I speak, I'm
at the openings, I don't tell you
what future I really see us having the future
is just like a memory, so what will I mean by that?

I'm the upturned boards of a childhood house.

I'm five in the Florida house,

refused to leave it after we left,
they left I'm the yard picking white jasmines
talk to no one I don't
talk for a couple years colossal
tangerine tree check it for tarantulas build a fort
in sawgrass, "no
I'm the mommy here
play with stones they're babies boys
play with stones like these each
stone's a shape on the continuum every shape of stone
hurts every shape of a boy hurts, too."

I didn't know I would be
alone, telepathically

venomous, shapeless the monitor: *pink grapefruit on a nightstand*.

Your friend Emily doesn't drink cocktails in her cocktail dress.

Our baby,
our extraordinary child,

"You,
look distant,

"Is some kind of apology? Where do you think I'm sleeping?
"I want to be a good person." I say, speaking language.

"I'm afraid I'll still love you when you're dying."

III

HIV,

is our future, is our when.

When is your eyes
confessions and ending
where love turns to look you in the

distance,

blue spectrum, blood of yes, that's what I mean.

Do you like roses? You do. My favorite is tiger lilies, and you remembered, I turn

to hold you like glass.

I dress nice our last night.

The Apparition

poetry by Jonathan Endurance

In the dream my body is a small castle
with doors and windows holding bullet holes.
I learn to pull up
a small flame as it dances
into a butterfly along the rooms
and it feels like the fire is burning
my wrist into ash.

My head is a cloud of thunder.
I feel the waves pulling up the veins
and it feels like God is dragging
my soul out of the garden of existence.

My body wakes in an old orchard garden
filled with withered flowers
and the ghost of my dead father just stood afar
with hands of reception.

Neon Jesus

visual art by Rhett Pritchard



Cloud Gods

visual art by Rhett Pritchard



The Depths Below

visual art by Rhett Pritchard



In Garden I Alight

creative nonfiction by Jolie B. Kaytes

It is dark.

The air is thick with the perfume of night blooming jessamine – a shrub of the tomato family whose demure, beige blossom emits an immodest scent, suggestive of lemons, clove and rose. My mother considers this plant among the prized specimens of her garden. She leads me to it before she goes to sleep. She tells me about the caterpillar invasion and her “I just clip ‘em” retaliation tactics. We talk about tomorrow, the next defense strategy, the weather, the beach. We stand outside together for a few minutes and then she goes in without me.

Moon hangs overhead. A great blue heron cries flying across the pond, the water hazard at the seventeenth tee of the golf course. My mother’s one story, aqua-green house, with pool and screen enclosure is behind me and I know a rose garden is to my left. To my right an array of plants – bottle palm, nora grant ixora, ylang ylang, brugmancia, carambola, frangipani, cocoaplum, coffee – trace the property line to Banyan Boulevard. I am barefoot on the not yet wet grass and face the empty hills of the seventeenth tee. The view is wide open, but I can’t see.

It is dark.

I am in my mother’s garden. Shadows dart about her uneven turf. I follow them to the beginnings of a banana grove. The patchy lawn network, which warrants a “paa!” from my mother, is an occasional source of stress for her. Her bananas, broad leafed and fertile, repeatedly delight.

My mother writes legislation for the city of Miami, Florida. She puts law in order with words. In the garden though, my mother is irreverent about formalities. Together we invent names for tropical transplants – the “Tahitian marshmallow” for the tree that persistently puts out sweet, white, tubular puffs, the “Hawaiian magnolia” for the full foliated, slender petaled, flowering specimen that is reminiscent of the Southern favorite. The garden itself is ongoing. However, it is not clear to me where it is going. My mother constantly tinkers and the garden will never be finished. It recently expanded into her

neighbor's property as a vegetable patch. The garden is all that circles her house. It literally goes around. My mother does not sit still and watch the garden orbit, though. She circles with it, and against it.

I circle through it, visiting a week in the winter, a week in the summer. Yet, in a sense I live and travel always in my mother's garden. Here I find the origins of my plant penchant and sources to renew it. Here I find my mother, casual, determined, and amused. My mother's garden is my background and foreground. Simultaneously it remains a familiar mystery. The young mango tree might fruit. The impatiens could take. The mail order datura may bloom white. Clouds unpredictably blacken sky, day is night.

It is dark.

I chase the cinnamon-vanilla bouquet of the tea olive bush through the roses, beneath the old honey-bell orange tree. I stop in an unlit thicket and listen. The rustle of a coconut palm spreads across ears, eyes, mouth, nose, cheek, chin, elastic skin, my mother's garden, a body of experience.

In my mother's garden, I look for ghosts. My pursuit is spurred by shivers, sounds, and ongoing curiosity for what hovers; a breeze that brings the pond to a shimmy, the coot's delirious toot, the automatic sprinkler whacking the foliage to a crack, treetops' shifting silhouettes. I inspect the avocado tree, amongst the grapefruits and anthuriums, around the tangle of spiderwort. The ghosts I look for are not disgruntled spirits, though. They are after effects, traces, like echoes diffusing or trails of color inside closed eyes, seeding and blooming.

