

The image is a cover for a journal. The top half shows a misty forest with tall, thin trees. The bottom half is a darker, blue-tinted version of the same forest scene. A dark blue horizontal band runs across the middle, containing the title and issue information in white text.

# DELUGE JOURNAL

ISSUE: FALL 2019

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# DELUGE JOURNAL

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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](http://www.delugejournal.com) before sending us your work.

Cover Art: Spirit Pond by Michael Anthony

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# FROM THE EDITOR 2019

Editor: Sue Scavo

Isn't it what we do, anyway? All the time? Translate? Take what we take [receive], take what is given [forced or otherwise], take [in] what we need and what we do not need [even parts of our self]. Then translate. First, into our story [find a place in a narrative we know], puzzling with parts that cannot fit neatly [allow for exceptions]. Let us, let us, let us keep translating, not stopping at the first [literal]. Finding, instead. Isn't this what translation is [can be]? Finding?

Editor: Karla Van Vliet

Early morning, in the dusky sky the moon's thin cradle hangs in leafless branches which line the near horizon. Crisp air; thin layer of snow covering the yard.

As the turning of light approaches, I've been contemplating darkness, the space it offers which allows for generation, if we let it, where what is unknown readies itself to become known. Let us honor this condition instead of feeling it as constraint, as block. Let it be part of the process.

I know, I'm being didactic. But I speak this to myself. I have written very little this past year, words not coming to me. Instead I have been painting, expressing with color, texture, image. And to keep my hand in writing practice, incorporating asemic writing into my paintings. I think about this as being in relationship to what is reading itself, in darkness, to come into the light in words.

Asemic writing, writing without known meaning, primes the pump for words with meaning. At the same time, it holds its own power and engagement with the creative practice.

I am trusting that to be in relationship with, to give attention to, is to honor. Trusting that like the moon in the sky the thin crescent will in time turn full.

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## Late August

Poetry by Robert Cole

Because you came early  
there was no time  
to set the table.

Let me put out the plates now;  
memory, acceptance,  
slow reckoning.

# Via del Reclusorio

Visual Art by Federico Federici



## After A Midsummer Night's Dream, Marc Chagall

Poetry by Elizabeth Paul

I dream that we have separated, we've been split for a long time, and I've forgotten you, or almost forgotten you, because in the dream I always begin to remember and can't believe how distant even the idea of you has become as though maybe I'm afraid that this time we have together is the tiniest blip in an eternal life I don't begin to fathom, that in the end (but there is no end), this life of ours will have been just some watery dream, some kind of confounded crossroads of colorful meanderings, more foresty figment than fact, that we're frozen and remote, barely even present in this tight frame, missing the urgent red angels and evergreen artist so close the way we miss the air we breathe, that I'm missing you, maybe even me, maybe especially me—

## (And also) the Red Fence

Poetry by Christopher Farago

Persephone dreamed  
About the rooster.  
The rooster dreamed  
About Persephone,  
And also millet,  
And also clover,  
And also the red fence.

## Plaza de las Tres Culturas

Poetry by Craig Finlay

It is October 2, 1968, and the world seems to be shifting for all who watch it. In Prague, anarchists are setting up aid networks and replacing the state. In May, students in Paris threw up barricades like the revolutionaries of 1848. In Northern Ireland, people are beginning to kill in earnest because inheritance is the last crime we visit upon our children. Right now it is six p.m. in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Mexico City. A ten-thousand-strong crowd of students chants that they do not want Olympics, they want Revolution. They climb the eight-hundred-year-old Aztec pyramids that dot the plaza. They feel as if they're throwing up a new invisible axis and the world must shift to turn about. A number of stray cats watch from atop the roof of the Templo de Santiago Tlatelolco. Just after six, in a way that recalls zoo animals that run for cover just before an earthquake, the cats suddenly flee through a hole in the roof to the darkened safety of the temple attic. There are ghosts there. How could there not be? They seem to be attracted to the cats. The cats can see them but don't run from them. People can't see them and are terrified. As a heavy, pregnant calico trots through the gloom, the ghost of a priest who died over two hundred years ago reaches out his hand. When the cat passes through it they can both nearly feel one another. Outside, a military helicopter fires a flare above the crowd. At this precise moment, six thousand miles away, Marcel Duchamp dies in his sleep. His epitaph reads, *D'ailleurs, c'est toujours les autres qui meurent*. He was wrong.

## The Mysteries of Isis

Poetry by Craig Finlay

A photo: A collection of magical items recovered from Pompeii. A sorcerer's cache for evocation of fertility, luck, health, protection. Small, blue and orange figurines. A skull, a dog, engraved depictions of Dionysus and Horus. Teeth, a crystal. Shells, coins. Scarabs and phalluses. A clear glass relief of a dancing satyr.

In present, a parallel: A number of choices kept in a small leather pouch purchased from a Renaissance Fair in 1997. Important because they remained unmade. Go to the Peace Corps. Quit smoking. Go to film school. Stay in France. Tell the truth. Visit my mother in the hospital. Admit that I did not drunkenly remember proposing to my ex-wife over the phone and did not at all want to marry her. Call off the engagement.

An action: A servant tends a garden in Herculaneum. He removes the carrots whole with the gentleness of a mother handling her first child. On the wall of the courtyard a mosaic of the rites of Isis. A woman of heavy breast burns offerings. Followers stare heavenward in adulation. A cat walks the length of the wall before stretching out in the Roman sun.

A divination: I take these, my talismans I've collected and carried around my neck. Through multiple moves, multiple benders, months on end of not cleaning my house or even getting out of bed except when absolutely necessary. Kept still. Every time I publish something I pile them roughly at the center of a rusting merry-go-round in the playground behind my house. I drink enough vodka to ensure decent reception. Spin. Watch how they fall. Number them and take notes. Enter the data into Excel. If not math then what the breath of God?

The eruption: A girl returns from the Temple of Isis and enjoys a meal of olive oil, bread and figs. The night is luxuriously alive with the symphony of insects. Hot, and this is when she feels free of time, insulated in the dark. She presses a bright blue seashell into her belly and feels the wetness as semen leaks from between her legs. She smirks and rocks back and forth happily. The air is thick lamp smoke and she feels the earth shake a little as something takes hold in her.

## The Half-Life of Uranium-238

Poetry by Robert Hilles

The men are drunk from vodka. They have not tied their shoelaces. But they dance. There is no music, but they dance. Wild dances around a backyard fire. Miles from here Chernobyl decays. The half-life of uranium-238 is 4.5 billion years. The men don't give any thought to that. They learned to dance as boys. Before the disaster. Before this area was condemned. Come back in five years one of them says. It sounds like a threat, but it isn't. It's simply a fact. They will still be here you are convinced of that. Older but still dancing. Still defiant. What does the half-life of uranium matter? It is such a big number. How old the Earth is now. How can rock on Earth last longer than Earth? You don't ask the men this but watch them dance. Their shadows on the ground move faster than they do. There must be some delay between each but it is not perceivable. They pass the bottle of vodka to you. It is clear like water but burns in the throat and unsettles the stomach. It doesn't make you want to dance like them. You go on watching and think of Chernobyl due south of here. The miles between flat but wooded. How is that possible? You know now that what lurks in the air, in the soil on the trees and grass will lurk here longer than human time. This is a young planet you know and the sun young too the solar system young and the ingredients are but the ingredients. You swig down more vodka let it burn your throat. The half-life of uranium-238 is 4.5 billion years and so it is important to dance and swig vodka and later when it is very dark walk out into the trees and stop and listen.

# Into the Unknown

Visual Art by Barbara Mellin



## Bone Cage

Creative Nonfiction by Ann Fisher

When I first saw it, death felt like sadness and fear half-buried in the new snow, bone cage fingers cupping thin wintered air. The remnants of a woodland deer.

Later, when I returned to it, tucked between two fallen logs, I knew it wasn't just those bones that had been picked over by rodents and scavengers. And so I found a place to hang my grief. Each curved rib holding onto bits of flesh, fluttering in the slight chill of February's breeze. One bloody flag his lost jazz collection, sold as a lot while I parceled out the casket and funeral flowers. Still another, the hanging shred of his half-finished will.

In my mind, I made little signs labeled with my mother's beautiful looped script, capturing all the things we'd lost over the years. Hung them there with threads embroidered from my grief. My mother's stolen silver. The pills clutched in my brother's hand. My father's hatchet and hammer and rasp, his tool collection. Boxes of family pictures. They fluttered freely there, no longer raw or new, alongside the hopeful scraps we once clutched in our yearning fingers.

I kept an eye on death for days; watching as we huddled there together, inside our bony prison. My mother long gone, my brother downed in thick woods of his own making. My father and the deer so recently upright, picking their way through the forest. Ready to bolt at the first acrid scent of danger.

All of us dangling in that space where once a pulsing heart used to live.

## Mo'olelo // i come from

Poetry by Judy Xio

Last night, the crickets stopped scratching their names. Thus says this black clay, this pimple, gravel dust. The false summer over and already the rivers run in reverse. In the homeland, the virgin stories starts from the roots. We learn about *jiao yu* and *guan xi* how ancestry jumps, flutter kicks like an inconsistent lifeline. We cut it, then, they say. When we left. & every year since. Every summer, since. Plane ride. 18 hours. Our ears sparking like gunfire, an invention that happens when landing begins to mean something. China breathes in smog and exhales history. Tianjin rots of machine and the sun bright only ever if it takes for skin.

These are the things that first world tells me. Red only ever angry. It's a burning color. But this says nothing about me, about heritage. There is much more than 20 years and yet at 17, I have not reached a lifetime. And at 3,000 years China has still not reached its lifetime.

This, I acknowledge as I shift through the streets. Construction overhead, I wonder at ton ball

If chain unlock chain release chain

Would drop like a stone.

The ground tilting upwards and all around, it'll move matter for matter the way a pond, a puddle does with a pebble. *Makes you wonder*, how easy it would be to misplace something like a stone or a wrecking ball or — me.

## Childhood Looks Different In the Hands of Children

Poetry by Judy Xio

### **Whitten Ln.**

Seen. In the slick glow of a summer night, 5 boys on rollerblades tear down Whitten Ln. They drag bats against the asphalt, a production of gravel sparks. At the hill, one boy hesitates nervous and chewing as the four break downhill at speeds in neighborhoods of 30 miles per hour. They veer past the stop signs, flank minivans/ soccer moms, as blinds open and close, and somewhere in the distance, the neighborhood dogs go quiet. Sometimes hands over eyes, the world blurs by us. But the boys (thank god) keep cruising. Their sparks caught in the rearview mirror, resemble ember leads running to the ends of a bomb.

That, or fireflies flickering out one by one.

### **Highland Trail.**

A dragonfly will not enter a body of water unless it must to keep alive. Like the fireflies, they do not plaster unless necessary. A little girl watches this across the lake, two pairs of dragonflies skimming just above the surface. They look like they're dancing. She holds her breath. A whole minute. Breathless, she is at her most beautiful. But she finds out later, the dragonflies were only ever fucking. This washes down around her too.

## **2 Indian Spring Trl. (13 min drive from home)**

Says Google Maps. But is home. I know because come autumn the crickets will have stopped scratching their names. We'll put up a ghost machine, and it is more funny than scary. From my window, the trees will tip together like hearts. I do not notice these things here (home). Maybe because I am too old and have stopped caring about the trees. Because there is no Lorax, no *Giving Tree* to entertain me the way hot celebrities fan themselves with alcohol and whiskey breath. They wear heels falling everywhere like I did Uggs, trick-o-treating. My feet sweaty against thick fur, but it went better with cowboy costume and I wanted to match more than candy, more than sense.

# The Cave of the Dreams

Visual Art by Maciej Toporowicz



## Ode to Mangoes in June

Poetry by Samia Ahmed

I peel your skin / it comes off / in my hands / nectar drips down / *amrit se bhara aam* / my fingers pallid / and sticky / the scent of mango filters through / another evening / *garmi ka ek din* / A version of me runs / around the courtyard made of my father's voice / sunlight kisses me when no one is watching / some days I am the sweetness of the Gods / sometimes I am the casing / *garmi ke aam* / sometimes I / wonder if mangoes / are souvenirs from a long lost land / *khiloney ka kbel* / or is it the key that opens / trapped blossom bees.

