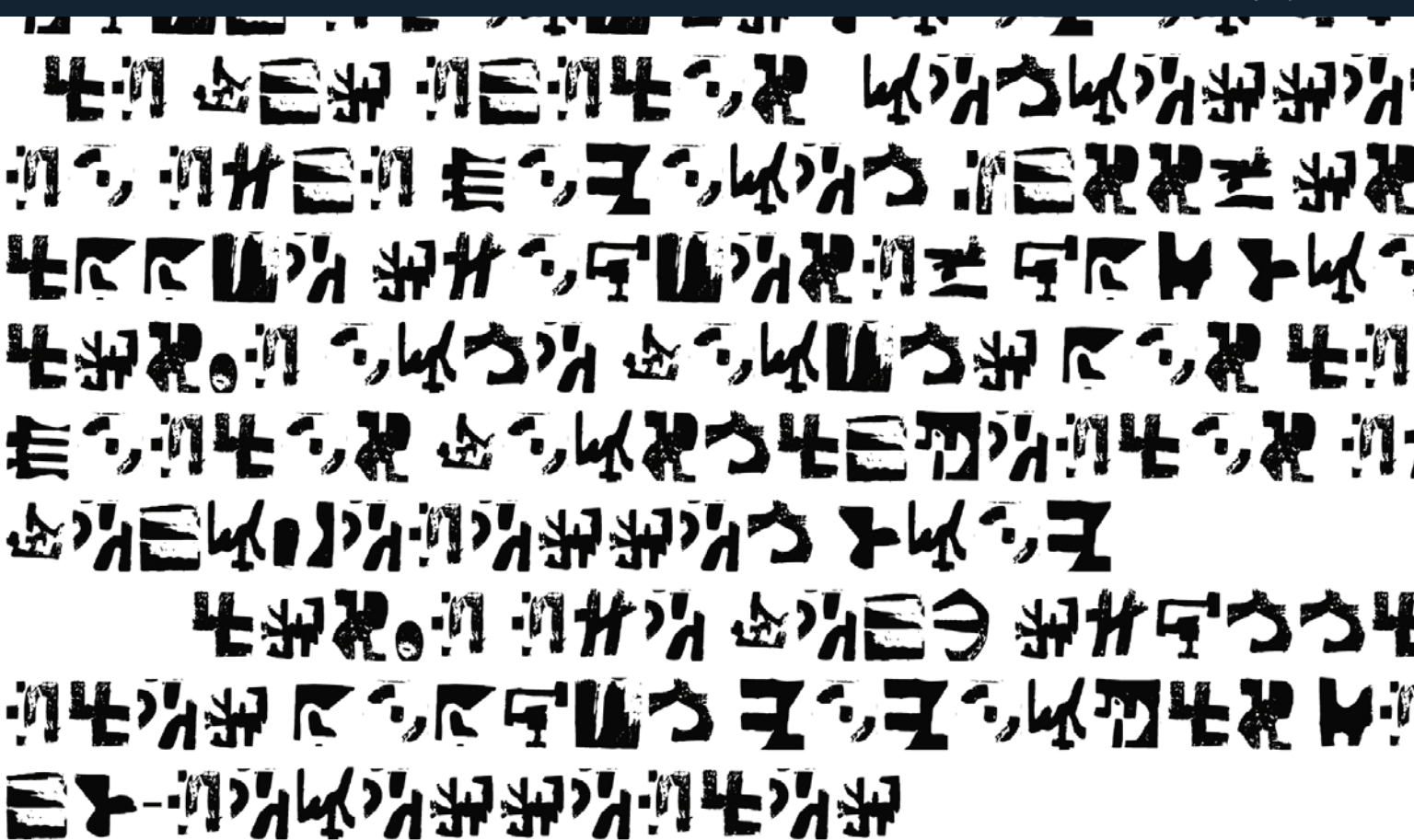


# DELUGE JOURNAL

ISSUE: SUMMER 2023

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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.

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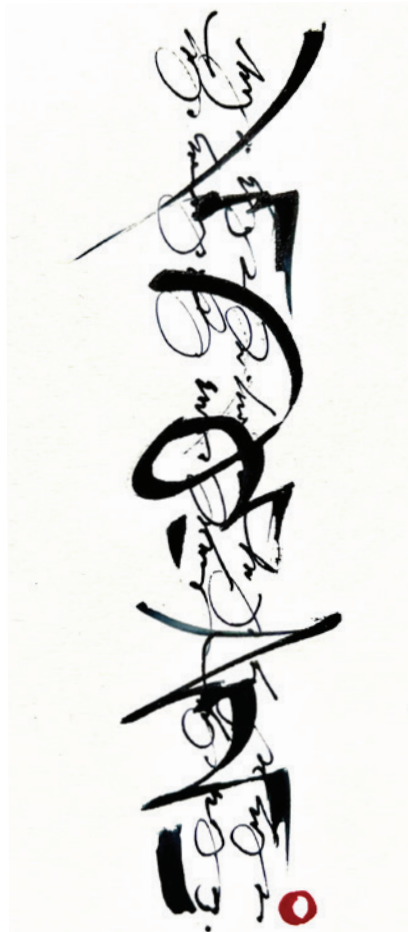
# FROM THE EDITOR SUMMER 2023

Editor: Sue Scavo

INSIDE  
[MAKE]

Inside the word *circle* are the words *equidistance* and *orbit*. As if there could be equal, as if a perfect orbit was ever possible. Inside the word *perfect* is *flawless* but also *make do*. It is what we do, make. Inside the word *make* is *knead* which I translate to *need*. There is always need in a making. Inside *need* is *peril* and *emergency* and also *death*, not just what is desired. To come full circle was never meant to be flawless. Or easy.