I climb my mother's banyan tree, a relative to the ficus, and I am enclosed by an expanse of sinewy branches that spread across midnight sky *and* across damp earth. At fifty feet tall, the banyan is approaching its peak height. Its ten foot diameter however, progresses out and out, the outcome of what are called adventitious roots. These adventitious roots emerge from the higher limbs and grow down to create braided tangles that enlarge the trunk's girth. They ultimately stretch into the soil's depths, ground the tree, and carry me.

Sparse

poetry by Ann Huang

Translucent. Linen: full, empty. While through your moon shone; your moon-star sparkled. A life span. Going forward. Around the clock. We are loved. Plus, we are satisfied.

Virgin oil to spread over the griller. Most times one love, you know! A door. Shadow. Monotony. Linen: racing, That, neither, ought to be done with.

Name Withheld Upon Request

poetry by Michelle Brooks

The moon, a fingernail of light tonight,
appears, and I return home late. I don't
have anywhere else to be, and you don't
have anywhere else to go. I unpack groceries,
stuffing the plastic bag into a drawer
with other plastic bags. "We should throw
these out," I say. "We're never going to use
them." You agree, but your heart isn't in it.
I should know. You like to keep everything.

Delaware Water Gap

poetry by Maggie Martin

Tendrils of longing, like morning mist,
Rise up out of the Water Gap
Ride on wings of hawks
To find me
No matter how far they must go.

I can taste this longing.
It isn't sweet.
It comes in waves.

I was born thousands of years
Before the cleft was created.
Before water wore away the mountain of stone.

The mountain speaks to me.
I yearn, it tells me. Breathe.
When I exhale, breathe me in.

When I die, will my spirit return
To the mountain of my people?
Then will the longing release me?
Then will I feel at home?

Darkness Intrudes on a Pleasant Dream

visual art by Martha Nance



Lunatic

cross-genre by Dan Glover

“You know... the Lord loves a lunatic.”

Most times Mae was looking my way whenever she hollered this, slowly shaking her head over something stupid I'd done, said. Fact was, I never thought of myself as such, but it is true how I could understand her doing so. After all, Mae probably knew me better than I did. I think, more though, it was the family from which I sprang that lent a sort of lunatic fringe feeling to those who were unfortunate enough to meet me over the years, lucky enough to survive the onslaught.

“How you know?” I asked her once. “You're an atheist.”

Some things you can't help. Like being born. Others you got a choice to consider, like believing in the Lord. Or not. And I guess to my way of thinking, the one's related to the other, especially if you take into account the cadence of happenings in the life you lead, because then right soon you might see the cascade of interconnections quick as the crack of a bullwhip. Of course that don't mean we all do.

“Ain't nobody throwing dirt on me yet, Clyde Thomas.”

I started to say what the hell does that even mean, Mae, but then I remembered she'd been reading Vonnegut again, the old billy goat's foxhole argument. As per normal, Mae was running two steps ahead of me laughing and dancing as she turned to look back, me hoping she didn't run into a tree. Still you gotta admit a girl like Mae understood the truth of things I never would, couldn't say how, though. At least she wouldn't whenever I asked. Just sort of tilted that pretty blonde head of hers, smiled at me, turned and walked away while singing snatches of some little ditty I'd heard but couldn't place.

Sometimes I live in the country.

Sometimes I live in the town;

Sometimes I get a great notion

To jump into the ocean...an drown.

It looks metallic when you first sight it from a distance, like a great shiny aluminum bowl turned upside down. Moving closer it takes on an organic texture, a living thing, like that world-encompassing ocean on Solaris, alive, sentient, beneficent, yet without purpose, at least none any human being like me could ever suss.

We walk the pounding surf as Mae searches for petrified shark teeth, while I

consider the depth of the waves, how far out I'd have to swim before I lacked the strength to make it back to shore, how deep to dive, how if that first good deep breath of water might choke or if it might instead feel as though I finally made it home again.

It is late November warm, we are alone. South I see high-rises sprouting out of the beach like someone planted rows of concrete shell seeds in the fallow sand then doused them with people now huddling behind glass and stone and aluminum waiting out the storm. To the north runs a long naked stretch of nothingness interspersed with orphaned homes, lights scattered about here and there, misthrown dice, like children playing closer to the water than seems safe but having no one who cares enough to call out, to warn them back.

Thunderhead clouds far out over the sea are heavy with mountain, lightning shards pop beneath, breathlessly. Darkness rises early, it quakes up from the beach even as we walk. But wait. Up ahead of us, there, look. Look. Is that a body lying in the sand with the tide bubbling around it, threatening to pull the figure back into the deep?

No, I think, chiding myself for silliness, my teeth grinding involuntarily till I wonder that they might break. How can that be? Mae has yet to notice, her attention to those beloved fossils that intense. I quicken my step my eyes fighting the soup of encroaching dusk. Mae has extracted a small flashlight from some secret pouch upon her body, is directing a point of grace at the sand as behind me she bends and searches, bends and searches.

As I pad closer I see but a bundle of rags rolled by the waves into a cylindrical shape resembling a facedown body. Surely. Those are not arms, no, not hands twisting grotesquely and unnaturally claw-like and puffy at a starless graying sky. That myriad movement I discern is not sandflies swarming over decaying flesh but the tattered threads of raggedy cloth come loose, waving in the stiff night breeze.