## mother dearest blames her eyesight

Poetry by Juheon Rhee

who stained the window dripping the opaque paint onto the glass plastered  
the sea glass film on top aftermath being rough and translucent facing  
the glossy silhouettes shapes round on edges it's all she sees when the girl  
looks out she neither sees see the high rise building nor the sea of suits the  
homeless man on the street the rebellious teenagers with their ink stained  
arms she sees her mother mother who teaches her the terror of the outside  
it's for your own good for your own good her hair is falling out for the  
weight it endures her scalp blossoming into a red day after day she is okay  
mother is by her side all she sees are just silhouettes just silhouettes gliding  
through the streets gives the rather otherworldly touch

## burial of a dead fish

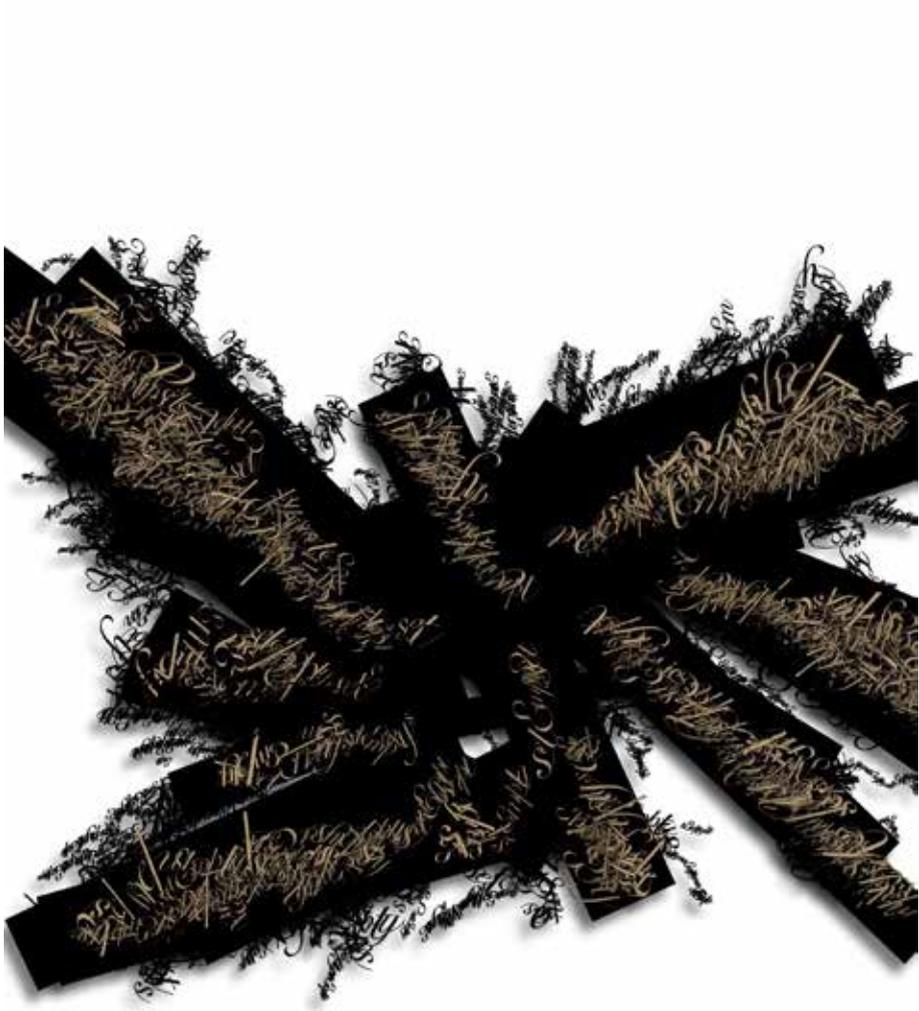
Poetry by Juheon Rhee

woman over there in the white veil in the colossal detainment of house it is so cramped but there is not a single furniture just the dust on the window sills a silver lining; a stage where the dust performs at twilight-- they are the real inhabitants of the large house not the woman in the veil standing frozen oxygen manages to suffocate her-- a tightening grip on her hidden gills for she sold her voice to the devil and can not let a raspy cry her skin no longer tender just a rubber film covering her frail bones she is dressed in white leaning on the black wall yet manages to blend in so well too well she does not walk for her bones in her feet has shattered from walking on shards of glass; but flutter around her long dress sweeping the dusty parchment floor leaving a trail of hickory color more prominent than her entire presence she never lifts her dainty pale fingers hanging off her sides like a corpse of a fly on the thread of the spider's web when the man stabs her from the back with the rusted kitchen knife she does not bleed but crumples onto the greying floor and melts into the ground leaving only the white nightgown and a pile of sea foam holding together avant-garde trinkets and scales



# To Fuss and Cause a Fracas In the Eye

Visual Poetry by Nico Vassilakis



## Dream In Sand

Poetry by Belen Odile

*Off of this planet.*

*Out of this body.*

The light within her would slip through a wolf's sharp gap-py teeth.

Her thin long hair, so transparent in the wind it looked like she was underwater. Halo of hair.

Her home was always ash by the end of the dream.

Like a joshua tree made of matches, yarn, and newspaper.

Fresh grass that sticks to your knees when you are pushed to the ground. That is the feeling. Sticky.

No blood or visible harm, only

“GET OFF OF ME!”.

A pile of paint, screws, brick, wood, and a ghost in a ghost home.

This dream, a splinter in her finger.

*A splinter in her finger.*

## Venus Descending

Poetry by Michele Karas

Running, now falling into a restless  
sleep — then walking out again  
into my grandparent's backyard.  
I carry in the crook of my spindly arm,  
a wooden spoon, a Folgers coffee tin.  
Inside, the resin head of Venus *clunk-*  
*clunking* with each step. My grandmother  
does not watch me from the window.  
She is in the kitchen with the twins,  
rationing out jellybeans for the coming  
tornado, merrily, merrily. As I approach,  
the eyes of the cherry tree grow wide.  
Beneath its lattice of branches, a tangle  
of shadows. The grass is stained with bloody  
fruit, a coliseum of martyrs. (I cannot say  
where my mother was.) I bury the head  
of the all-seeing statue, her naked torso  
cowering somewhere behind curtains.  
Next door, in my grandfather's radiator  
shop, an open barrel of battery acid is  
a giant teacup brewing magic. The smell  
of wet metal and solvent excites me  
(I swear this began as a happy dream.)  
—*Drink me.*

## in the dark

Poetry by RC deWinter

i'm watching  
you breathe knowing you're  
dreaming eyes  
twitching lids  
the soft wings of a small bird  
fluttering in the

mists of a  
kaleidoscopic  
landscape as  
you explore  
the leftovers of your life  
stitched together in

a patchwork  
of mud and satin  
random bits  
shifting to  
form new memories things that  
never happened things

that always  
did i wonder when  
you wake if  
you'll share this  
new hejira or will you  
fold it away in

the strongbox  
of silence held close  
to your chest  
no matter  
i took you knowing there would  
always be secrets

# Spirit Pond

Visual Art by Michael Anthony



## Salt, Water, Yeast

Poetry by Samantha Cramer

Prayer as breadmaking;  
kneading this  
floursoft  
and trembling thing  
of my hands- these  
tendons and cuticle and  
whorl of prints, the  
wheat sighing with yeast  
and rosemary.

I have learned to be  
still when I ache  
to scream  
Pressed words behind ribs,  
told them  
*Stay. Sit with this.*  
*Be smaller than you are.*

Hair clings to the dough,  
potteryred of Grecian shards,  
the broken wine dark  
vase of my hair holds  
nothing. No  
fingers threaded through  
like benediction,  
only the silver of daysgone,

pulled free of the scalp  
one by one-  
another rosary of  
loneliness.

I pray

*Send me a shipwreck love  
seatossed and salt  
kissed  
I'll gather you up, push  
myself into your lungs and  
lips  
lifebreathing, a goddess,  
no need or desire for  
forgiveness,  
only the bread and wine of want  
between us,  
rosemary and grapes and olives to  
eat, for remembrance  
and intoxication and  
salt, like our firstmeeting day  
of lips and gasping  
air.*

*Let's get drunk, shipwreck love.  
Winegentle and foolish  
let the bread rise an hour  
-two, three-  
my hands and mouth  
can pass the tick  
and feathered rush of time  
well enough.  
Honey and apples for after, to*

*fill us up with sweetness,  
exchanged for the bitterness  
of riblocked  
words  
Solomon song of joy  
and flesh*

I ache to be known  
that way-  
still raw like the dough  
that rises, waiting  
to be finished with  
heat.

Bread burns.  
Blackenedchar carbon soot  
that crumbles  
to ash  
and ash  
and ash.

Perhaps I will bury it  
in the garden,  
overmade offering, gone  
back to the soil's womb  
lightless, airless, and  
waiting.

I know a thing or two, I think,  
of waiting.

## Viscera

Poetry by Samantha Cramer

Orpheus was weak

No song or sweet lyre  
when I come for you,  
only this;  
toothbared  
jaw and bloodeager  
tongue  
my hunter eyes and force  
of nature hips.

I would crack the cage  
of my ribs,  
press you inside  
drag you to airsweet  
sunglow life  
in the butcherbox  
of my body,  
cradled there in viscera,  
and tendon, and  
bone

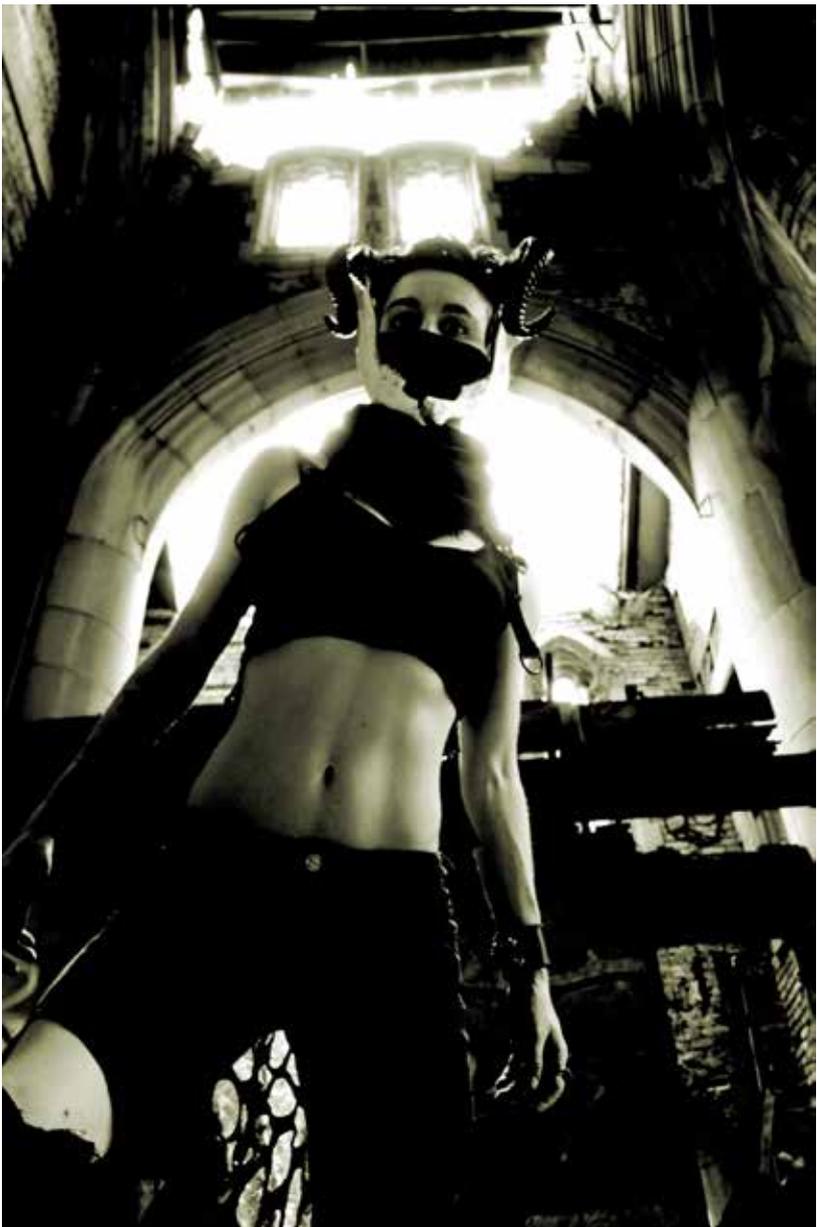
*(My love is visceral;  
whiteknuckled and  
bloodrushing  
They do not sing of love*

*like this.*  
*Love like this is not meant*  
*for song)*

What is death, beside this  
raw-eating  
desire?

# In the Belly of the Beast

Visual Art by George L. Stein







## Illume #6: Postcards From Paradise

Poetry by henry7. reneau, jr

On soiled Post-its & the back of receipts. Written in lowercase letters  
packaged in hope, a non-pretentious, 3rd person narrative

of resistance, the corrections & marginalia strung together to reveal  
a history sieved through the alkali of bone dust &

repetition, a random sequence of code that have grouped together  
to produce an unexpected protocol. Poems, like dreams, remind us

that memory is fluid, & perception, the chemical sum  
of our own opinions, & experiences. There's no pattern to the narrative,

only a surreal dialogue of complicated mathematical odds,  
& when poems lean sideways

to whisper something necessary, or rise up  
to tell another kind of truth,

history is distilled to darkness tucked into another darkness,  
the national tradition

that discriminates & assigns by the mechanisms of race &  
class & faith,

like the resilient pulse of an abandoned machine, each moment  
crystalline & dangerous—the message, magnetic as gravity.

The blind mole panicked from  
the routine futility of a capricious nonexistence

by steel harrows churning endless rows of corporate progress,  
or rebellion, reflected in the bright chrome & gaudy tail-fins

of large cars  
during the Summer of Dissent.