Editor: Karla Van Vliet





## (IN)HALATION

Poetry by Laura Rockhold

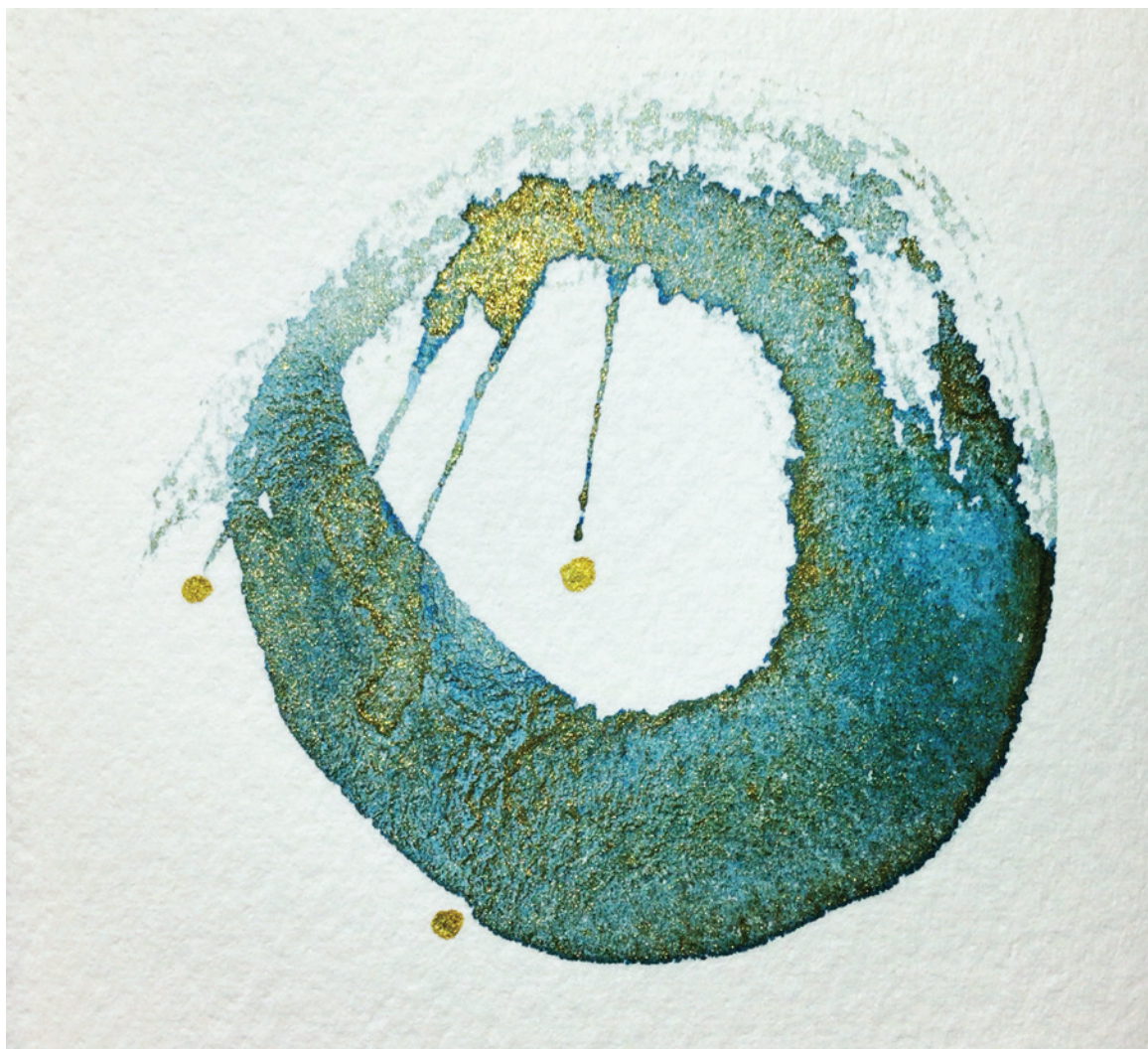
*halation (noun): the spreading of light beyond its proper boundaries to form a fog around the edges of a bright image*

*"In all chaos there is a cosmos, in all disorder a secret order." – Carl Jung*

somewhere between sleeping & waking an unknown  
(reality?) always beyond me like memory or a dream  
& I am trying to catch it when I am not too tired or too quick  
to wait it comes as lines forming  
coalescing into shapes into unnamed color into absence  
of color advancing retreating appearing disappearing  
passing through a grid lit (with constellations?)  
one green concentric ring & a green (word?) a sound  
of many sounds a round murmuring atmospheric musing  
a collective crescendo in a vault chromatic notes  
not belonging to a scale of the key in which a passage is written  
turning interacting ascending descending a flagellate floating  
its center conducting biorhythmic sucking & when I search  
for answers I get: sacred geometry cosmic grid  
sounds of creation not of here but something more  
than bodies perceived invisible so I write: sublime  
& erase it only its ghost its aura remains like letting go  
of all that is (unnecessary?) like cutting out the noise inside  
& just listening to a light mist & not wiping it away

# Untitled

Visual Art by Jan Roes



# Goldfinches

Poetry by Jory Mickelson

Who ever wanted  
to become the trembling  
shape of a bird?

For how long  
and to what  
end? Fierce

as hawks, gold-  
finches strike out  
over the meadow

challenging each other  
for what, territory?  
the coneflower's tight seed?

a mate? How often  
have I hungered  
without knowing

gratitude had already  
spread its wings  
within me?