"Watch out!" I cry, jumping back, a hysterical thinking machine, unable to fathom this thing on the beach. "Watch out!" It seems such flimsy advice in the face the present peril. I feel I am hung up on saving Mae from the horror, so I ask myself: just what is it that's going to happen if I go forward with this? Have I that choice?

When I turn to where she stood, Mae is gone. Has she switched off her flashlight? Only no, it is not so dark I cannot witness the presence of another living human being. I jog back to where she was, searching for her, this way then that, finding only one set of footprints in the smooth wet sand the consistency of concrete just before it sets.

A peculiarly large wave nearly dashes me off balance, rocking into that sack of cloth, rolling it farther up the beach before tugging it back, bringing it to rest at my feet. Sand hisses at the retreating water, an enraged goose mocking the sea. The pale dead purplish face stares up at me, black holes for eyes, cheeks eaten raw, stringy blonde hair streaming over naked skin.

I reel forward, fall to my knees, gasping, unsure what I am seeing, putting my palms to my eyes and rubbing. Overhead, the moon breaks through a cleft in the clouds, its light revealing what I am looking at. Who. Lying dead and drowned. Mae. But how? She was just here, just here, just here. And now? Poof. She's gone again. The ocean has reclaimed its prize. A voice wails from the darkness, from the sea, waking me.

“The Lord loves a lunatic, you know.”

Day/Break

poetry by Leslie McGriff

In this moment
morning
is still

a breath is suspended
waiting
for time to move

someone I don't know yet
wakes from the dream
they had where
I am blossoming
into myself

I drop my petals
to the floor
emerge
from my bed
and break open the day

Driftwood Study No. 10

visual art by John Chavers



Stone Walk Mosaic No. 2

visual art by John Chavers



Consolation Prize

fiction by Claire Lobenfeld

You will be down an unprecedented amount of money on a game show where the rules are to give every answer in the form of a question. Little beadlets of sweat will gather on your upper lip. The perspiration will probably give you a moustache similar to the host's, only yours will be glistening and more crass. He will have to remind you that you don't have to buzz in if you don't know the answer.

Patti, one of the show's makeup artists, will bristle at your slick, swelling skin when she goes in to give you a touchup. "Don't worry, sweetie, I've seen things like this happen before," she'll say, making eye contact only with her palette of fleshtone pressed powders. "You'll bounce back in the second round."

The other contestants will also offer you reassurance:

"The lights are very bright, I'm finding it hard to concentrate, too," Pablo, a 42-year-old volunteer firefighter from Kansas City who stands to your left, will say.

"I didn't think to study current popular music, I only knew those answers because I listen to the radio in my car," Moirah, on your right, will offer. She will have graduated from Yale at 17 years old and will now be working on her second Ph. D., this time at Columbia. It won't seem fair that someone with so many degrees could compete in this trivia contest, as if an obsessive study of feminist literary theory gives anyone an advantage in a game of identifying actors from *The Big Bang Theory* or knowing what type of black bird can mimic human speech. And before the second round starts, Moirah will whisper to you, "I think you still get \$1000 even if you come in last place. You're not losing money, just money-themed points."

But then, you will be too scared to hit the buzzer at all, even though you're very confident about what is an artichoke or who is George Wendt. You won't even participate in the final round: no monetary wager, no stab at the final answer in the form of a question. You will just wait until the closing credits theme starts so you know it's all over. It will be the worst performance in the show's history. The cameras will stop rolling and the studio audience of Hollywood tourists, septuagenarians, and beatniks without day jobs will file out of the theater. You will collect your consolation prize of game show paraphernalia—your check will be "in the mail," as they say—and throw it into the backseat of your rented Chevy Cruze.

You will get in the driver's seat and rest your head against the steering wheel instead of starting up the car. You will think of all the inane trivia you studied for two

years. You will know the differences between every kind of red bird, like how summer tanagers are part of the cardinal family, but that female tanagers are green and yellow instead of the expected fire engine hue.

You will have studied current affairs, memorized the names of TV shows in categories by genre and first letter of their titles. You will see the whole world in categories but nothing of the factoid garbage dump you've turned your brain into over the past hundreds and hundreds of days will have done you any good.

Then you will realize this embarrassment isn't something that will go away after you tear into the tiny bottles of Bacardi and Campari and Seagrams in your mini-bar that you won't mind paying for because gosh darn it you have \$1000 in consolation prize money coming to you. You will realize that this episode of the game show will eventually be on the air. You will be the subject of blog posts titled things like You Won't Believe This Total Gameshow Meltdown. YouTubers will remix you like that "hide your kids, hide your wife" guy.

So, you will start the car, head out on Washington Boulevard, and then start driving east instead of to DoubleTree Inn by Hilton where the game show has put you up. You will push on until store marquees and billboards are no longer in English. You will park the Cruze in a chunk of strip mall boasting a boba tea shop, a cell phone repair store, and a BBQ restaurant, its doors flanked on either side by rotating colored lights. You will see a disco ball inside. Above the door there will be a sign that reads, "WE HAVE ENGLISH!!!"

You will take your perch at the bar. Hanging lights shaped like tiki drinks attached to its lip will tickle your knees. The thick fog of table-grilled beef and pork and octopus blooming overreach booth in the restaurant will be unforgettable. You have the kind of hair that captures any scent, so you will likely take the stank of seared flesh back to your hotel bed.

You will order a double piña colada and flip through the hefty binder of songs. When you find the one you want, you'll fill out the details for song number 32568 on the request slip and hand it to the bartender.