## Film

Poetry by Robert Beveridge

no sounds here

wind echoes across hair  
stone strikes stone  
slides off  
trail of sand  
its only mark

four figures blurred  
in the grass  
one holds a stone knife  
at chest level

time elapses  
grass waves

stone bleeds  
figures disappear  
over horizon

wind blows sand away

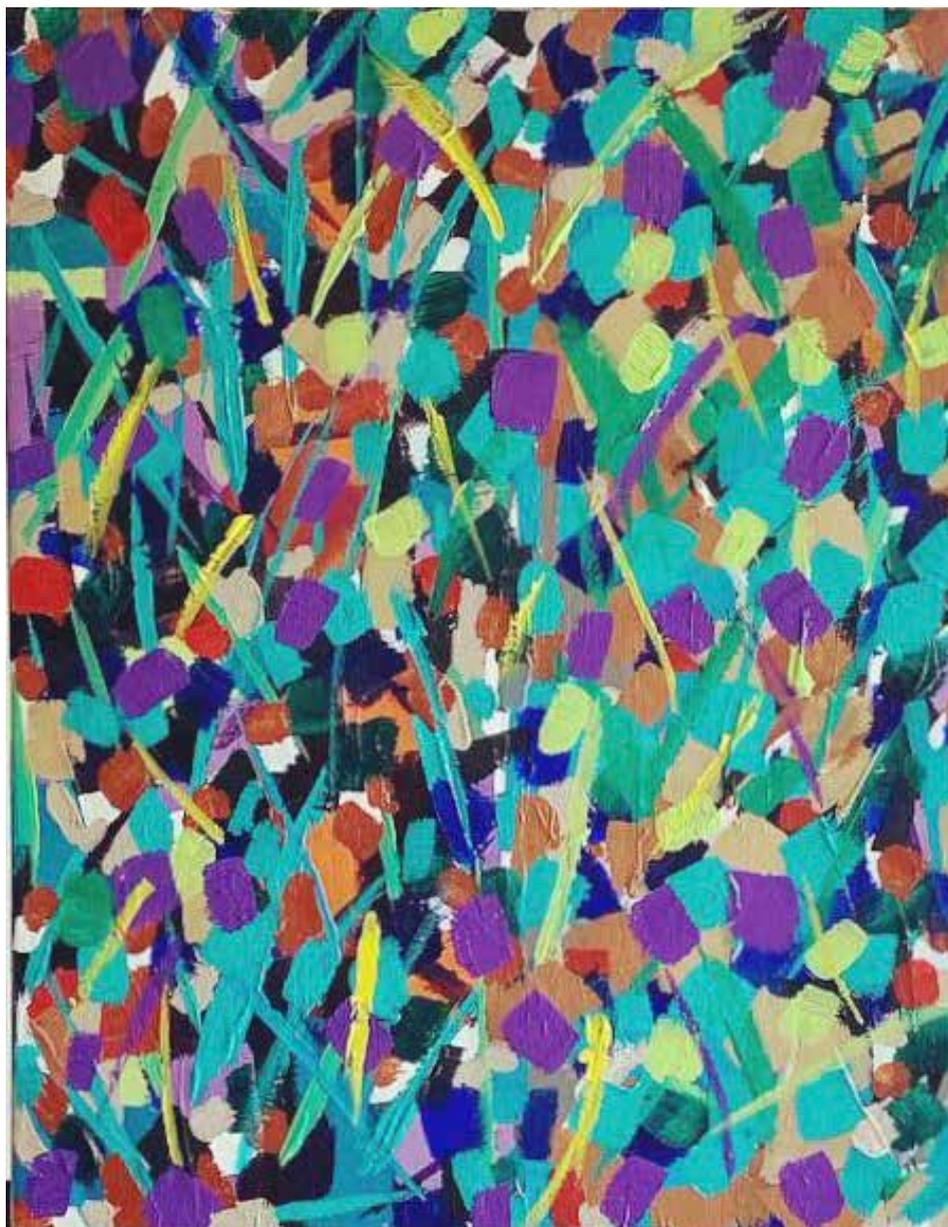
## Say Uncle

Poetry by Michele Karas

Coyotes didn't dare cross the boundary of our property — though tarantulas and scorpions, all other manner of hurtful things — did. And vampires, perhaps, because when I was ten, I thought I saw one fly past my window while I was undressing for bed. He had wine-stained teeth, bloodsucker that he was, and he dove into the branches of our orange tree. Wherever he landed, little golden suns turned black and dropped like moles from an old woman's back. I never knew a vampire who was funny. Well, maybe Dad's work buddy Bob. When Bob came to visit, he'd smoke cherry cigarillos, his long pale fingers transmuted into vapor. Bob claimed to be related to Vlad the Impaler, but all we kids knew special agents were good. Say Uncle, he'd insist as he twisted my brother's wrist, the boy's giggles too many bubbles in one cola can. After Bob left, my brother would brag about the bruises that marked him both victor and undead — Uncle! Uncle! Uncle! He never hollered.

i wish i had not woken up from a beautiful dream, and  
continued dreaming within sleep upon sleep until i became a  
dream itself

Visual Art by Desiree Dufresne



## Montrose #3 Rock n Roll Hootchie Koo

Fiction by Stephanie Dickinson

JOHNNY WINTER LIVE. The breath of *Hootchie Koo* suspends your platinum hair above the stage on your chest and shoulders and flails your arms inked with asteroid belts. We've all come to worship at the altar of your guitar. When you face us you're the Angel of Death. Paste-white in black hat and leather vest. You make us quiver in the air-conditioned heat, one riff and the sky fuses between us and earth's flesh of leaves. You invite us to taste the rabbit heart inside the owl. Your blues guitar warns those on the bitter run of the ropemen trailing them. Flee the quicksand tour bus you're sucked to the bottom of, the foot licking of Kool cigarettes and tourniquets. We've brought you chocolates. Your guitar is the one solid thing in your nocturnal life, the rest revolves on its turret, seahorse tango of getting clean, then getting dirty. The shame of heroin. Beaumont boy. Father, godmother, brother--carved chess pieces, their heads watching you. All those burnt offerings. Escape what washes your songs in the sweat of scat and ambergris. Candles flickering across a tub filled with vodka. Eyes swimming upside down, seconds before another mosquito eats you.

## rounds

Poetry by German Dario

the storms are back  
faithful and menacing  
rapture ripped emotion

wind's

claw            tears  
tongue        stings

noise moving fast  
like child bouncing ball  
    traveling  
    room to room  
    and out a window

orphaned  
palm fronds  
    lie exhausted

storms  
always worse  
at night

drunk thunder  
lightning  
    eyes and ears  
    receive

malice in the rain  
like spit

child and woman  
always  
always  
weather worst

gods make them strong  
for another round  
of monsoon storms

# Slumber

Visual Art by Gina Urban



# Because I am a Dreamer, and I am Tired of Our Country's Leader Who Crushes the Tender Reed

Poetry by Bethany Breitland

These nights, it's always high grasses blowing  
in the field south of ours – barbed wire fence-  
rusty and slack from the winter just passed.  
It must be May in Kosciusko County, Indiana.  
Robins in russet vests are hopping.  
When the sun hits grass,  
there is a sweetness of breast milk. Of buttocks  
patted til sleep comes in a rocking chair, then crib.  
Now days, I choose to remember love like that, too.

So the grasses and the fences.  
The robin perched in a mulberry tree,  
gulping down the fruit to later pepper the fields  
in its purple. She doesn't sing.  
Only the rub of the wire and the grass,  
the sweet-eyed cow and her chewing  
of wild carrot. And then,

the mower. An artillery of noise  
demanding order and obedience.  
I see my father looking over his shoulder  
the trajectory of his power  
the chlorophyll bleeding from the blades.  
To simply say that I loved him would be  
a lie. I loved him. Like a worshiper  
to an idol, I loved him. Like I wanted to lay

down my life in the grass and die.  
To become smaller  
chopped up and ground down –  
the only way to feed a god.

But instead,  
standing at the end of the acre  
I finger the rust on the fence.  
The robin flies east. The cow raises her head,  
noses her wet anointing on my hand –  
the dream changed:  
hand bearing down on wire –  
barbs bending low. Hooking boot, swinging leg  
And in just seconds – this new field  
hissing wild. Sweetgrass dancing.  
I feel a largeness, a jungle –  
with its ropes my veins,  
a pool my blood, the animal my loin.  
And in its high grasses I do not want  
to die. I want to live.

## Leaving Love

Poetry by Maggie Martin

An unexpected afternoon nap on a cold, rainy, late February Saturday before an officially declared Iraq War.

The nap as much of a surprise as the dream:

My old lover, the one who represents passion, and pain, arrives at my door.

I'm vacuuming the living room.

I'm always vacuuming in waking life.

Cleaning. Making things right, even when they could never be so.

It was what I was doing before my mother died.

I wasn't able to sit quietly at my mother's bedside, lie next to her, take hold of her hand. The way I know others have done with their loved ones.

Given them permission to go. Stayed with them until they crossed the threshold between worlds.

Parting affirmations of devotion, their passwords at the Pearly Gate:

*I am loved by my daughter husband wife lover son...*

*You have no choice but to let me in.*

My last minutes at my mother's bedside were spent on my hands and knees wiping, with a damp cloth, the sections of rug the vacuum couldn't reach.

I had already dusted and straightened the room, with its scent of death.

As if these were the only possible things to do in the circumstances.

Growing up, I cleaned my mother's house. Not always, of course.

But when I did, I was the one who took it upon herself to empty out the hardened drops of coffee flavored sugar after too many spoons from steaming cups had

dipped into the sugar bowl.  
A little thing. I know.  
But I noticed little things no one else could see.  
Or chose not to acknowledge. They were my domain.  
My mother too busy to take them on  
after picking up and returning the children she taught  
in the nursery school and kindergarten in our home.  
That doesn't mean she didn't scrub and wax floors into the night.  
Or get upset when my father walked in off the road,  
tracking snow or mud when he walked into the kitchen  
on stormy winter evenings or rainy days in spring,  
after delivering the soda he made in our soda plant next door.  
Not far mind you, but far enough to undo her work.

2.

In the last house, the ranch house I hated,  
where I lived with my husband and son,  
I knew my husband was preparing to leave.  
It's that awful waiting. That "Please don't let it happen!"  
knowing the inevitable will happen and you/I have  
absolutely no way to stop it. Like my mother's death.  
Like the war in Iraq.

Wednesdays, as he got ready to spend his day off,  
with the person he was leaving me for,

I made a point of scrubbing the floors.  
Surely, he would see how invaluable I was.  
After all, hadn't I cleaned for him all those years  
washed his clothes, taken care of his son?

Where was I?

Oh yes, the dream, years after my divorce  
and my ex-husband's untimely death.

My lover is at the door.

I'm vacuuming.

I think I see a mouse, but it's not a mouse.

It's a bird jumping onto the living room windowsill.

How will it get back outside?

At least a mouse can find an opening to escape.

Lord knows there are enough of them in this drafty house

I've been renting for twenty-three years. Afraid to leave

because it's home. Mine and my son's.

I turn off the vacuum and open the door.

Let my lover in.

He's edgy. Wired and uneasy. Always on the move.

My life too insular for him.

But that was why he came sometimes.

For the quiet.

An antidote to too much living in too little time.

I unplug the vacuum, and as I put it away, my lover  
suddenly says the words I've heard him say a hundred times before.

"I gotta go!"

Like our troops have to go.

Like my mother, holding on as long as she could,  
had to go.

3.

I escort my lover to the door.

It opens onto a closed-in porch, existing only in dream time.

I am about to go back in the house when he tells me he  
doesn't want to step off the porch. He wants to stay.

Be part of what's inside.

I tell this lover who has entered my house in waking life,  
continues to enter my heart in my dreams-

even after his time on earth has come to a close-

I tell him I feel Happy? Safe? Loved?

What is it I feel?

What was it I used to feel?

When I was too young to worry about going to war.

When my father came in off the road, muddy shoes or not.

When my mother danced in the kitchen. Sang as she cooked.

When my husband came home at suppertime-before those  
dreadful Wednesday afternoons- and my son and I

raced to open the door, laughing and yelling, *Daddy's home!*

*Daddy's home!*

# Lavender Farm

Visual Art by Gretchen Gales



# We Grew Up Here

Visual Art by Gretchen Gales



# Movie In Your Head

Visual Art by Gretchen Gales



## Eva, Eva, Ave Maria

Poetry by Carol Talmage

Suppose I were to begin by saying I've dreamt of  
Eva. Suppose I were to tell you that, in broad daylight,  
Eva vignettes reel out and squeeze my heart.

Dia de los Muertos. We bring fried potatoes and eel, linzer  
cookies and a pack of Camels; I lay down a blanket embroidered  
with pink and green flowers. Eva's water glass plinks on the Formica table  
in the kitchen as I wander about wall-papered rooms.

*Eva, Eva, Ave Maria.* My uncle Johnny sang Ave Maria. He sang it for Eva.

A black and white photo of women in dresses. Eva and my mother and Eva's  
mother and me – a child holding a doll.

Eva's heels click on slate sidewalks. She walks to the factory behind the  
ivy-covered library and sits at her machine and sews seams in coats.

Eva makes my coats on the Singer in her bedroom. She makes the whole coat. Teachers  
in elementary school spin me around to admire my hand-tailored tweed coats.

Eva has no books but Uncle Johnny left a Complete Shakespeare. It sits  
on a shelf in Eva's closet below a row of shoes.

Eva's dresses hang from a clothes rod along the wall of a small room. Eva's  
dresses are 1940s long and elegant. Eva is elegant.

Eva goes to the empty attic once a year to clear cobwebs. She pries open a stuck window to let the Sparrow out. I hear wing flutter as it lists toward cool air.

Lilies of the valley cluster in the shade on the north side of Eva's house. Just beyond, clothes on the line whip the summer air and sheets tangle in rose bushes.

Eva's house is on the corner of Franklin Street and Seward Avenue. Blocks of sidewalks grid the town. I tighten metal roller skates onto my shoes with a key. I roll in squares.

*Step on a crack and break your mother's back. Step on a crack and break your mother's back,* I chant as I skip along the sidewalk to Barber's Corner Store to get Eva's cigarettes and a penny candy. Machines in the shoe factory across the way throw out a rhythmic hum-hum.