# Parting

Poetry by Jory Mickelson

I believe they buried us  
tired, as the leaves fell  
from the trees

to cover us when we  
could go no further

Doesn't every story  
end or begin like this:

arriving at the path's  
ceasing or coming to

the first parting  
of the grass

# Hatsuyume

Visual Art by Kate Chadwick



# Heart of Karst

Visual Art by Kate Chadwick






# Barracuda 360°

VISPO by Katie Cloutte


## CHAPTER 1.

*Barracuda 360°*

### Loomings.

Call me Ishmael.  Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the steam and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the sea. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in the world degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me.

There now is your insular city of the Manhattoes, belted round by wharves as Indian isles by coral reefs—commerce surrounds it with her surf.  Right and left, the streets take you waterward. Its extreme downtown is the battery, where that noble  is washed by waves, and cooled by breezes, which a few hours previous were out of sight of land. Look at the crowds of water-gazers there.

Circumnavigate the city of a dreamy Sabbath afternoon. Go from Corlears Hook to Coenties Slip, and from thence, by Whitehall, northward. What do you see?—Possibly like silent sentinels all around the town, stand thousands upon thousands of mortal men fixed in ocean reveries. Some leaning against the piles; some seated upon the pier-heads; some looking over the bulwarks of ships from China; some high aloft in the rigging, as if striving to get a still better seaward peep. But these are all landsmen; of week days pent up in lath and plaster, tied to counters, nailed to benches, clinched to desks. How then is this? Are the green fields gone? What do they here? 

## Side Fishtail Split

VISPO by Katie Cloutte

Now, Bildad, like Peleg, and indeed many other Nantucketers, was a Quaker, the island having been originally settled by that sect; and to this *Side fishtail split* in general retain in an uncommon measure the peculiarities of the Quaker, only variously and anomalously modified by things altogether alien and heterogeneous. For some of these *same* Quakers are the most sanguinary of all sailors and whale-hunters. They are fighting Quakers; they are Quakers with a vengeance.



So that there are instances among them of men, who, named with Scripture names—a singularly common fashion on the island—and in childhood naturally imbibing the stately dramatic thee and thou of the Quaker; still, from the audacious, daring, and boundless adventure of their subsequent lives, strangely blend with these unoutgrown peculiarities, a thousand bold dashes of character, not unworthy a Scandinavian sea-king, or a poetical Pagan Roman. And when these things unite in a man of greatly superior natural force, with a globular brain and a ponderous heart; who has also by the stillness and seclusion of many long night-watches in the remotest waters, and beneath constellations never seen here at the north, been led to think untraditionally and independently; receiving all nature's sweet or savage impressions fresh from his own virgin voluntary and confiding breast, and thereby chiefly, but with some help from accidental advantages, to learn a bold and nervous lofty language—that man makes one in a whole nation's census—a mighty pageant creature, formed for noble tragedies. Nor will it at all detract from him, dramatically regarded, if either by birth or other circumstances, he have what seems a half wilful overruling morbidness at the bottom of his nature. For all men tragically great are made so through a certain morbidness. Be sure of this, O young ambition, all mortal greatness is but disease. But, as yet we have not to do with such an one, but with quite another; and still a man, who, if indeed peculiar, it only results again from another phase of the Quaker, modified by individual circumstances.


Like Captain Peleg, Captain Bildad was a well-to-do, retired whaleman. But unlike Captain Peleg—who cared not a rush for what are called serious things, and indeed deemed those self-same serious things the veriest of all trifles—Captain Bildad had not only been originally educated according to the strictest sect of Nantucket Quakerism, but all his subsequent ocean life, and the sight of many unclad, lovely island creatures, round the Horn—all that had not moved this native born Quaker one single jot, had not so much as altered one angle of his vest. Still, for all this immutableness, was there some lack of common consistency about worthy Captain Bildad.

# Ballet Leg

VISPO by Katie Cloutte

Soon all the boats but Starbuck's were dropped; all the boat-sails set—all the paddles plying; with rippling swiftness, shooting to leeward, <sup>Ballet leg</sup> and Ahab heading the onset. A pale, death glimmer lit up Fedallah's sunken eyes; a hideous motion gnawed his mouth.

Like noiseless nautilus shells, their light prows sped through the sea; but only slowly they neared the foe. As they neared him, the ocean grew still more smooth; seemed drawing a carpet over its waves, seemed a noon-meadow, so serenely it spread. At length the breathless hunter came so nigh his seemingly unsuspecting prey, that his entire dazzling hump was distinctly visible, sliding along the sea as if an isolated thing, and continually set in a revolving ring of finest, fleecy, greenish foam. He saw the vast, involved wrinkles of the slightly projecting head beyond. Before it, far out on the soft Turkish-rugged waters, went the glistening white shadow from his broad, milky forehead, a musical rippling playful  accompanying the shade; and behind, the blue waters interchangeably flowed over into the moving valley of his steady wake; and on either hand bright bubbles arose and danced  by his side. But these were broken again by the light toes of hundreds of gay fowl softly feathering the sea, alternate with their fitful flight; and like to some flag-staff rising from the painted hull of an argosy, the tall but shattered pole of a recent lance projected from the white whale's back; and at intervals one of the cloud of soft-toed fowls hovering, and to and fro skimming like a canopy over the fish, silently perched and rocked on this pole, the long tail feathers streaming like pennons.