It will take three more frozen drinks before your song is called. You'll take your spot on the stage, clutching the microphone as it starts to gloss up with your sweat. The first few words of The Human League's "Don't You Want Me, Baby" will tremble out of your mouth.

The other patrons will start to whoop and flap their arms as they realize you are your own duet partner. You will sway like an American Idol contestant. You will extend your arms in languid waves, even let a coconut-scented burp fly into the mic. This is your one moment of performance glory before you're just another dummy who got their fifteen minutes of fame just for being another dummy.

When it ends, you will take a deep breath and bow to the group of 20-somethings live-streaming you from their iPhones.

The Dead Room

poetry by Kasey Perkins

I.

Suddenly I am awake
and through the dun I first feel
then see
your tiny weight draped
across my chest, one small hand
clutching the strap of my shirt
as one might clutch a purse
to her chest when scared
walking home alone in the dark.

You never do this.

But alone in my father's bedroom,
out of town,
our first solo girls' trip
you insist on this closeness.

You who look so much like me

like a mitosis of my very first cell
whose face in this light
streaming through the unfamiliar
window

suddenly looks just like your father

in this sleep, which is strange
because he never sleeps.

II.

And I wonder about ghosts.

Your father's face ghosting across yours
the room next door
where my grandfather died
The Dead Room

Is he the reason you cried last night
til you crawled on top of me
and I patted your hair until you slept,
held your tiny hand?

He is nothing to fear, darling.
He loved me
and probably would you.

He is maybe curious,
looking at your parted, puffy lips
the straight tufts of honey hair
wondering where you got that eye color
(certainly not from him, though
the shape and recessed setting are)
and what the scent of
your breath may be, assuming
it's milk and sleep—
what I'm saying is

he's okay.

III.

And I'm struck by a poem
and a strange light flickers across
your face in this dark room
as if to say *yes yes yes*.

A Case for Quietude

poetry by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

Arriving at the starting line
I think of the marathon to come —
somewhere there's a man

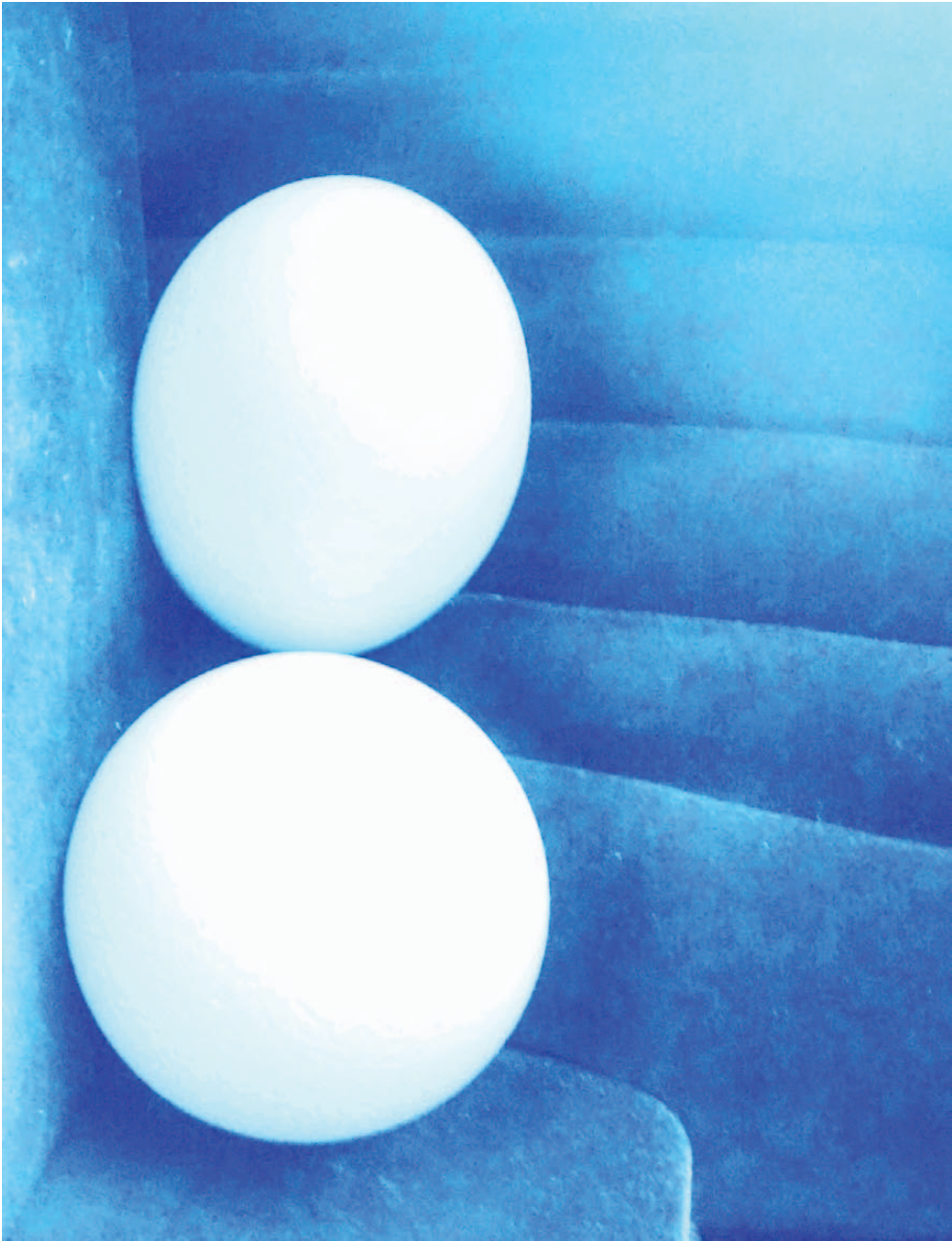
with a gun and a timer.
Somewhere there's another line
I hope to cross.