A large vase of Pussy Willows sits on the floor in the corner of Eva's living room and they feel like cat paws – but I'm not supposed to touch.

I can still see all the rooms in Eva's house. Sometimes I walk through them.

Eva uses only the bottom floor of the house. The screen door in the kitchen has a spring that squeaks and slaps it shut - wood on wood.

My favorite photo of my mother and me: My mother is young and beautiful. She wears a camel coat and braids sit on top of her head. It is snowy. I am a toddler in white boots and a white cap. I lean into my mother and a black dog props me in front. We, all three, are looking at something to the side. We are looking toward the porch of Eva's house. Maybe Eva stands there greeting us. Maybe, all these years, we have been looking at Eva.

I dream that I am walking past Eva's house – I have not been by for a very long time and Eva is still there. She sits at an upstairs window - on the second floor. Then, she is in the attic window, waiting.

I cannot believe – in my dream – that I had forgotten her.

## I Saw You Again and Thought of the Vastness

Poetry by Judith Chalmer

A broad-winged heron beats overhead,  
its long legs mirrored in the trailing reeds below.

How many times, how many years  
can a straggling heart bend and wait?

There were stars, there were storms, everything  
lifted, lugged off. By now, you must be far,

very far away. How is it? It's been so long  
since you sent a sign, a word. Here, in the sweet

smoke, waiting for dark and the distant owl,  
I'm steeped in this beech smudge, sharp scent

now, sharpness all the way home and this  
peace that I believe, dear one, belongs to you.

## Monarch Meadow

Poetry by LizzyFox

The round hay bales ran over with baby garter snakes —  
olive and yellow ribbons that slid over our palms, the lot of us

competing to see who could be the most indifferent, who  
could hold the snakes without flinching. I didn't win.

Sleek-striped caterpillars crawled in masses over grass  
and milkweed. When I was alone, I closed my eyes to dream of growing.

Time moved the way a rainbow fades while caterpillars  
silently measured my limbs and the strands of my hair,

mapped my neck and ankles. They gave way to monarchs. So many  
we gave the meadow its name and kept it long after the monarchs

left. Back then, the air was so orange and shifting, it may have been a flame.  
Summer was slipping. A residue hung in the late afternoon, then fell.

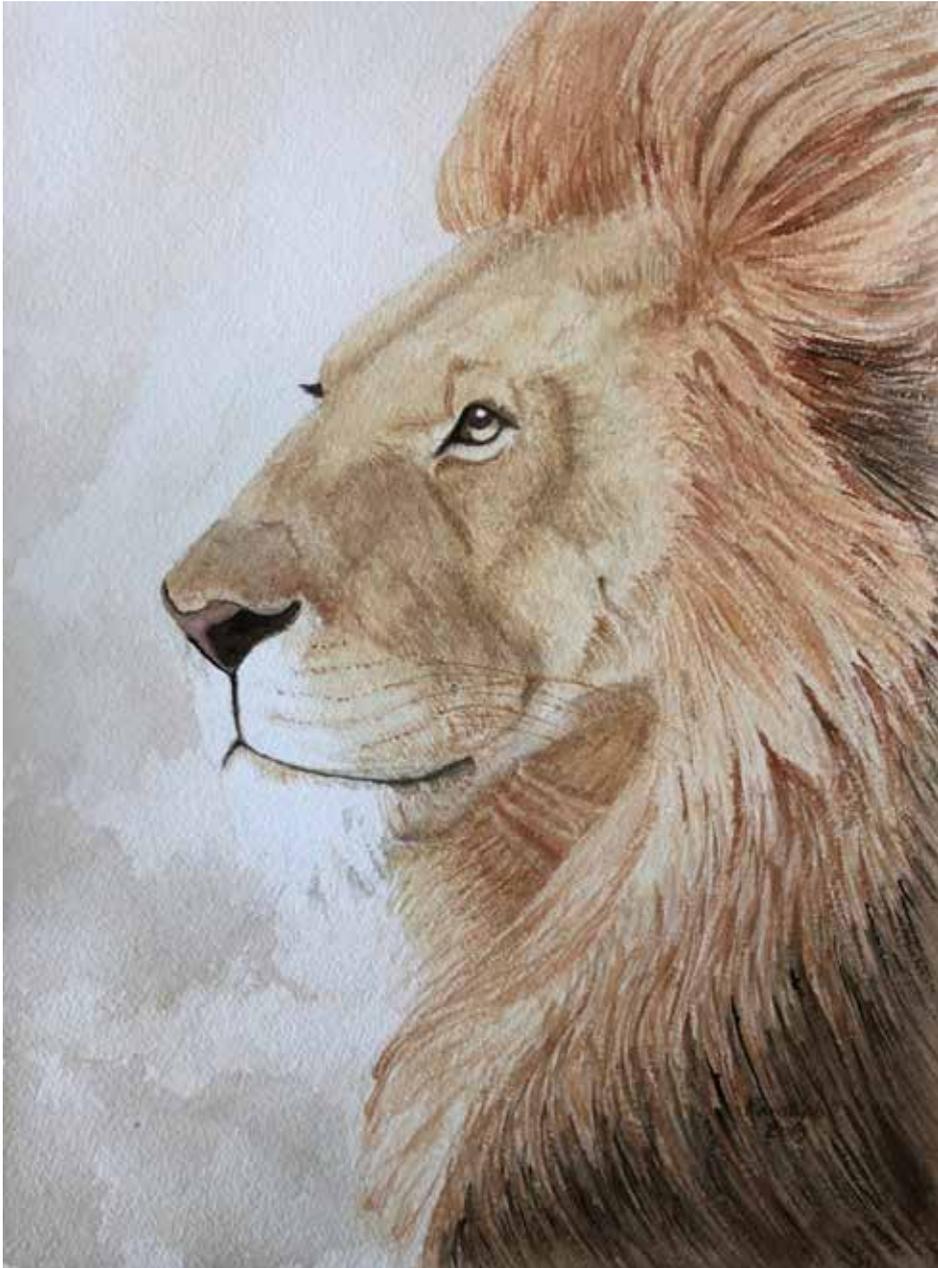
I left before night came on, but imagine the field filled with fireflies in summer  
and in winter, only ghosts — the same ghosts my brother said

came into the house at night to shatter bottles and leave holes in the walls.  
We both left on bedside lamps so as not to endure the dark, and I'd lie awake

for hours, listening. In daylight, I could hold the future. I was sure.  
I did not know the new farm would pick apart the bales and till the milkweed under.  
That monarchs would starve mid-migration.  
That they were half-ghosts already, fluttering before my eyes.

# Lion

Visual Art by Leigh Randolph



## Untitled

Poetry by Lake Angela

The dark insects of happiness, anonymous  
as they fly and fall—the dreamscapes never  
permeate my blood: I grow cold and shiver  
through the night. Ants meet and exchange  
scents. Into the scree the ropes fly and birds fall  
from black jaws. The sweet-smelling flowers  
were vultures over the dying one, hovering—  
A story about death is also a love story. A cloud  
breaks. Is it possible? Yes, our baby is growing  
on my dreams. Perilously, I make mostly  
nightmares, digested long before the colors  
reach my mind, empty except for the blackbirds  
frozen in ice. A drop hits the floorboards  
and the ants rush back in their holes to tend  
the divinations, to hush the red spark. Any attempt  
to understand is a translucent hand bent before  
the thaw, stirring the nameless ones we have lost.

## A Merz

Prose by David Capps

Just then, a boy S had never seen before on the playground came up and asked: 'Would you rather be happy, or be a stick?' And the moment S responded he dropped to the ground as though lifeless. He was long and slender with thin papery bark, and a kind of open dark spot at the top of him so that it looked like he had been gnawed by some small animal - perhaps the strange boy, or perhaps it had been where he would have broken off from a tree, if he had broken off from a tree, which he didn't, because he was a boy, and boys don't break off from trees.

S was not the best at keeping his different trees straight and he did not come equipped with a pair of eyes and a mirror, so really it would have been hard to tell which kind of tree he had come from—but surely it must have been some kind of tree, since he appeared to be a stick, and sticks come from trees, after all. So he lay there in the wet grass and would have been looking up at the blue sky, again, if he had had eyes, or perhaps the aid of a telescope, which comes to much the same thing. You couldn't very well grow a telescope from your bark though, or so it seemed to S.

He was never one to panic though; he had been in this situation before and knew that it was really just a matter of time until someone found him. And since sticks have no natural predators, there would be no reason to be afraid. It would be like when he agreed to let Charlie 'mummify' him with duck tape—yet that was different because when Charlie left him, S did panic—after all, he felt trapped, and writhed to make his escape: a finger here, an elbow here, like an inch worm wriggling out of a mesh of leaves, and finally the eyes slits that reveal the world, still there, with Charlie, laughing.

Actually, he was more like a Mexican jumping bean — eventually he would just move, displaying to everyone once and for all that he was still himself! And the school should find out and his parents should find out and the matter quickly settled. But there was not the slightest desire to move, or rather S-the-stick did not have the same desire to move as S-the-boy, or had their desires cancelled each other out? And how could he compare himself to Mexican jumping beans when they are Mexican jumping beans and he is not a stick, because, after all, he was a boy and boys are not sticks? What was he talking about? It was as plain as day: you are a stick, even if there is nothing like being a stick!

And as S began yet another daydream, or would have, if sticks could dream, which they can't, this time about presenting his finding before The Important Panel of Highly Esteemed Scientists that, in point of fact, humans are biologically sticks, and that what he was, was evidence to prove it, a little girl snatched him up and began to beat him against the chain link fence, to which he did not outrightly object because it was rather beneath his stature to object, for doing so would only put him on the same moral level as his assailant, and, after all, humans who recognized their true natures were above those who did not.

She beat him and beat him and beat him until he broke into several tinier pieces, and that was a difference he could perceive — it was as though a bird had spread out its wings in mid-flight and yet they just kept spreading until they detached from its body altogether, so that, to speak truly, it was not the bird but the bird's wings that flew — yet somehow his pieces were still him, the way the notes of the severed songbird's song were still its, even though they were what made up the song. And if it was a listening that made the notes a song, and the wind that made the bird's wings fly, what was it that made those sticks him? Well, if it was a listening that made the notes that song and the wind that made the bird's wings fly that way, what it was that made those sticks him-wedged-between-fence-links was rather obvious: a little girl.

But it wouldn't be for too long, because a whole flock of birds soon snatched him up and delivered him to their nests. Each bird had him, or a part of him, and from what he could tell it would be even more difficult for him to be discovered. How would the school get up the trees and into the nests to rescue him? Fire departments would have to be called from all across the state, that was for sure, or else a real army of birds would have to be called in to help—and they could, for people, being sticks, are actually much lighter than they look.

# Hydrangeas In Flames

Visual Art by Ann-Marie Brown



## Anatta

Poetry by Gerard Sarnat

Self is the center  
of narrative gravity's  
rising and falling.

## Rainbow Man

Fiction by Sylvia Ketchum

The first time Jesse saw color, he was five. An arch of spectral colors appeared in the sunlit sky, guiding his path home—he'd discovered a rainbow. He couldn't wait to tell his parents.

Along the way home, he stooped down and picked some orange flowers. He gazed in awe at their fuzzy, brown centers. Poppies. They reminded him of his mother. Running through the front door, he gleefully presented them to her.

“Look Momma! Flowers that match your eyes! See...” he said, holding them up as high as he could. “Orange with brown in the middle!”

She peered down at him. “No, son!” she scolded. “Those flowers are gray.” Dropping to her knees, she looked into his eyes and breathed a heavy sigh. “There are no colors other than black, white, and the shades in-between. Never forget that, son,” she said, caressing his shoulders.

“Yes, Momma,” Jesse said quietly, his chin on his chest.

Momma was right; she was always right. From out of the corner of his eye, he stared down at the flowers in his little hands and told himself they were gray. He willed it to be true.

He'd forgotten about the rainbow.

The next day, he ignored the greens, oranges, reds, yellows, and blues on his way to school. He kept his eyes glued to the gray concrete beneath his feet. The safe zone.

“The world is black, white, and gray,” he sang to himself, jumping from one section of sidewalk to the next, careful not to step on the cracks.

In class, he dutifully picked up his monochromatic crayon set and drew the perfect shades of black, white, and gray inside the outlines of his color-by-numbers homework. His teacher was pleased.

“Good job, Jesse,” his teacher said, her smile revealing a perfect set of white teeth.

Jesse studied the colors of his new world. In his mind’s eye, he tried to turn them into shades of gray: red was a perfect medium gray, yellow a shade lighter, orange was in-between the two, and forest green was a dark gray.

But in the effort to change them, everything began to ache. His wrists, elbows, and knees became stiff. A dull pain pulsed from behind his ribs, and a lump formed in his throat that wouldn’t go away. It pained him to breathe and it took effort to speak. He felt heavy and hollow all at once.

“The world is black, white, and some gray,” he chanted to himself. He wasn’t going to give up.

As he continued to push down his feelings, his senses soon numbed. Then a tight little knot formed in his stomach like a hard, black seed. But hidden so deep within his psyche, it could be thoroughly ignored.

At age fourteen, the colors flared-up again. Hues of every color surrounded him, leaving him gasping for air. Did anyone else see the world as he did? Was it a bad thing? He approached his father hoping for an answer, but he didn’t know how to broach the subject.

“Dad, look at those pink blossoms on that cherry tree,” he said slowly, “aren’t they beautiful?”

His father wasn’t pleased.

An intervention followed. Then the meetings with the family minister began.