A gentle joyousness—a mighty mildness of repose  and peace, invested the gliding whale. Not the white bull Jupiter swimming away with ravished Europa clinging to his graceful horns; his lovely, leering eyes sideways intent upon the maid; with smooth bewitching fleetness, rippling straight for the nuptial bower in Crete; not Jove, not that great majesty Supreme! did surpass the glorified White Whale as he so divinely swam.

On each soft side—coincident with the parted swell, that but once leaving him, then flowed so wide away—on each bright side, the whale shed off enticings. No wonder there had been some among the hunters who namelessly transported and allured by all this serenity, had ventured to assail it; but had fatally found that quietude but the vesture of tornadoes. Yet calm, enticing calm, oh, whale! thou glidest on, to all who for the first time eye thee, no matter how many in that same way thou may'st have bejuggled and destroyed before.

And thus, through the serene tranquillities of the tropical sea, among waves whose hand-clappings were suspended by exceeding rapture  moved on, still withholding from sight the full terrors of

## Wild Swimming

Poetry by Victoria Punch

the sayer says light and I  
lift. says dark and I  
go body-less and stunned,  
fjordwater cold

still, I am undimensional,  
my lines are smooth, cool  
and I can barely breathe.

and sometimes in the valley the dark  
will be a different kind of light  
illuminated by the shadows  
on the wall, I find that I am not  
myself, not myself  
at all

# Flying In the Dark

Poetry by Victoria Punch

in the gloam, when the shadows  
are thick as honey

and comb, I am thirsty, no river  
deep in me, I am hungry

the desolate is my daydream  
I am sand

between your fingers  
in the hourglass of your looking

when the small hours scratch  
my back bends round a small breathing thing

I find lee from the wind's relentless  
questions, from the haul of the day

I sing because it's all I know  
to do, with no words

left only tune, no tune left,  
only breath

# Untitled

Visual Art by Brian Michael Barbeito



# Prayer Cycle

VISPO by Caleb Peterson



*1st Repair.*

Trying Death	love dust	hot suns and suns	their asking the edge of my world
Nothing Red	grasps love	or floods which floods	enough for me the landscape
Rivers Trying	broken grasps	in threads for threads	come back together some comfort
And Nothing	wound broken	is what remains remains	after love everything shifts
Wringing Rivers	bodies wound	out of dirt the dirt	I try to remember the pieces of earth
Turns And	hands bodies	which bleed they bleed	into touch      into red yet live
Deserts Wringing	mourning hands	the life this life	now aching      wrought this effort
Death Turns	wide mourning	as dancing into dancing	alone unashamed a gasp in the surface
Red Deserts	dust wide	the hem as the hem	of the mourning of your absence



*2nd Repair.*

Listen beloved you are breathing  
Listen for the cool whispers

the wind of these lungs  
of the darkness

Green strokes of each unfurling  
Green beloved you grow

fist or flower  
thick and dewy

Language erupting from caverns  
Language strokes with each breathing

only the body knows  
beat within

Living pours out the mouth  
Living erupting and unfurling

in willow trees  
a whole entire forest

Forever open your deep  
Forever pours whole caverns

center and sing  
in every hand of soil

You want to forget  
You open your mouth

life's vibrance  
the way you remember

Then inhaling the nothing  
Then want the deep

air and water and life  
and the hurt buried

Make sound in whispers  
Make inhaling not to forget

make everything love  
to water the memory

Songs for you to grow  
Songs sound like nothing

this landscape of depths  
death could silence

*3rd Repair.*

Listen beloved you are breathing beat within  
Language strokes with each breathing wind of these lungs

Green strokes of each unfurling whole entire forest  
Living erupting and unfurling fist or flower

Language erupting from caverns in every hand of soil  
Forever pours whole caverns only the body knows

Living pours out the mouth the way you remember  
You open your mouth in willow trees

Forever open your deep and the hurt buried  
Then want the deep center and sing

You want to forget to water the memory  
Begin inhaling not to forget life's vibrance

Then inhaling the nothing that death could silence  
Songs sound like nothing and air and water and life

Begin sound in whispers of the darkness  
Listen for the cool whispers that make everything love

Songs for you to grow thick and dewy  
Green beloved you grow this landscape of depths

# Storm Cycle

VISPO by Caleb Peterson



*1st Repair*

I Lifting	wind up	my arms in the arms	like scant tumbleweeds of a storm
The Stirring	feel wind	unsettles unsettles	the sleep of the heart in its stable
Horses I	sound feel	like hair the hair	whining in the pit of my ears reared up on my wrists
Thunder The	awoke sound	an animal of an animal	jolting its neck like a snake sniffing in the dark
Coiled Horses	then awoke	I cry my cry	without utter or sound in the bed of that grass
And Thunder	toes then	like rain and rain	tapping alert in the night and my feet in the mud
Fear Coiled	gods toes	the burrow burrow	deep in the ruts in a crook of the earth
Lifted And	breathing gods	to the voiceless voiceless	the edge of my throat slumbering beneath
Stirring Fear	up breathing	like a spoon is the spoon	in a cup scraping the edge of my touch