Somewhere there's a woman
who doesn't know there is a race.
She knows only that the juncos

have come, and if she is still enough
she can see their white tail feathers
flashing in flight.

Texture 15

visual art by Lucas Hargis



Sleepwalker

poetry by Mary Elder Jacobsen

—after the woodcut “Sömngångaren” by Swedish printmaker Kristina Anshelm

Silver-sharp blade up against the inky night,
the crescent moon’s razor shaves a narrow swath
of stubbled grass much brighter than the rest,
and like a velvet aisle on which a bride has trod,
this moonlit stretch of field is hers and hers
alone. Her simple dress is more akin to shift
than nuptial gown. It is the night she wears
and weds, and in a trance of dark and light
she moves away toward waking and all married is.

Like Tea Steam

poetry by John Penola

I have been telling the stories of my sleep
to a palm-sized journal beside my bed,
struggling to seize each bit of each dream,
to reel them backward, bind them to pages
before they disintegrate like newsprint
in the washing machine of waking light.

Only once have I caught myself, standing
beneath the showerhead, recalling more
than I committed to the page—something
omitted or best left lifting off the pillow
like tea steam, up and away and gone.

My hair still wet, I went back to that book,
my hand now firmer, further from fleece.
I wrote of how even dream-me knew better
than to lean into her in that hotel hallway
that was also my childhood home, but we
couldn't stop ourselves. This, too, a warning.