“Color is a sin,” the minister lectured in a stern tone. “The world is black and white. The path sometimes turns a shade of gray, but a virtuous person’s sight never veers from the black and white path. The right path,” he had warned.

The minister was correct. He had to be. There was something wrong with him, but he didn’t know how to fix it.

Pulling a clump of hair from his head, he stared at his reflection in the bathroom mirror as red blood ran down the side of his face. He wished he was dead.

“Better to carve out my eyes with a knife than commit such a sin,” he said to himself, determined.

Jesse stuffed his colors down deeper: his blues, his greens, and deeper still, his pinks. The seed in his gut grew to the size of a walnut.

“The world is black and white,” he uttered in his daily prayers, pushing his pain down even further.

Jesse buried himself in school work. He graduated from high school with honors and went off to an ivy league college. But in his second year, the colors reared their ugly, twisted heads yet again, threatening his sanity. This time he squashed them down with alcohol and recreational drugs, numbing them into obedience. The booze worked for a while, but when it stopped being effective, he switched to heroin.

Somehow, he managed to push through the next few years, keeping his colors and the needle tracks that ran up and down his arms, a deep, dark secret.

But after graduation, his world came crashing down around him in a swirl of vivid colors. Blues, greens, yellows, and reds filled his brain in a torrent, blinding him—a nervous breakdown. The black seed in his gut had grown to

the size of a grapefruit. With no more room to grow, it exploded, rising to the forefront of his consciousness like fireworks. He couldn't think; he couldn't breathe.

Addiction.

Rehab.

"Hello. My name is Jesse. I am an addict," he professed to his fellow addicts in a Narcotics Anonymous meeting. He scanned the room. "And...I see color," he added in a quiet voice. He'd said it. A weight lifted from his shoulders.

Applause.

"Thank you, Jesse," they said in unison.

He gasped, his eyes darting around the room, confused. Did they hear the second half of his confession? He wasn't sure.

But then, as Jesse stepped down from the podium, a tall, thin man approached him. "I too, see color," he said with a nod. "You are not alone," the man offered in a whisper, giving him a wounded smile and an assuring pat on the back.

Jesse smiled in return, a smile that quickly turned into a broad grin. His heart fluttered in his chest, threatening to burst from his rib cage as it slowly sank in.

"I am not alone..." he whispered under his breath. "I am not—"

A spectrum of colors caught his eye. He gazed out the window. A double rainbow had appeared in the bright-blue sky after a warm, spring rain. A rare and wondrous thing to see. As he walked over to get a closer look, the tall, thin man slipped his hand into his, and they smiled up at the double rainbow, together.

"I am not alone," Jesse repeated, giving the man's hand a tight squeeze. "Thank you."

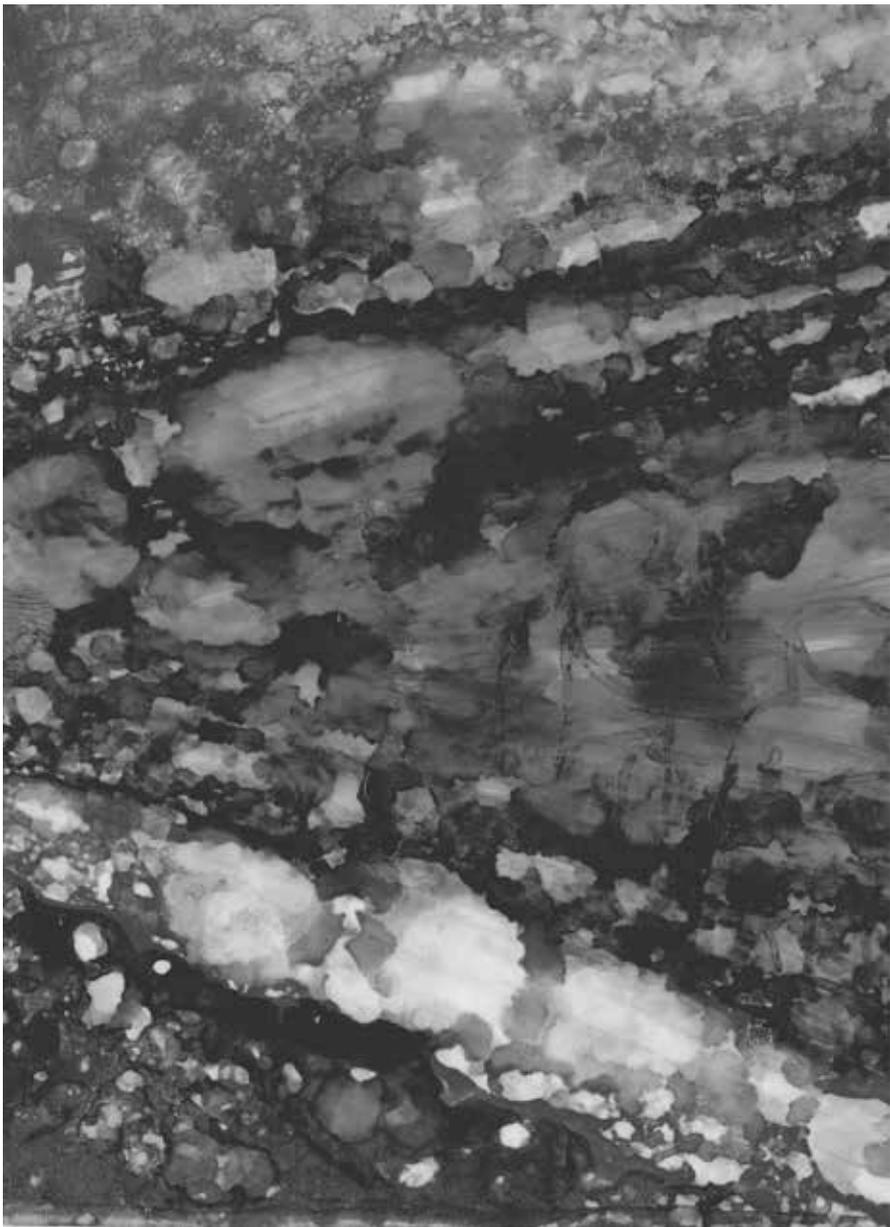
## Germantown, 1777

Poetry by Amy Karon

boom! i wake to shots  
fallen boys coat fog-choked streets  
through which redcoats drum

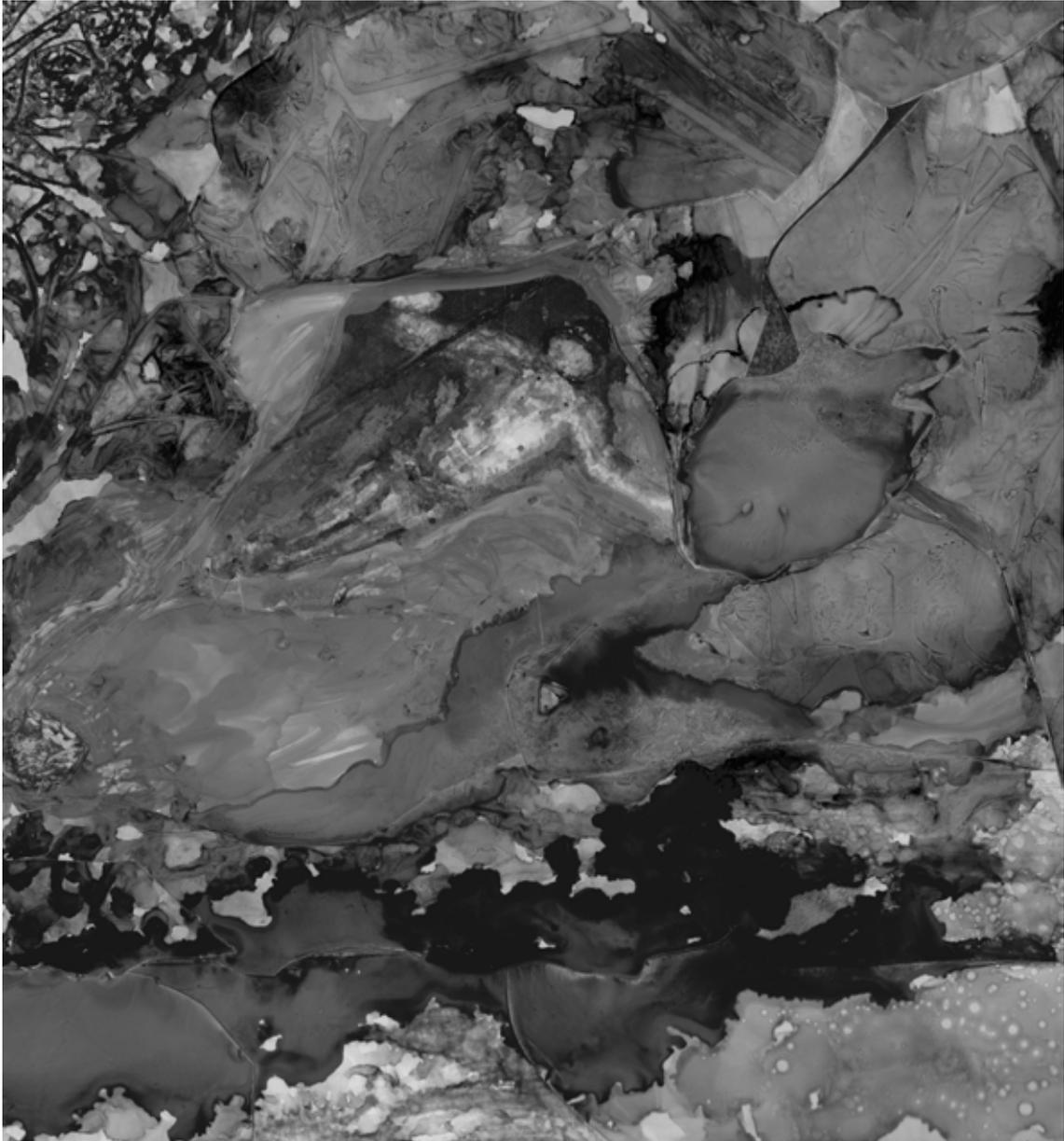
# Echoes Of People I Knew

Visual Art by Claire Lawrence



# The Nightmare

Visual Art by Claire Lawrence



## merde twin: vestibular

Poetry by Lily Rose Kosmicki

flashing grasp of otoliths  
the initial counterpart is fungi  
who is being a girl or child, or not?  
our relations are translated

form a duo, one overgrown  
we made homes in others, you, we  
alongside us, altars, keepsakes, toys  
tablatures rotating

pencil becomes pen in semicircular tangles, a cartwheel across bridges over borderless,  
nebulous swamps where siamese cats grow into each other, then rip apart  
they see the first naked woman in the context of nuclear weapons, reflexive eye  
movement  
the underlying structure of the sensorium is unknown, filled days with tackling  
baiting, playing, and chasing, chased myself to knowing: today i, today we

## spiral crustacean: nervous

Poetry by Lily Rose Kosmicki

electrical fascicles  
sun dried and mint ridden  
are rubbed all over the hands  
finger axons whorl in tandem  
stolons run, molt, hermit  
away, the shell gets stepped on  
soft curled abdomen  
reveals the radial, parallel  
cords, we don't have answers  
but we find bearings, bear with it

left hand up, back, and down, ordeals unfold a wavering compass whirring  
back, down, hand up, hand up, hand up, paths to opaque depths  
you will learn so much from this death, in glows unfolding, parting, partnering  
clouds of soft words for apples, I miss a stroke, high strings sinewy  
in the year of the centerline, i let the flower ones stay

# Little Fellow Makes an Effort to be Heard

Visual Art by Eric Erekson



# Standing in the Wake of Decisions Made Under the Influence of the Fear of Eating Lunch Alone

Visual Art by Eric Erekson



## Not Another Fall

Poetry by Kenneth Pobo

I just fixed  
summer's breakfast.

Crimson leaves  
plug up our gutters,  
look nervous,  
like the sky's feet  
will break them.

## Cow Dream

Poetry by Jen Ryan Onken

It felt real. The calf,  
its red carpet forehead  
sniffing my hand, shunting

my shoulder to the mountain  
there above the meadow's  
glowing lantern.

Come back, the husband called,  
the children distant salt  
statues in the high grass—

the calf drifting back  
with the other calves  
taking turns licking salt.

Into a giant cow's head  
the mountain shifted  
its weight—

furred, exhaling warm wind.  
Her giant forelock whorl,  
the slap-scent of fodder  
startled me—

## Haiku

Poetry by Ben Moeller Gaa

fireworks  
the burst  
of tart lemonade

## Magnum Opus

Poetry by Lily Hinrichsen

I straddle darkness and light  
Smudges of inky dilemmas  
    snuffing out sunlit rooms  
Tangled black threads  
    threatening the smooth transition of time  
Light peeks around the curtain  
    like a grinning moon  
    with a story to tell.

I have much to say about light  
because darkness has lived under my skin for so long.  
Give light center stage  
    and I will perform my magnum opus  
I will exhale yellow beams  
    with tears as my props.  
I will open my arms wide to the applause  
    take deep bows of gratitude  
and never look back.

# Sweet Dreams

Visual Art by Richard Wu



## The Man Who Died Twice

Poetry by Alfred Fournier

Lazarus, on his second deathbed—  
poster child of Love's great reversal  
of oblivion, returner from darkness,  
outliver of friends, a man of modest  
success—offers up a life completed  
on the sticky palate of death, knowing better  
than to doubt this time.