*2nd Repair*

Stirring, wind  
Stirring up

unsettles  
like a spoon

in its stable—  
in a cup

I feel  
I wind

the hair  
my arms

reared up on my wrists  
like scant tumbleweeds

The sound  
The feel

of an animal  
unsettles

sniffing in the dark  
the sleep of the heart

Horses awoke  
Horses sound

my cry  
like hair

in the bed of that grass  
whining in the pit of my ear

Thunder then  
Thunder awoke

and rain  
this animal

and my feet in the mud  
rearing its neck like a snake

Coiled toes  
Coiled then

burrow  
I cry

in a crook of the earth  
without utter or sound

And God  
And toes

is a voiceless  
like rain

slumbering beneath  
alert in the night

Fear breathing  
Fear gods

is the spoon  
the burrow

scraping the edge of my touch  
deep in the ruts

lifting up  
lifting breathing

in the arms  
to the voiceless

of a storm  
the edge of my throat

*3rd Repair*

Lifting up in the arms I wind my arms	like scant tumbleweeds  of a storm
Stirring wind unsettles The feel unsettles	the sleep of the heart  in its stable
I feel the hair Horses like hair	whining in the pit of my ears  reared up on my wrists
The sound of an animal Thunder awoke an animal	jolting its neck like a snake  sniffing in the dark
Horses heard my cry Coiled then I cry	without utter or sound  in the bed of that grass
Thunder then and rain And toes are like rain	tapping alert in the night  and my feet in the mud
Coiled toes burow Fear gods the burrow	deep in the ruts  in a crook of the earth
And gods voiceless Lifted breathing to the voiceless	the edge of my throat  slumbering beneath
Fear breathing is the spoon Stirring up like a spoon	in a cup  scraping the edge of my touch

**Mad Scientist (2021) from the series  
Children in Homemade Costumes**

Visual Art by Jen MacIntyre



Hedgehog (2022) from the series  
Children in Homemade Costumes

Visual Art by Jen MacIntyre





## Am I Awake Yet?

Poetry by Vivian Faith Prescott

Am I awake yet? I floated through a year of dreams and the silver kettle after my morning walk welcomes me through the front door once again. I shake off the rain, pondering a thought—there's been a whale skeleton at the bottom of the sea all winter long and a black bear's bones have fallen through a carpet of moss. A woodpecker's wing-torn body and the remains of a vole are rotting somewhere—Everything leaves a trace. So will this—Our brother-in-law died from Covid-19 on Christmas Eve, and I learned to yoik from a woman on another continent. Every few weeks, we shook our bodies awake, grounded our feet, chanted the crow, the wind, and reindeer. Notes wavered and growled across time zones and opened our throats. This is awake, isn't it? Some nights I swear, being wide-awake is terrifying—lately it seems the wind merchants have sold all their knots and the body count keeps going up and up. A tree leans over a nearby road ready to fall, and winter is here yet again. It's like something is rousing me from torpor and I can't shake the dream—there's a recurring one—I'm a salmon floating in a school of other fish on the Stikine River delta and a poet I know is on the beach telling a story. With each wave of his hands through the gray mist, he summons us to the creek beside him. In the dream I don't want to wake up and I am melancholy when I do. But this is just like me—I'm always reading messages: a stone shaped like a foot, a driftwood shaped like a seal, and a heron flying overhead so close I see the underside of her blue wings. I blink myself awake.

# After the Dreams of Meret Oppenheim

Poetry by Sarah Feathersone

I.     gentian turning into a glass of wine

the Queen of the Elves, her bright thighs burning, lives on  
the precious stones are burying themselves  
she will never tell us what she knows

II.    a woman in a cage between tree trunks

first guest in the house but not the last to leave,  
she shivers under pale paternal gazes  
in the violet forest, three transparent moons

III.   a skeleton playing the cello

in Paris, an old woman is shedding her skin  
it is spring and the proverbs are breaking loose the walls  
under the tap of her white fingers all sounds are revealed



# OCCULATIOMORBIT late script

VISPO by Eric Lunde

□ 1. The first part of the script is a list of names and titles. It begins with "The first part of the script is a list of names and titles." and continues with "The names are: John, Mary, Peter, Paul, and James."

2. The second part of the script is a list of dates and times. It begins with "The second part of the script is a list of dates and times." and continues with "The dates are: 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003."

3. The third part of the script is a list of locations. It begins with "The third part of the script is a list of locations." and continues with "The locations are: New York, Los Angeles, London, Paris, and Tokyo."

4. The fourth part of the script is a list of events. It begins with "The fourth part of the script is a list of events." and continues with "The events are: the birth of Jesus, the resurrection, the ascension, and the Pentecost."

5. The fifth part of the script is a list of people. It begins with "The fifth part of the script is a list of people." and continues with "The people are: Jesus, the apostles, and the early church."

□ 6. The sixth part of the script is a list of places. It begins with "The sixth part of the script is a list of places." and continues with "The places are: Jerusalem, the Holy Land, and the New World."

7. The seventh part of the script is a list of things. It begins with "The seventh part of the script is a list of things." and continues with "The things are: the Bible, the cross, and the resurrection."

8. The eighth part of the script is a list of people. It begins with "The eighth part of the script is a list of people." and continues with "The people are: the apostles, the early church, and the people of the New World."

9. The ninth part of the script is a list of things. It begins with "The ninth part of the script is a list of things." and continues with "The things are: the Bible, the cross, and the resurrection."

10. The tenth part of the script is a list of people. It begins with "The tenth part of the script is a list of people." and continues with "The people are: the apostles, the early church, and the people of the New World."

# Springtime Studies of Death and Dying

Poetry by Stacey Johnson

## *i. with poet*

For this one, it came down to a single wish: growth.  
*Can you tell me how?* She asked, bare against the elements.  
There was singing by the burial ground, and she remembered  
childhood friends who spoke of immortality  
    --one by one,  
    then were gone.  
Just before they fell, they imagined themselves suns.