Conflict of Interest

a found poem from the New York State Employee ethics test
poetry by Bella Pori

You are
successful he will pay

*Conflicts should
raise suspicion among the public
in violation of their trust*

find out.
regardless of an appearance of
ethics

You are aware
you will represent him
you do it

The term means

good faith

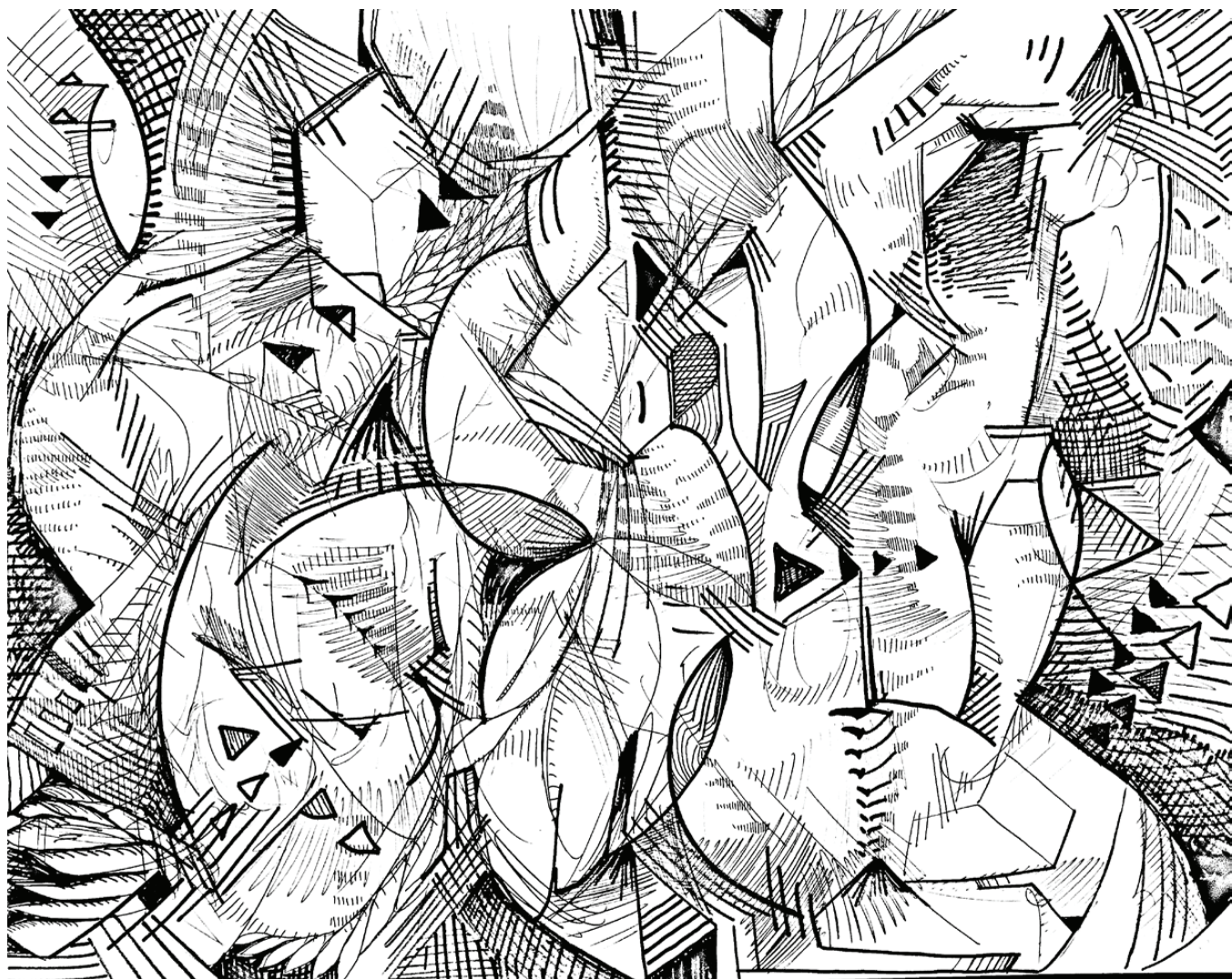
a ceremonial function

a significant activity

You
are expected. You will not be speaking.

Drawing

visual art by John Mancini



holding

poetry by Heidi A. Howell

forget the broken the winter
it is a purple attic
the fire is book through the madness
the storm the wind the fog is dream

Waking Cantos

poetry by Nolan Meditz

I

I lie back and trace the dust
falling from one strand of sunlight
to the next,

consider inactivity
as a means of escape,
a path to a dream

in which I've already woken
in an open field,
the dew on my shoulders,
in sight of the stars, their flames on my neck.

II

I adjust my eyes and begin again
the work of justifying my anxiety
about the cobweb by the ceiling fan,
the harvestman upon the storm door,
the spoiled fruit behind the pie
on the bottom shelf of my overstocked refrigerator.

The garbage men are talking
while they toss another black bag
into the back of their truck.
It doesn't matter what's inside.
Hardly a nod and they're gone.

III

I glimpse the shadow of dead leaves
on pavement. Whatever writhes
underneath, I crush underfoot.

A dog snaps. A squirrel
rushes into the road
to steal what remains.

IV

Empty, the sky and its trees.
Empty, the road and its trash barrels.

I adjust my eyes as the sun pours forth,
and take my first steps towards dawn.

I lie back and trace the dust
falling from one strand of sunlight
to the next.

Three Tanka

poetry by Kenneth Pabo

Humidity
a languid cat stretches.
When I pet it
claws sink in, a nasty nip,
the sun smug

•

This water fall
barely a trickle. Spring corpsed,
the body a welcome sight
to a famished owl
pecking at it.

•

A cinnamon fern—
drought works up from roots. Sleigh bell
leaves jangle in oaks.
A hermit has a dream—and
the parched forest stops breathing.

Barber's Roll, China

visual art by Emma Sywyj



BIOS

Simon Anton Niño Diego Baena spends his spare time on the road with his wife, Xandy. His recent work can be found in *Chiron Review*, *Santa Ana River Review*, *Fifth Wednesday Journal*, *Oxidant Engine*, *Construction Literary Magazine*, *One: Jacar Press*, *Osiris*, and elsewhere..

Sheila Black received her MFA from the University of Montana. She is the author of four poetry collections, most recently *Iron, Ardent* (Educe Press, 2017). She is a co-editor of *Beauty is a Verb: The New Poetry of Disability*. (Cinco Puntos, 2011). Awards include the 2000 Frost/Pellicer Frontera Prize, a 2012 Witter Bynner Fellowship, and a Barbara Jordan Media Award. She divides her time between Washington, DC, and San Antonio, Texas.

Kateryna Bortsova holds a Master of Fine Arts from Kharkov National Pedagogical University. She has shown her artwork through out Europe. Her work has appeared in *Sonder Midwest*, *New Plains Review*, *The Healing Muse*, among many others.

Michelle Brooks has published a collection of poetry, *Make Yourself Small*, (Backwaters Press), and a novella, *Dead Girl, Live Boy*, (Storylandia Press). Her poetry collection, *Flamethrower*, will be published by Latte Press in 2019. A native Texan, she has spent much of her adult life in Detroit.

John Chavers enjoys working as an artist and photographer. His work has appeared in *The Healing Muse*, *Cream City Review*, *Whitefish Review*, *JuxtaProse*, *Camas Magazine*, and *Glass Mountain*, among others. In June, he will be a guest artist with The Association of Icelandic Visual Artists (SiM) at Seljavegur in Reykjavík.

Marieken Cochius is a Dutch-born artist who has lived and worked in New York City since 1987, and in the Hudson Valley since 2013. Her work encompasses drawing, painting, sculpture and printmaking. Cochius' work has been exhibited in places ranging from New York City, NY, Berkeley, CA, Austin, TX, Los Angeles, CA, to Japan, Germany and the Netherlands. Her work is in numerous private collections in the US and Europe.

Darren C. Demaree is the author of nine poetry collections, most recently

Bombing the Thinker, which was published by Backlash Press. He is the recipient of a 2018 Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award, the Louis Bogan Award from *Trio House Press*, and the Nancy Dew Taylor Award from *Emrys Journal*. He is the Managing Editor of the *Best of the Net Anthology* and *Ovenbird Poetry*. He is currently living in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.