# Buenos Aires Caminito District

Visual Art by Keith Moul



## My Soul to Keep

Fiction by Scott Hughes

Two young men sit across from each other in a diner booth. One, with blond hair, stares out the window at a starry sky.

The other, black-haired, looks quizzically at him. "This is a dream."

"What?" says the blond. He flattens his palms on the tabletop, fingers splayed, and studies them. "Yeah... I don't know how I know... but it is."

"Look around."

The servers, cooks, and other customers have blurry faces. When the blond focuses on them, their features begin to solidify. If they turn their heads or walk by or stand, though, their faces again become colorful smudges, like an Impressionist painting.

"Huh," says the blond.

He picks up the salt shaker and releases it a foot above the tabletop. It doesn't fall. Instead, it floats there, spinning slowly. White specks spill from the cap's holes and swirl into a small cloud like a swarm of crystalline gnats.

The black-haired man lifts the pepper shaker and sets it afloat. "The thing is, which one of us is dreaming?"

The blond cocks his head. "I am."

Carefully, as if performing surgery or defusing a bomb, the black-haired man reaches out and stops the salt and pepper shakers from twirling. He lowers his hands. The shakers continue to hover, yet he eyes them as though he expects them to drop.

"How do you know, though?" he asks.

"Because," the blond says, "I know who I am. I mean, I know I'm dreaming."

"As do I."

"Yeah, but I know who I am when I'm awake." He plucks the shakers

from the air and sets them on the table.

“I know who I am too,” says the black-haired man. “I know who you are. I know the you in the real world, that is.”

“Yeah, I know you! The you in the real world, as you said.”

“So, that doesn’t help us then, does it?”

“Right. If we both know ourselves, and we both know each other...”

“Then we’re back where we started,” says the black-haired man.

“Who’s the dreamer?”

The blond scratches his chin. “Can you read the menu? I’ve heard it’s hard to read in dreams.”

They both take a menu from behind the napkin dispenser, then scan them.

“Just a bunch of jumbled letters,” says the blond.

“Same here.”

“But... I still know what it says. Bacon and eggs, pancakes and sausage...”

“Hamburger, BLT, fries, onion rings...” The black-haired man puts back his menu. “Well, that doesn’t help, either.”

“Nope.” The blond sets down his menu and drums his fingers. “What about this? If you know me, tell me who I am.”

“Okay, and you tell me who I am. A back-and-forth thing.”

“Deal.”

“First things first.” He runs his fingers through his black hair. “Names. Yours is Eric.”

The blond taps his nose. “You’re Malcolm.”

He nods. “We were college roommates.”

“Freshman year,” says Eric. “Mercer University. They paired us randomly. That was, what... eleven years ago?”

“Yep,” says Malcolm. “You were pre-med, because that’s what your dad wanted. You wanted to be a philosophy major, though.”

“You were undecided. You always said you were majoring in drinking and minoring in gynecology. I heard it a hundred times, and every time, you acted like it was a brand-new joke.”

Malcolm chuckles. “Still pretty funny.”

“Not really. We didn’t room together after freshman year. We hung out a few times here and there. I don’t know what major you ended up choosing or if you even finished college.”

“I know,” says Malcolm.

“How would I know you’re telling the truth? I mean, if I’m the dreamer, you’re in my brain like any other memory. You could say anything.”

“Like how I flunked out and worked for my dad selling cars.”

“Right,” says Eric. “My brain’s simply supplying that detail, making you say that.”

“Except that’s not what happened. I became a nurse.” Malcolm slips a thin napkin from the dispenser and begins folding it. “Looks like I got closer to pre-med than you. Unless, of course, you are a memory in my brain and the real Eric out there in the waking world actually became a doctor.”

Malcolm places the napkin, now an origami swan, on the table and thumps it gently. It flaps its paper wings and flutters in circles.

“How do I really know you’re Malcolm?” Eric asks. “The real Malcolm might’ve looked completely different, and you’re somebody else, like my neighbor or someone I work with or some random person I saw the other day at the grocery store.”

Eric catches the origami swan in both hands. He puffs air into his cupped hands, then opens them, and out flits a blue butterfly—not paper, but real. Malcolm grins.

“There may not be a real Malcolm at all,” says Eric. “You could be someone my brain made up. I have dreams like that all the time, where people I know look like other people.”

“So, you dream...”

“Well, yeah.” Eric gestures to the diner around them.

“You dream, therefore you are.”

“And my brain made you say that because I did become a philosophy major and study Descartes.”

“Everybody’s heard that one. And that’s not even right. It’s ‘I think, therefore I am.’”

“And I know that. It’s in my brain, so you know it too.”

With one hand, Malcolm snatches the butterfly. He wiggles his other hand’s fingers over his closed fist like a magician doing a coin trick. He opens his hand to reveal a six-inch black feather, which he balances upright on the table.

“Well, Eric,” says Malcolm, “if your name even is Eric... Everything you’ve said about me, I could say about you. You could be my neighbor, my coworker, or a cashier at my grocery store. Or nobody at all.”

Malcolm slams his palm onto the feather. Eric jerks back, but nobody else in the diner seems to notice. Malcolm moves his hand, and the feather is gone.

“I dream too,” Malcolm says. “There’s one in particular I’ll never forget. It was freshman year, in fact. My great-grandmother fell at the nursing home she was in. Broke her hip. She went to the hospital but was otherwise fine. Then a few nights later, I had a realistic dream, like this one. I was in my great-grandmother’s house, the one she lived in most of her life before the nursing home. She was there, except she was young, younger than us now. Other people were there too, all wearing clothes from the thirties or forties. Some were dancing to jazzy music on a record player, one of those with a big cone speaker. Others, including my great-grandmother, were playing a game where they stood in a circle with their hands behind their backs, holding an orange with their chins.” Malcolm mimes the action my pressing his chin onto his chest. “They took turns passing the orange to each other using only their necks. Laughing and dancing up a storm. The whole time, I watched from a rocking chair in the corner. After a while, my great-grandmother came over. I’d never seen her so young or so beautiful, except maybe in an old photo. She kissed my forehead and told me she was okay. That’s when I woke up in our dorm room. That morning, my mom called me and told me Granny had passed the night before, and all I could say was ‘I know.’”

“That sounds familiar. You—or the real Malcolm—probably told me when it happened back then, or...”

“Or it happened to you, Eric. It was your great-grandmother. Your

dream about her.”

“Yeah... I just don’t know...”

“Because maybe it did happen to me,” says Malcolm, “and you’re the dream.”

“I have a feeling that’s what’s happening now.”

“I feel it too.”

“You died—or the real Malcolm died—and you’re visiting me in a dream.”

“Or you’re visiting me. You could be the dead guy.”

“I don’t feel dead,” says Eric.

“Neither do I. So, we’re back at the beginning. Who’s the dreamer?”

Eric places a palm on the table. As he raises his hand, the feather, still upright, reappears from under his fingers. Now it’s white.

Then he slides from the booth and stands. “Only one way to find out.”

Malcolm scoots out and stands too. “We wake up.”

“One of us wakes up.”

“And the other...”

Eric shrugs.

A roaring tornado rips through the diner, sucking up food, plates, booths, smudgy-faced patrons, and the white feather. It tears everything apart, leaving Malcolm and Eric untouched as it churns around them.

“Did you make this?” Eric asks.

“No. I thought you did.”

“Okay, on the count of three, we let the tornado take us. That should wake us up.”

Malcolm nods. “One.”

“Two.”

“Three,” they say together.

# Cohen

Visual Art by Kristin LaFollette



# When All We Think of Is How Much We Carry with Us

Poetry by Jonathan Yungkans

after John Ashbery

I try to dream my great-grandfather, Pappy, try  
to find words, syllables, fragments of light and air  
to conjure a man so soundless that his presence  
spoke pages and stilled the room. I was a bottle,  
corked tight, a note inside, while Grandma and Mom's  
conversation eddied around my glass wall. Years

later, still sealed reticent, I watched Pappy  
in a hospital bed, wizened as driftwood, both of us  
barely bobbing, an ocean between us,  
ironed glass-smooth in the wordlessness  
for all the times we'd seen each other. We'd heard  
little more between us than a push broom's shush,

pauses between purple tides of bougainvillea bracts  
down his red-painted concrete driveway. He'd paint  
the driveway the deep green  
of bougainvillea leaves and airtight chats,  
leaked only as color, pigment that remained  
to my knowing and aching, vacant ear when Pappy

changed the color back to fire-engine or flame.  
Silence singed; the shushing remained constant,  
even when I took over the sweeping. In that plant's  
stretching tendril, I envision him, though the bracts  
on the vine at my house are closer to pink  
than the violet that fell there. In the spaces

between leaf and thorn, I watch  
and listen for soundless scraps of color  
he and I missed in the hospital, to clip and plant  
like vine cuttings—not to grow Pappy but to grow  
toward him in phrases and sentences, uncork the note  
we both sought to read. Tendrils stretch,

but do they grasp the lath sure enough  
to weave and bloom? Do they topple back from their own weight?  
like the vine here the neighbors cut it loose.  
A long cloud, dark green and crepe pink,  
fell back onto my house and, dried and browning,  
hacked away. It reminded me

of the white hospital room, the enameled steel bed,  
the air bleached of conversation when Mom  
wasn't blooming in the room with small talk.

Our tête-à-têtes were brush and shovel-scrape:  
hearing his broom call me into the bracts' wave;  
a metallic rasp answering along a bottle green shore.

## Banal and Neglected

Poetry by KJ Hannah Greenberg

Palliation long overlooked unpretentious options; nutrition, sleep, exercise,  
In favor of surgery, radiation, chemo; nasty projects meant to flense cancer.  
Weak strategies, envisioned to ease symptoms, instead, reduce life's charm,  
Cause hopeful survivors to abandon reason against sundry cosmetic fears.

It's possible, alternatively, to embrace bird song, perform one hundred asanas,  
Remove invaders visa via hand hot baths, lemon water, Essiac, lots of cuddles.  
Meditation's a wonderful baldric for healing energies, for restoring reservoirs.  
Much of muchness clichéd "cures" profit drug companies or hospital officials.

Cogitate that neuroglia can't maintain vigor when myelin sheaths go missing.  
Support, protection (similarly serenity), get undermined if glial cells misbehave.  
Sadly, today's twisted prognostications prove few treated women fecund. Thus,  
It's often best, when determining futures, to consider both aurum and dunghills.

No matter the cambering of our designs, our mollifying or otherwise pleasuring  
Persons disconnected from human welfare, rudimentary needs' value is reduced,  
Sold off (not necessarily to discommode nor inculcate fresh alacrity in forgotten  
Courses, but to relieve social histologies). All things as calmly, trust disappoints.

Hence, horologists, kings, calmly, no matter their domains, attempt old, disused  
Campaigns, harbor unrealistic expectations of aged achievements, fret, cry out,  
Fail to independently corroborate elaborate details of weskits, boots, disregard  
Abandon, and dully pass over trivial details that make health-giving conceivable.

Although experience's an excellence baily, a teacher of walls, buttresses, certain  
Ramparts, expressly facing prospective partners' expiations, claim knowledge's  
Need for gluey dedication. Changes in plans, also atonement, are as nothing when  
Trite, felicitous acts translate "commonplace" into "mistreated;" illness succeeds.

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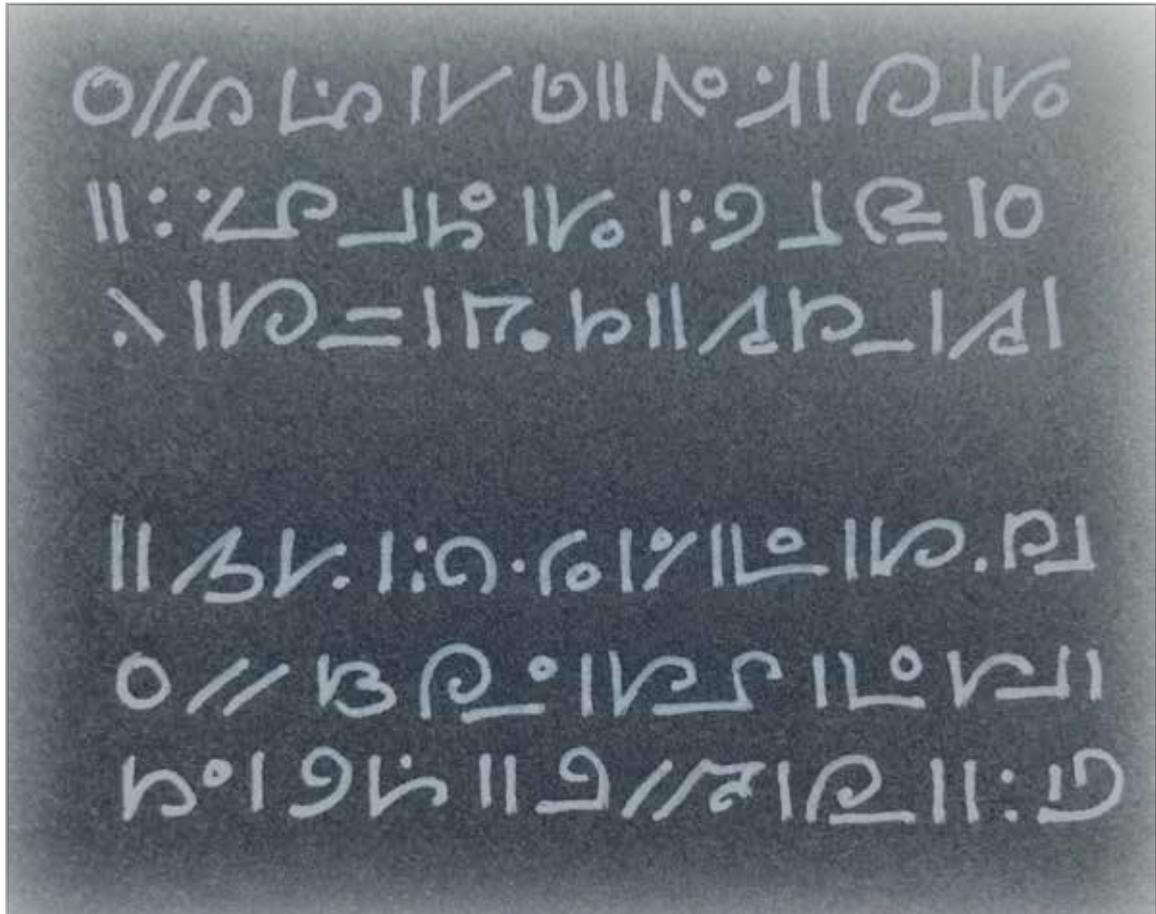
# Asemic Translation Project

Created and Collected by Karla Van Vliet



# Asemic Writing

Visual Writing by Karla Van Vliet



I recently became interested in asemic writing, a developing art movement that depicts writing-like markings within artworks. For me it embraces the mystery between silence, what is yet to be spoken, and meaning, the semantics of known language. It inhabits an essential space of expression, the need to depict what is yet fully denotational. What is represented are the feelings or ideas that the word, or markings, suggests, to the artist, and to the viewer.