Later, she went to the school of omission.  
It is possible in dreams to be a guest in the land of the dead.  
There, she met a blind woman on a low bench, chewing.  
*You are much better company than the ones who think themselves gods,* she said,  
and they wrote for a long time together, there by the light of the axe.

## *ii. with deep time*

Cipher of memory, speak. Please,  
Blow your words past the border  
of this condition.

The first body will vanish soon,  
but the second goes slowly.  
A creature of culture does not exit  
so quickly from its binding web.  
There are decisions to unmake  
about the coming journey;  
in these, enough fiber to weave a net.

Ease them from us, invite them back.  
We live with them, and they know us.  
Gone is too easy a word; if it were complete,  
wouldn't the loss have less weight?

This is something else,  
a presence without assurance,  
some rupture reminding what the soil takes back.  
No, we have never been clean.

But if not gone, where?  
Here is the beginning of hope,  
thirteen ways of looking at a moldering body.  
What else could it be, these first lessons  
in seeing what won't let us look?

*iii. with acrobats*

We knew better than to argue  
but we couldn't help resisting  
certain distinctions between sublime  
and absurdist, laughter and horror.  
Awe and dread. It was all of these  
and everywhere at once,  
and they scolded us for laughing  
at the wrong times.

*When was the right time?* we wondered.  
But it was always *not yet*.

So much applause everywhere  
for the questing hero, but our supple forms  
learned something else in those years.  
How accepting and bearing  
what may come might be done with  
wild and weedy generosity.  
It was impossible to wait,  
but we loved our mothers.

*Ashes, ashes* we were all arcs and curves,  
falling down and back again, swinging between  
force and grace, dance and non-dance,  
gravestones and oleander, the bright horizon,  
and the way it shattered in the spray.  
Rose quartz and granite, sand.  
You, and your eyes. We played at not blinking  
until we lost again, shouting *I won!*

*Careful*, the greybeards would say  
as we ran back out into the cold.  
You'll catch your death. But it was our lives  
we were after and death was the feathered brush  
at the base of the spine, coming hard  
and we could hear it at our backs.  
We played at tagging it into a temporary pause  
but then it would turn, and we knew.  
*Run!* We called back and forth when  
the only response was *fast as you can.*

## River Triptych

Poetry by Stacey Johnson

i.

Everything happened after your birth,  
when you left on a boat of herons

*a new Eve  
not to be eaten  
as anybody's muse*

your spine a hearing trumpet  
you blew self-portraits in glass,  
and only spoke between worlds

*mère, mer  
now mother, now sea.*

cosmos of your eyes kindled light  
on which to ride the seventh horse  
away from the house of fear  
gallop through the stone door  
to the land of swinging serpents  
singing stories from the well

*Dear pilgrim, come up  
here is the memory tower*

ii.

There is a way to thread a map  
forming knots at points of collision.  
Without the crash of time,  
space has no memory

*I meant to  
make something*



But you've only ever made  
works-in-progress, your studio ever  
empty but for the mess: tributary threads  
suspended in ropy confusion above us

*until I leave you this canopy,  
that you might one day  
assemble, looking up*

We would have no choice  
but to return to the sounds  
before words

*in one place  
expanding out  
then back*

between carryings but what happens  
in this state, when the tremble  
of memory is soul?

iii.

And then came the memory  
of someone who so loved the world  
that they could not stop highlighting her face,  
who at every turn of the gaze would find  
her silhouette made flesh  
and lean into its give.

Whose ear, tuned to dream music,

would sharpen a pen and point it  
toward transcribing your tattered robes.

Who kept flying home, crying home,  
and singing her back, the jazz ache  
of her grief's webbed movements  
and polyphonic breaths  
keeping time with the ancients  
at the drums, past the trembling  
where words won't go, these nested rolls  
yoked to something just beyond the reach  
of the given ear, where the pattern of beats becomes so dense that---

*it collapses,  
absorbing our cries  
back  
to some original  
sea.*

## The Other Baby

Fiction by Lee Varon

After supper, when the mockingbirds got going and the fireflies would light up her back patio, my grandmother would tell me stories, even though the TV droned on. It was just the two of us by then. Mom had died. And others, too numerous to count. We'd drink orange pekoe tea mixed with honey and cream and stir it with silver teaspoons.

"There was," and here there's always a long pause, "another baby. I don't suppose your mother ever mentioned that," my grandmother would always begin.

"What do you mean another baby?" I ask. I don't tell her she's already told me this story. Because, the truth is, there are different versions, and I always wonder if, some evening, I might hear something new. Something that might help me piece together the truth.

"Well, honey, I wouldn't want you to say anything to your mother, but we all make mistakes." Like I said, Mom's dead, but sometimes Grandmother doesn't remember this.

Mom marrying my father was one of those mistakes. I look down at my arm and then over at Grandmother's arm. Underlying her skin is a rose blush like the rose blush of Mom's skin, but underlying my own arm is a dark, sallow tone like my father's.

"Where is the other baby now?" I finally ask.  
"Well, I suspect she's living over in Culpepper. The family who took her to raise—that's where they were from. It was a nice family, an Episcopalian family."

We finish our tea. Grandmother's oak floors gleam with lemon polish.

"I forgave her," she adds. She rises, taking our flowered teacups, which clatter as she walks, into the kitchen.

"She stayed home that year from school. She was careful not to go outside. It was a lonely time. But the baby was born perfect, and your mother was relieved when it was all over and she could return to be with her classmates."

In the long silence that follows this sentence, the mockingbirds sing in curlicues of sound until finally I ask: "Do you know what they named her?" The sound of my own voice startles me.