Kelly DuMar is a poet, playwright and workshop facilitator from Boston. She's author of two poetry chapbooks, *All These Cures*, (Lit House Press), and *Tree of the Apple*, (Two of Cups Press). Her poems, prose and photos are published in many literary journals including *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Crab Fat*, *Storm Cellar*, *Corium & Lumina Online*. Her website is kellydumar.com

Jonathan Endurance is a little owl who loves football and poetry.

Ashley Geiger is a digital artist living in Toledo, Ohio. When she is not manipulating images, she is manipulating minds, at the University of Toledo, where she teaches courses in the Humanities

Dan Glover's short fiction has appeared in *Come a Bad Cloud Anthology*.

Lucas Hargis is an award-winning visual artist, writer, and performance artist. Also, an overthinker. After growing up closeted in a one-stoplight town in NC, his stubborn belief that beauty is boundless drew his nomadic soul across many state lines. His art and writings have appeared in multiple anthologies and journals.

Working loosely in the experimental/ language/Black Mountain/ NY School traditions, **Heidi A. Howell** has published poems in online and print literary magazines, including *SHANTI*, *s/word*, *Psychic Meatloaf*, *The Eastern Iowa Review*, *Otoliths*, *la fovea*, *What Light*, *So To Speak: A Feminist Journal of Language and Art*, and the *Washington Review*, which nominated her work for a Pushcart. She holds an MFA from George Mason University, Fairfax, VA.

Ann Huang is an author, poet, and filmmaker based in Newport Beach. She has authored one chapbook and three poetry collections. She wrote and directed the award-winning films *Palpitations of Dust* and *Indelible Winter*. For more information about Huang's experimental shorts visit SaffronSplash.com.

Mary Elder Jacobsen's poetry has appeared in *Cold Mountain Review*, *The*

Cincinnati Review, *Green Mountains Review (GMR Online)*, *The Greensboro Review*, and other venues, including *Poetry Daily*, where her poem “This Be the Oyster” was featured. She holds an MA from The Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University, where she was a Teaching Fellow, and an MFA from UNC-Greensboro. A recent recipient of a Vermont Artists Week residency at the Vermont Studio Center, she lives in Calais, Vermont, with her husband and son.

Jolie B. Kaytes is an associate professor of landscape architecture at Washington State University. Her teaching, writing, and images integrate disciplinary perspectives and focus on recognizing the complexity of landscapes. Jolie’s work has appeared in the *Fourth River*, *Terrain.org*, *Camas* and elsewhere. In 2017 she was a resident at the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest and PLAYA .

R. J. Keeler. Born St. Paul, Minnesota. Lived in the jungles of Colombia, S.A., up to age twelve. BS Mathematics NCSU, MS Computer Science UNC, MBA UCLA, Certificate in Poetry UW. Honorman, U.S. Naval Submarine School. “SS” (Submarine Service) qualified. Vietnam Service Medal. Honorable Discharge. Whiting Foundation Experimental Grant. P&W’s Directory of Poets and Writers. Member IEEE, AAAS, AAP. The Boeing Company. Does not subscribe to the cattle-prod paradigm of poetry. May tend to melancholy. My collection *Detonation* will be published in January, 2019.

Claire Lobenfeld is a writer based in Los Angeles.

Aimee Lowenstern is a twenty year old writer living in Nevada. She has cerebral palsy and is a big fan of glitter.

John Mancini’s work has appeared or is forthcoming in *New World Writing*, *SmokeLong Quarterly*, *McSweeney’s online* and elsewhere. He earned an MFA from SF State and a BFA from Rhode Island School of Design.

Maggie Martin is the author of the poetry chapbook *Old Stories* (Niobe Press) and the co-author of *Rebel in White*, a memoir on the life and career of Henniker, New Hampshire resident, Bertha McComish-from farm girl to US Cadet Nurse Corps trainee, during WWII, to retired Supervisor of Nursing. A poet, writer and workshop facilitator, Martin specializes in healing through the practice of poetry. She has served as a poet in residence at a VA Medical Center, been a fellow of the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and the recipient of numerous grants and fellowships, including

two nominations for the Pushcart Prize. Martin lived in Shawnee-On-Delaware, in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania, before making her home on the Contoocook River in the foothills of New Hampshire's White Mountains.

Leslie McGriff (Leslie Dianne) is a poet, novelist, screenwriter, playwright and performer whose work has been acclaimed internationally in places such as the Harrogate Fringe Festival in Great Britain, The International Arts Festival in Tuscany, Italy and at La Mama, ETC in New York City. Her stage plays have been produced in NYC at The American Theater of Actors, The Raw Space, The Puerto Rican Traveling Theater and The Lamb's Theater. Her screenplay, *Striver's Row*, was chosen as a finalist in the Urban World Screenwriting Competition. Her poems have appeared or currently appear in *The Pangolin Review*, *Soft Cartel*, *Esthetic Apostle*, *PopShot*, *Ink and Voices* and are forthcoming in *S/tick*, *Rue Scribe*, *RAW Journal of Arts* and *Furtive Dalliance*.

Born and raised on Long Island, **Nolan Meditz** received his MFA from Hofstra University in 2014 and his Ph.D. from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 2018. His poetry has appeared in *Roanoke Review*, *AMP: Journal of Digital Literature*, and *Mockingheart Review* among other publications. He currently teaches writing at Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Karalynn Moran is a graduate of University of Maine's Stonecoast MFA Creative Writing Program who works with at-risk youth in Job Corps. Previous work has appeared in 'Stone House: A Literary Anthology,' apt, and Bacopa Literary Review. She is a lyrical essayist fascinated with the interim and language.