As a poet and artist, I began to experiment using asemic writing in my own work. This led to contemplating meaning and the relationship between the writer/artist and viewer. These works engage the viewer in a unique way, beyond more traditional abstract work, because the marks seem like one should be able to read them and that the marks are meant to be read. This awakens the part of the mind that engages with language and in lieu of being given words with known meaning the viewer creates their own translation or meaning of what is written, entering, in a sense, a conversation with the piece.

How would poets engage in this process of translation, I wondered. I created a piece of asemic writing and sent it off to a handful of poets requesting they participate in my experiment. I am grateful for those who were able and who sent me their translation collected here. I'm fascinated with the similarities and disparities of their lovely pieces; I hope you are too.

Karla Van Vliet

## Asemic Translation

Translation by Michele Parker Randall

As civilization ends: prepare well. Take what you need, only / remember a bowl can be a cup; ceramic breaks. Truthfully, we valued all of the wrong things. What we thought we'd mourn. Much can be done with your hands / even more with another alongside.

Now: the journey you face covers terrain familiar to you only from books you read / saw as a child. Set your direction with the tallest tree / living thing. Mark your feet forward—longer than your lifespan / longer than your memory—in search of another human: being.

## Asemic Translation

Translation by Mark Halliday

Through clogging furbelows and craggy shims  
past bosky gaggles of blue shadow  
between echo-deep cairns with no ladders

we wandered dreaming toward each other  
choosing not to surrender to material noise  
until at last our eyes created belief.

## Asemic Translation

Translation by Karin Gottshall

The oracle — thorn-mouth — she  
Unyoked herself from the bitter  
Smoke — the thousand starlings

Flew up — flower foot — bare-shinned  
In the river — she unbuckled  
Her heavy bronze helmet

## Asemic Translation - Triage

Translation by Tim Seibles

Firelight hems the horizon and it all begins again:  
cool wind shakes off the dark, early birds flex their wings,  
and those people who starred in your dreams --

do you remember: the street,  
her voice, that long house?  
Do you think you can remember?



Over and over the night brings  
the soft rush of salt  
from the brackish river:

not unlike the play of blood  
in the body: the current rushes  
from the heart the soul swimming

## Asemic Translation - Warnings

Translation by Didi Jackson

Often in winter the sun sings so low I can barely hear its electric hum, the verse a whispered litany of *lord have mercy* after the quince have fallen to the ground, placed like tiny golden planets in a wooded orbit. Today I want everything all at once: sun, song, flesh, my ego eating

the shortened day; from inside the house I click the key fob twice to lock the car door and confuse its chirp with the jeer of the jay, the two flashes of amber lights only warnings — But what is it I should heed? Tomorrow's full day of snow? The beech tree's eerie rattle? How easily Adam was persuaded?

## Asemic Translation - [in the direction of]

Translation by Sue Scavo

It seems singular – a leaning into, a curiosity. Singular, this gesture *toward*, which is also *away*. As if there is nothing out there that draws. As if there is nothing gesturing us *toward* [and also *away*]. As if gesture will not move *into* and *with*.

Isn't this what always happens in me [you]? As if the gesture, the lean [call], is nothing and the answer [response], nothing, too.

## Asemic Translation - Bower

Translation by Rachel Elion Baird

I dream lost in the bower with trees that talk to the wind. One tree – I am silent, why, lost among the others, one turning wind talks, circles I resting with them, with the tall trees there in that wood, full of sound

silent among the others then, suddenly a roaring, hinged open, they are listening too, I dream in the bower, wind speaks to the trees there, a new language born by their turning, an open-eyed bird that has heard comes to join us, silent winged.



I am in the bower, turning in circles lost inside these trees, at home inside of them, I am hinged open and I remember in a waking dream, how I once was a tree face open to the wind, bowing and dancing, turning with each gust;

my branches shelter, my body strong, my roots reaching to the others deep within the earth, all of us standing together, sharing this language born of turning.

Translation by Michele Parker Randall

Notes:

My approach to this project was one of questions: Is it a language/translation? Are these word pictures and/or symbols? What does the form tell me? What is repeated? I turned the writing every which way and even held it up to a mirror to look for alternate patterns. After charting and drawing the symbols I returned to my third question: the form. Writing that looks as if it is carved in stone, that is even and fully justified, implies importance—refined and measured thought—carefulness. What message would require that much consideration? This is my answer.

Translation by Rachel Elion Baird

Notes:

My process in translation is to take a character or series of characters and interpret them as a word or phrase, thereby, when the character or series repeats, the appointed word or phrase also repeats. I used this technique for my Secret Language of Mt. Philo series, where I took glyph images from rocks and attributed one glyph to one character in the roman alphabet, replacing the roman character with the image. I see Asemic Writing as the organic creation of glyphs, which were the original form of written communication/language. In the first piece you can see my original translation of the Asemic piece, then the poem that formed from my stepping into the Asemic story.

# BIOS

**Samia Ahmed** is from India but now lives in America where she pursues her passion for writing. Her work can be found in *Coffin Bell Journal* and *Indus Woman Writing*. Her flash fiction was nominated for Best of the Net Anthology 2019. She has a forthcoming publication in an anthology published by Penguin. She has a masters in journalism. She believes in breaking stereotypes and continues to practice it while petting pretty black cats and sipping chai.

**Lake Angela** is a poet, translator, and dancer-choreographer from Lake Erie who develops her work at the confluence of verbal language and movement. She holds a PhD from The University of Texas at Dallas for her inter-semiotic translations of German Expressionist poetry into dance and has her MFA in poetry. She is a medieval mystic and beguine. Her poems and choreography often explore the possibilities in and kinds of darkneses and silences and the expressions of colors, waters, and suffering. Her first two books of poetry are forthcoming from FutureCycle Press in 2020 and 2021. Her poetry-dance may be found on her website: [www.lakeangeladance.com](http://www.lakeangeladance.com)

**Michael Anthony** is a writer and artist living in New Jersey. He has published fiction, poetry, illustrations, and photographs in literary journals and commercial magazines. Most recently these include the Paterson Literary Review, Terror House Magazine, Tall Tale TV Podcast, and Pithead Chapel. His work may be viewed at: [MichaelAnthony.MyPortfolio.com](http://MichaelAnthony.MyPortfolio.com)

**Rachel Elion Baird** (aka M R Baird) is an artist, poet and writer. Raised in San Francisco on the pabulum of the west coast literary and art renaissance. Her work appears in numerous publications including: *Poetry Scotland*, *South Light*, *Into the Void*, *New Millennium Writings*, and *Cape Cod Poetry Review* as well as in experimental film and multimedia installations. Baird is the author of two published poetry collections: *Uplands*, and *Valentines and other Tragedies*. She is currently working on the hybrid narrative project, *Weather Girl*. Rachel Elion Baird resides among her ancestral lands of Scotland and the island of Martha's Vineyard, MA. To see more of her work, you can go to: <http://RachelElionBaird.com>

**Robert Beveridge** (he/him) makes noise ([xterminal.bandcamp.com](http://xterminal.bandcamp.com)) and writes poetry in Akron, OH. Recent/upcoming appearances in *The Virginia Normal*, *Credo Espoir*, and *Chiron Review*, among others.

**Bethany Breitland** has worked as a barista, bouncer, English teacher, researcher, and a florist. From Indiana by way of Massachusetts, California, and Georgia, she now lives with her family in Vermont. When she's not walking trails, Breitland is singing Fleetwood Mac covers on her home karaoke machine.

**SyBrand** is a queer non-binary person living in Edinburgh, Scotland. They write through the haze of sleep deprivation to try and make sense of gender, relationships, parenting, and ADHD. Their work has been published in *Popshot Quarterly* among others. You can find them on Twitter @TartanLlama.

**Ann-Marie Brown** is a Canadian artist working on the west coast of B.C. in a house she shares with her husband, son, dog, and the occasional bear. Her oil & encaustic paintings have been exhibited across the United States & Canada, and have found their way into public, private & corporate collections. More of her work can be seen at [www.annmariebrownpaintings.com](http://www.annmariebrownpaintings.com)."

**David Capps** is a philosophy professor and poet who lives in Hamden, CT. He is the author of two chapbooks: *Poems from the First Voyage* (The Nasiona Press, 2019), and *A Non-Grecian Non-Urn* (Yavanika Press, 2019).

**Judith Chalmer** is the author of two books of poems, *Minnow* (Kelsay Books 2020) and *Out of History's Junk Jar* (Time Being Books 1995) and is co-translator with poet, Michiko Oishi of two books, *Red Fish Alphabet* (Honami Syoten 2008) and *Deepening Snow* (Plowboy Press 2012).

**Robert Cole** is a professional writer based in New York City who has been crafting poetry for over thirty-five years. His poems have appeared in literary journals, anthologies, and non-fiction works. In 2011 his poetry chapbook *The Life of the Body* was set to music by composer Tom Cipullo, and has since been performed at venues in the US and Canada, including Carnegie Hall.

**Samantha Cramer** has been in love with poetry since she stole her mother's old college textbook of English poetry from the bookshelf at age 10. Poetry has always managed to bring her into a fumbling understanding of things that are difficult to express. Poetry speaks to her of the archaeology of the psyche, the strata of loneliness and desire inside all of us, and the equally strong ache to be truly and fully seen. Samantha is a Northern California native, and lives on the foggy redwood coast of Santa Cruz, where she works in education.

**German Dario** resides in Tempe, Arizona with his wife, two sons, two dogs and sometimes a fish. Recently published in *Into The Void*, *The Friday Influence*, *Right Hand Pointing*, *The New Verse News*, *The Acentos Review*, and *The American Journal of Poetry*.

**RC deWinter's** poetry is anthologized, notably in *Uno: A Poetry Anthology* (Verian Thomas, 2002), *New York City Haiku* (NY Times, 2017), *Cowboys & Cocktails* (Brick Street Poetry, April 2019), *Nature In The Now* (Tiny Seed Press, August 2019), in print in *2River*, *borrowed solace*, *Genre Urban Arts*, *Gravitas*, *Night Picnic Journal*, *Pink Panther*, *Reality Break Press*, *Southword* among many others and appears in numerous online literary journals..

**Stephanie Dickinson** lives in New York City with the visionary poet Rob Cook and their feline, Vallejo. Her novels *Half Girl* and *Lust Series* are published by Spuyten Duyvil, as is her feminist noir *Love Highway*. Other books include *Heat: An Interview with Jean Seberg*, (New Michigan Press), *Flashlight Girls Run* (New Meridian Arts), *Girl Behind the Door* (RMP), and her just released *Big-Headed Anna Imagines Herself* (Alien Buddha Press).

**Desiree Dufresne** is a painter living and working in Los Angeles. She works primarily with acrylic and oil, and seeks to create evocative abstractions of emotion and experience through her art. Desiree's work can be found in several private collections around the United States.

**Eric Erikson** resides in Salt Lake City, UT. He teaches courses at the University of Utah and also brings the importance of art and creative practices to the community through Continuing Education.

**Christopher Farago** is a poet living in Greenbelt, Maryland. His work has appeared in *The Northern Virginia Review*, *Exterminating Angel Press: The Magazine*, and *Endlessly Rocking: Poems in Honor of Walt Whitman's 200th Birthday*.

**Federico Federici** lives between Berlin and the Ligurian Apennines. His works have appeared in international journals and anthologies including *3:AM Magazine*, *Jabruch*, *Der Lyrik*, *Poet Lore*, *Raum*, *Sand*, *Trafika Europe*, *Magma*. Among his books: the prose/poem in English and German *Requiem auf einer Stele* (2017), the asemic albums *Liner notes for a Pithecanthropus Erectus sketchbook* (2018) with a foreword by SJ Fowler and *A private notebook of winds* (2019). In 2019 he has been awarded the Nassau Review Writer Awards for poetry.

**Craig Finlay** lives in South Bend, Indiana, where he spends most of his time being a librarian. A child of the Rust Belt, his poems have most recently appeared in *Levee Magazine*, *Coast/noCoast*, *Obra/Artefact* and *West Trade Review*. His first book, *The Very Small Mammoths of Wrangel Island*, is coming out in 2020 from Urban Farmhouse Press.