"Yes, as a matter of fact. I named her after your mother. I named her Virginia, and the new family kept her name. It was your mother's sin and would carry her name."

Sin. A baby could be a sin.

"I always felt one day she'd marry Alvin and they'd have another baby, but..." Grandmother sighs faintly.

"You know, dear, that was such a beautiful diamond ring he gave her. It was a shame she had to return it after she ran off with... Such a shame."

Mom told me she'd missed a year of school. She had a tutor. She said she'd had a mysterious illness the doctor attributed to a B12 deficiency.

Earlier in the day, Grandmother and I had gone over to the cemetery to lay geraniums near the family plot.

I haven't told Grandmother I don't plan to be buried there. Even though there's a space for me, and Grandmother has paid for something called perpetual care. Which supposedly means our plot will be mowed and the box elders trimmed and the stone bench kept upright.

When we drive over to the plot, it seems to jolt Grandmother's memory, and she remembers that Mom is no longer with us.

I never heard the story of the other baby when Mom was alive, so, of course, I never asked her about it. I'm left with Virginia—my not-dark-skinned half-sister in Culpepper. The girl who was probably like Mom—sweet and popular. The girl who could dance and ride horses. The girl who is a woman now with a blonde pageboy like Mom had. The woman with a beautiful, full mouth and small, perfect teeth that showed when she bit into pralines.

"I wouldn't say anything to your mother, dear," Grandmother says as she rises to turn off the TV.

The sun slips behind the horizon, and the horses in the field behind Grandmother's house become slow-moving shadows. On one of these, my fair-skinned half-sister rides bareback as I sit in the lit parlor—the repository of secrets.

## II

"You know, dear, there was another baby." We drink our tea mixed with honey and cream and nibble cookies shaped like windmills. The sounds of her cuckoo clock and the silver spoons tapping the teacups punctuate the drone of the TV.

"I don't suppose your mother ever mentioned that," my grandmother says as we watch *The Price Is Right*.

"What do you mean another baby?" I ask.

"Well, honey, I wouldn't want you to say anything to your mother, but we all make mistakes."

And the mistake she always means is eloping with my dark-skinned Jewish father.

"What happened to the other baby?" I finally ask.

"Well, that baby died," Grandmother says, nibbling one of the cookies she's set out on a blue china plate between us.

We finish our tea. The panes of the corner cupboard gleam, and inside, a lifetime of Grandmother's collected china and jade and ivory and silver gleam.

"I forgave her," Grandmother adds. She rises, taking our teacups, which clatter as she walks, into the kitchen.

"She had to stay home that year from school. She had to be careful not to go outside. It was a lonely time. The baby was born right here."

"How did it die?" I ask, and my voice trembles with anticipation.

"God took that baby home," Grandmother says. "It was your mother's sin and God's mercy."

Mercy. A baby's death was God's mercy.

"I always felt one day she'd marry Alvin and they'd have another baby, but..." Nana sighs and the little blue cuckoo clock bird comes out of its house and chirps ten times.

"You know, dear, that was such a beautiful diamond ring he gave her. It was a shame she had to return it after she ran off with... It was such a shame.

"I wrapped it up real good in a blanket and laid it on its stomach. A pink satin quilted blanket with blue velvet piping. Just real tight to keep it warm. So it wouldn't cry so. I wrapped it until it stopped crying. And then it stopped breathing. Why tell anyone after it died? I buried it myself, beneath the crepe myrtle bush out back. That pretty shrimp-colored one with the showy flowers."

In this version my fair-haired half-sibling only lived a few short minutes.

"Do you know if it was a boy or a girl?"

"It was a baby girl. Just as perfect as could be. I wouldn't say anything to your mother, dear. Why bring up unpleasant memories?"

The sun slips behind the horizon, and the horses in the field become slow-moving shadows. On one of these, the other baby grown-up rides bareback. In the hot night, I shiver like a feverish child.

## Fragments For Ken Smith (excerpt)

Poetry by Paul Ilichko

...time had been sliced into fragments and the fragments were individuated some slid and fell and were lost in the gaps while others remained in their strength powerful hands that could tear apart the continuum they had no clothing all lost in the empty houses...

...he took his family to the shooting range where they took detailed notes before traveling cheerfully home in the evening in basketry vehicles towed by horses past the ducks who illuminated the pond with the majestic illusion of their color and texture...

...landscape absorbs you with its surface but you may fail to recognize the mass beneath it focusing on the pink and white of spring or the gold and burgundy of autumn you disembark from your train missing by seconds the one who climbed into another...

...a priest cleans his boots as the sun begins to set his leather turning from black to oxblood the stones from his cemetery leaking onto the adjacent moor pagan mounds and ancient dividing lines lines that cross the acres of emptiness and fill it with purpose...

...ocean thrashes itself onto rocks that resemble a clutch of dinosaur eggs waiting to be fertilized by the seeds of language dropped by winged creatures who haunt this darkening coast and as she watched the process unfold she softly combed her hair and sang to herself...

...there was a great collection of pottery stained blue and patterned with medieval subjects battles and jousting and maids with hair stretching long and fair and aquatic creatures in tanks maintained at a stable temperature snails and seahorses and so on...

...mothers and fathers had been buried in different cemeteries sometimes at great distances making the mourning period hard to manage some gravestones surrounded by bluebells that carpeted the landscape other serenaded with endless whispering song...

...the old man kept stones in his many pockets which he would gift to the people he met in the streets some drab and corroded others lit with mineral warmth in his youth he had fished from a boat the left the small dock daily famed for landing eel and cod...