Martha Nance is a physician in Minnesota who tries to find interesting things around her before and after and in between patients. These are part of a series of photos entitled "Waterworks".

Okeke Onyedika is a Nigerian poet. His works are published in both online and print magazines and journals.

Ksenia Panova is originally from Russia. She believes that there is nothing better than telling stories that tell the truth.

John Penola's manuscript, *The Spire*, earned him the Excellence in Writing Award from William Paterson University. While teaching middle and high school English, he wrote and recorded his debut solo album, *Dotted Lines and Whispers*, under the moniker of Maybe Bomb. His work has previously been published in *deLuge*.

Kasey Perkins, is a teacher, freelance editor, and writer who completed her MFA in poetry from the University of Missouri - St. Louis in 2014. She is the recipient of the 2014 Margaret Leong Children's Poetry Prize and received her MA in English at Truman State University in Kirksville, MO, where she was both a frequent performer and organizer in the poetry slam community. Her chapbook, *When the Dead Get Mail*, is forthcoming through Finishing Line Press in 2019. Her work has appeared in the *Chattahoochee Review*, *Chariton Review*, *Digital Americana*, *Green Hills Literary Lantern*, the *Wisconsin Review*, *the Oracle*, *Lumina*, and many more.

Kenneth Pobo had a book of ekphrastic poetry out in 2017 from Circling Rivers called *Loplop in a Red City*. His recent work can be read at *Eclectica*, *Brittle Star*, *CruX*, and elsewhere.

Bella Pori is a law student and poet in Brooklyn, New York. Her poetry can be found in *HCE Review*, *Alternating Current*, and *FEELINGS*, among others. Her political writing can be found on westwingbestwing.com

Rhett Pritchard is a photographer based in southern Louisiana specializing in abstract and fine art photography. He has been published in poetry as well as photography and is the owner/operator of Framed Fox Photography. He is also working on his first photography book, which will also include some of his poetry.

Brook J. Sadler, Ph.D. is a poet and professor of philosophy. She lives in Florida, where she reads, writes, professes, walks, shoots hoops with her son, watches birds, and dreams. Sometimes, she sleeps. Her writing can be found in many academic and literary journals including *Atlanta Review*, *Cortland Review*, *The Boiler Journal*, *Chariton Review*, *Calamaro Magazine*, *Ms. Magazine*, *Pleiades*, and *Kestrel*.

Caroline Sheais a poetry editor at Green Writers Press, a small, women-run press focused on publishing sustainably. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Poached Hare*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, *Crab Fat Magazine*, *Bad Pony Magazine*, and others. She was a finalist for the 2018 Brett Elizabeth Jenkins Poetry Prize. She lives in Connecticut.

Dana Sonnenschein has authored two books of poetry, *Bear Country* and *Natural Forms*, and two chapbooks of prose poems, *No Angels but These* and *Corvus*. Recent work appears in *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *The Matador Review*, *The Prachya Review*, and *Measure*, and more is forthcoming in *Feminist Studies*, *Algebra of Owls*, and elsewhere.

She teaches Shakespeare, folklore, and creative writing at Southern Connecticut State University.

Wendy Lee Spacek is a poet living in Bloomington, IN. She teaches Creative Writing at Indiana University. Her chapbook, *Psychogynecology*, was published by Monster House Press in 2015. Since 2016, she has served as a poetry editor for *Monster House*. Her work has appeared online at *poets.org*, and in print with *Blotterature* and *LVNG Magazine* (Flood Editions).

Emma Sywyj has exhibited her artwork in the United States, Greece, and Hungary, as well as the UK where she currently lives and works. Her artwork aims to capture and show life at its most vibrant & exciting. And is often centered around her immediate environment and cultural identity.

Kelli Tompkins is an artist and writer in Salt Lake City, Utah. She graduated with a BA in English from the University of Utah in '09, and from the Utah Screenwriter's Project with the Salt Lake Film Society in '15. Kelli believes deeply in the healing and restorative power of art. Find more of Kelli's art and writing at mintfresca.com.

Life-lover **Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer** has 11 collections of poetry, most recently *Naked for Tea* (Able Muse Press, 2018). She served as the third Colorado Western Slope Poet Laureate (2015-2017) and is poetry editor for the gourmet magazine *Edible Southwest*. She teaches poetry for 12-step recovery programs, hospice, mindfulness retreats, women's retreats and more. One-word mantra: Adjust. www.wordwoman.com

Wyatt Welch grew up on the Interstates after being kidnapped by his Vietnam Vet father. Watching the boundaries of Self and the State has been the work of their recent poetry, alongside other poetic concerns such as living gay in the United States. Their recent work has appeared in the *Metric*, *Mantra Review*, *The Ocotillo Review*, *Persephone's Daughters*, and the *Tucson Weekly*. Wyatt earned their MA in Linguistics and African Languages at the University of Florida. Currently, Wyatt lives in Tucson, Arizona, where they teach at the University of Arizona.

Nina Wilson has a BA in History and Writing, and have published photography, essays, poetry, and fiction previously published in *The Pearl*, *Coe Review*, *The Fishfood Magazine*, *Adelaide Magazine*, and several others.