A counselor by trade, **Ann Fisher** lives, works and writes at the base of the Vermont Green Mountains. She is the Fiction Assistant Editor for *Mud Season Review*. Her work has appeared in *AcrosstheMargin*, *The Sonder Review*, *Heartwood Literary Magazine*, *The Green Mountain Club News*, and elsewhere.

**Alfred Fournier** is an entomologist in Phoenix, Arizona. He is a graduate of Purdue and George Washington Universities. His poetry has been published in *The New Verse News* and *Cathexis Northwest Press*, and is forthcoming in *Plainsongs*, *Kind Writers* and *The Main Street Rag*.

**Lizzy Fox's** poetry has appeared in *The Greensboro Review*, *Hunger Mountain*, *Santa Ana River Review*, *Small Orange*, and elsewhere. She holds an MFA in Writing from the Vermont College of Fine Arts, teaches at Norwich University, and offers creative writing workshops across the northeast. She lives in Montpelier, Vermont with her partner and their cat, Rhu.

**Gretchen Gales** is the executive editor of *Quail Bell Magazine*, a women-run publication devoted to the otherworldly and scholarly. She has written for more than 30 publications and has had her artwork featured in *cream city review*, *Lady Blue Publishing*, and others.

**Karin Gottshall's** most recent book is *The River Won't Hold You* (Ohio State University Press, 2015). Her poems have appeared in *Crazyhorse*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *Kenyon Review*, and many other journals. Gottshall lives in Vermont, where she teaches at Middlebury College and directs the New England Young Writers' Conference.

**KJ Hannah Greenberg** captures the world in words and images. Her latest photography portfolio is *20/20: KJ Hannah Greenberg Eye on Israel*. Her newest poetry collection is *Beast There—Don't That*, Fomite Press, 2019. Her most recent fiction collection is *Walnut Street*, Bards & Sages Publishing, 2019.

**Mark Halliday** teaches at Ohio University. His book of poems *Losers Dream On* appeared in 2018 from the University of Chicago Press.

**Robert Hilles** has won the Governor General's Award for Poetry for *Cantos* from *A Small Room*. He has published seventeen books of poetry and his latest is *Shimmer*. His novel *Don't Hang Your Soul on That* will be published in 2021. The prose poem included here is from *A Piece of Rag Wrapped Gold*. Website: <https://roberthilles.wordpress.com/>

Science says we hold memory in our cells. **Lily Hinrichsen** believe this to be true. Her body remembers all moments; holding the impressions in the grip of her hand. The hand that holds a brush, a pen, a pair of scissors. Her writing, like her art, is an expression — in every sense of the word — a voicing, an utterance, illustration, appearance, an extraction of her everyday observations.

**Scott Hughes's** fiction, poetry, and essays have appeared in such publications as *Crazyhorse*, *One Sentence Poems*, *Deep Magic*, *Redheaded Stepchild*, *Entropy*, and *Strange Horizons*. He is the Division Head of English at Central Georgia Technical College. His short story collection, *The Last Book You'll Ever Read*, is available from Sinister Stoa Press/Weasel Press, and his poetry collection, *The Universe You Swallowed Whole*, is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press in 2020. For more information, visit [writescott.com](http://writescott.com).

**Didi Jackson** is the author of *Moon Jar* (Red Hen Press, 2020). Her poems have appeared in or are forthcoming from *The New Yorker*, *New England Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Ploughshares* and elsewhere. After living most of her life in Florida, she currently lives in Vermont teaching creative writing at the University of Vermont.

**Michele Karas** holds an MFA from The City College of New York, where she was the 2016 recipient of the Jerome Lowell Dejur Award. Her poems have appeared in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Tinderbox*, *Thrush Poetry Journal*, and elsewhere. Read more at [MicheleKaras.com](http://MicheleKaras.com).

**Amy Karon's** poems have recently appeared in *Claw and Blossom*, *Eastern Iowa Review*, *Zoetic Press*, *Kahini*, *Lagan Online*, *Blanket Sea*, *Half Mystic Journal*, and *Eternal Haunted Summer*. She is a freelance writer based in the San Francisco Bay Area.

**Sylvia Ketchum** is an avid reader, writer, and consumer of gluten-free snacks. She resides in the Pacific Northwest with her husband and her pet cockatoo, Karl.

**Lily Rose Kosmicki** is a person, but sometimes feels like an alien in this world. By trade she is a librarian at the public library and by night she is a collector of dreams. Her zine *Dream Zine* recently won a Broken Pencil Zine Award for Best Art Zine 2018. Her work appears in *GASHER*, *glowworm*, *where is the river*, and *The Fanzine*.

**Kristin LaFollette** is a writer, artist, and photographer and is the author of the chapbook, *Body Parts* (GFT Press, 2018). She is a professor at the University of Southern Indiana and serves as the Art Editor at *Mud Season Review*. You can visit her on Twitter at @k\_lafollette03 or at kristinlafollette.com.

**Claire Lawrence** is a storyteller and visual artist living in British Columbia, Canada. She has been published in Canada, the United States, United Kingdom and India. Her work has been performed on BBC radio. Claire's stories have appeared in numerous publications including: *Geist, Litro, Ravensperch, Brilliant Flash Fiction*. She has a number of prize winning stories, and was nominated for the 2016 Pushcart Prize. Claire's artwork has appeared in *Wired, A5 Review, Sunspot, Esthetic Apostle, Haunted, Fractured Nuance* and more. Her goal is to write and publish in all genres, and not inhale too many fumes.

**Maggie Martin** is the author of the poetry chapbook *Old Stories* (Niobe Press) and co-author of *Rebel in White*, a memoir on the life and nursing career of Bertha McComish. Her work has appeared in journals and magazines has been anthologized in *Coalseam: Poems from the Anthracite Region*, and *Palpable Clock*, University of Scranton Press; *VIA, Voices in Italian America*, Perdue University. An essay on her time as a disc jockey on a country western station in the south during the 1970's has recently been published in the anthology, *Air; Hippocampus Magazine and Books*. Her work can also be found on-line at *deluge Journal* and *Folded Word*, and *Stony Quartz Literary and Arts Journal*. A poet, writer, and writing workshop facilitator, she has been the recipient of numerous grants and fellowships from the PA Council on the Arts, including the Artist in the Schools Fellowship. A fellow of the Virginia Center of the Arts, she has twice been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. Martin lives by the Contoocook River in Henniker, NH.

**Barbara Rizza Mellin** is an award-winning artist and writer. Her original prints and paintings have been exhibited in shows throughout the US and internationally online. Her art have been featured in one-woman shows at Duke U.: Chapel Hill, Cary, Mebane and other Arts Council Galleries, and Central Piedmont Community College. She taught art for 25 years in Massachusetts before relocating to North Carolina, where she creates in her home studio.

**Ben Moeller-Gaa** an award winning haiku poet that hails from St. Louis, MO. His work regularly appears in a number of haiku journals and anthologies around the globe. He is the author of the Touchstone Award winning *Whbbones* (Folded Word 2018) as well as three haiku chapbooks.

He has a degree in Creative Writing from Knox College, works as a Senior IT Functional Analyst for MilliporeSigma, and enjoys travel, music, art and other worldly meanderings with his wife Jessica and their rascal of a cat, Anastasia.

**Keith Moul** is a poet of place, a photographer of the distinction light adds to place. Both his poems and photos are published widely. His photos are digital, striving for high contrast and saturation, which makes his vision colorful (or weak, requiring enhancement). <http://poemsphtosmoul.blogspot.com/>

**Jen Ryan Onken** lives and teaches high school in Maine and is a candidate at Warren Wilson's MFA Program for Writers. Some recent poems have been featured in *Love's Executive Order*, *Harbor Review* and are forthcoming in Maine Poet Laureate Stuart Kestenbaum's *Poems from Here* on Maine Public Radio. She recently earned a prize from the Maine Poet's Society for previously unpublished poets.

**Belen Odile** is a poetess, artist, advocate, and cinephile. Being only 19 years old, she has been published in a number of literary journals both in print and virtually. Carrying a large social media following Odile is widely recognized by her somber, nostalgic, and cutting poetry style. Her art began while hospitalized for severe anorexia over the course of two years. Be in touch with socials and her website at [\\*belenodile.com](http://*belenodile.com)

**Elizabeth Paul** has an MFA in creative writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts, and her texts and images have appeared in *Cold Mountain Review*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Sweet Lit*, *The Indianapolis Review*, and elsewhere. Her chapbook *Reading Girl* is a collection of ekphrastic prose poems based on paintings by Henri Matisse. Liz served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kyrgyzstan and currently teaches writing at George Mason University. Learn more at [elizabethsgpaul.com](http://elizabethsgpaul.com).

**Kenneth Pobo** has a new book out from Duck Lake Books called *Dindi Expecting Snow*. His work appears in *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Atlanta Review*, *Nimrod*, *Mudfish*, and elsewhere. His chapbook, *Your Place Or Mine*, is coming out from the Poetry Society of Alabama in 2020.

**Michele Parker Randall** is the author of *Museum of Everyday Life* (Kelsay Books 2015). Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Nimrod International Journal*, *Atlanta Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, and elsewhere.

After a life of pretending to be left brained **Leigh Randolph's** heart found art.

**henry 7. reneau, jr.** does not Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Instagram. It is not that he is scared of change, or stuck fast in the past; instead, he has learned from experience: the crack pipe kills.

**Juheon (Julie) Rhee** is a 14-year-old student and is currently attending International School Manila. During her free time, she enjoys reading Agatha Christie's mysteries and hanging out with her friends. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in *K'in Literary Journal*, *Indolent Books*, *Heritage Review*, *580 Split*, and has been recognized by Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.

**Gerard Sarnat** is a retired physician who has built and staffed homeless and prison clinics. He was also a Stanford professor and healthcare CEO. As a writer, he has won First Place in Poetry in the Arts Award, the Dorfman Prize, been nominated for a handful of recent Pushcart and Best of the Net Awards, published four collections and appeared in Stanford, Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Pomona, Brown, Columbia, Wesleyan, University of Chicago periodicals as well as in *Gargoyle*, *Main Street Rag*, *American Journal Poetry*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *New Delta Review*, *Brooklyn Review*, *LA Review*, *San Francisco Magazine*, and *The New York Times*.

**Tim Seibles**, the former Poet Laureate of Virginia, is the author of 6 collections of poetry—most notably, *Fast Animal*, which was a finalist for the 2012 National Book Award. He lives on the Elizabeth River in Norfolk.

**George L Stein** is a writer and photographer in the New Jersey/New York metropolitan area. Interest in monochrome, film photography and urban decay/architectural subject matter has come to include street photography, fashion, fetish, collage, and oppositional/juxtapositional projects in digital format. His work has been published in *Midwest Gothic*, *NUNUM*, *Montana Mouthful*, *Out/Cast*, *The Fredericksburg Literary and Art Review*, and *DarkSide magazine*.

**Carol Talmage** is the author/illustrator of *A Possum in My Pantry*, a children's alphabet book featuring animals of the eastern forest. She also co-authored a memoir, *I Gave You to the Lord*, documenting the missionary life of Mariella Talmage Provost. She has loved writing since junior high school and is still trying to improve her skills in poetry, memoir, and essay. She lives in Lincoln, Vermont and regularly gets together with the South Street Writers in Bristol, Vermont.

**Maciej Toporowicz** is a multimedia artist based in Brooklyn, and Grahamsville, NY. He came to USA as political refugee in 1985. His work was presented in shows at Lombard Freid Fine Arts, Galeria Camargo Vilaca, The Jewish Museum, Museo D'Arte Moderne, P.S.Museum and others.

**Robin Turner** is the author of *bindweed & crow poison* (Porkbelly Press). A Best of the Net and Pushcart Prize nominee, her work has most recently appeared in *Unlost Journal*, *Glass Poets Resist*, *Sweet Tree Review*, and *Virga Magazine*. She is a community teaching artist in Dallas, Texas, and an online writing guide for homeschooled teens.

**Gina Urban** one of the heteronyms of a street artist and performer who doesn't feel so optimistic about making America great again.

**Nico Vassilakis** is a verbo-visual poet. His books include *TEXT LOSES TIME* and *The Amputation of L Mendax* among others. He was an editor for *The Last Vispo Anthology: Visual Poetry 1998-2008*. Nico's website is Staring Poetics - <https://staringpoetics.weebly.com/> He lives in NYC.

**Richard Wu** is a Eugene McDermott Scholar from the University of Texas at Dallas. In his spare time, Richard enjoys creating artwork, as well as writing and composing music. His works are published or forthcoming in *The Penn Review*, *The Healing Muse*, *Pulse: Voices from the Heart of Medicine*, *Daily Science Fiction*, and other publications.

**Judy Xie**'s writing has been nationally recognized by the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, both Rider and Ringling University, and the Festival of Books. She attends Mountain Lakes High School in New Jersey and has been published in *PolyphonyHs*, *The Columbia Journal*, *Into the Void*, and *Noble / Gas Qrtly*, among others. However, she is most known for consisting of at least 50% ice cream.

**Jonathan Yungkans** is a Los Angeles-based writer and photographer with an MFA from California State University, Long Beach. His work has appeared in *Oyster River Pages*; *Quiddity*, *West Texas Literary Review* and other publications. His poetry chapbook, *Colors the Thorns Draw*, was released by Desert Willow Press in August 2018.