# Tree of Peace

Visual Art by Kelly DuMar



# Wabi-Sabi

Visual Art by Kelly DuMar



## The 2:47

Poetry by Charlene Moskal

Mornings rattled her awake, fragile— she shook out cobwebs from last night's wine, tried to remember her routines as she re-heated yesterday's coffee, sang snatches of songs she had performed on stages in small towns, tried to make her feet remember the steps of heel, toe, shuffle, shuffle. She lived in a battered green trailer borne on cinder blocks and hope. In the hardscrabble yard plastic chairs once white now yellowed with dirt and time waited for visitors. Mug found, coffee hot, she took the steps slowly, one at a time to sit and watch the road. Heel, toe, shuffle, shuffle. She gave her memories to strangers in exchange for their broken dreams. Her palms were lined with lies. Life barreled alongside train tracks. When the 2:47 rumbled past, tinfoil curtains lifted just enough to let in light, remind her of a time when she heard the whistle blow from a house on the hill. Heel, toe, shuffle, shuffle.

## Blast From the Past

Poetry by Maggie Martin

Pink Floyd on the radio today -  
*All in all, it's just another brick in the wall...*

I was forty years younger  
when that song played the first time  
on my car radio, as I drove, fast—  
windows down  
hair long, wild, dark brown  
(with red highlights)  
flying in the wind.

I had lovers.  
Two who stayed on as heart friends  
calling or stopping by,  
on and off, through the years.

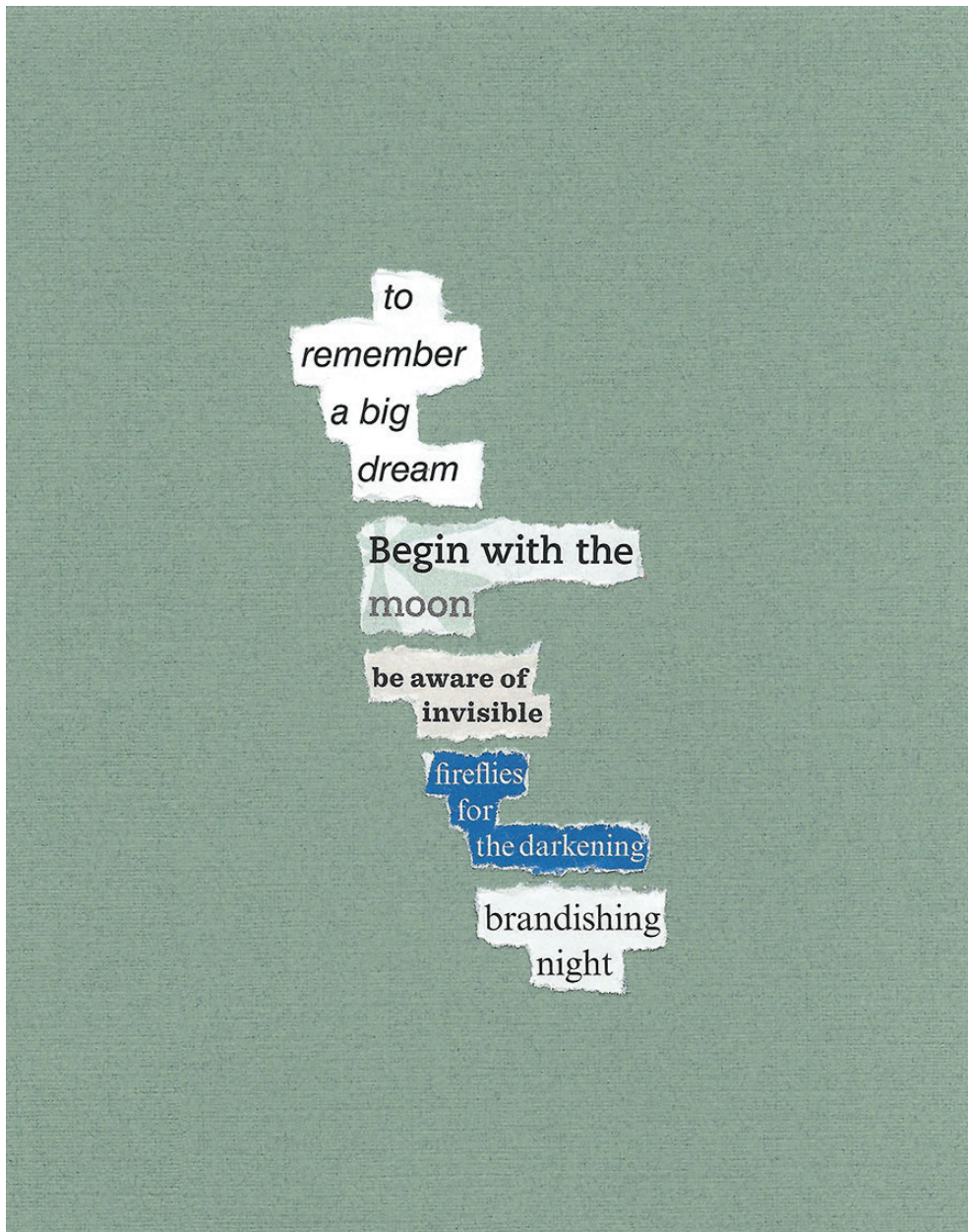
They're no longer with me now.  
But I can still  
feel their bodies sometimes at night  
in dreams.  
Know every inch of them,  
or at least the way they used to be.

I miss us.  
The passion, the pain.  
Yes, even the pain.

Sweet suffering.  
Molten lava burning.  
Too rich to let go.

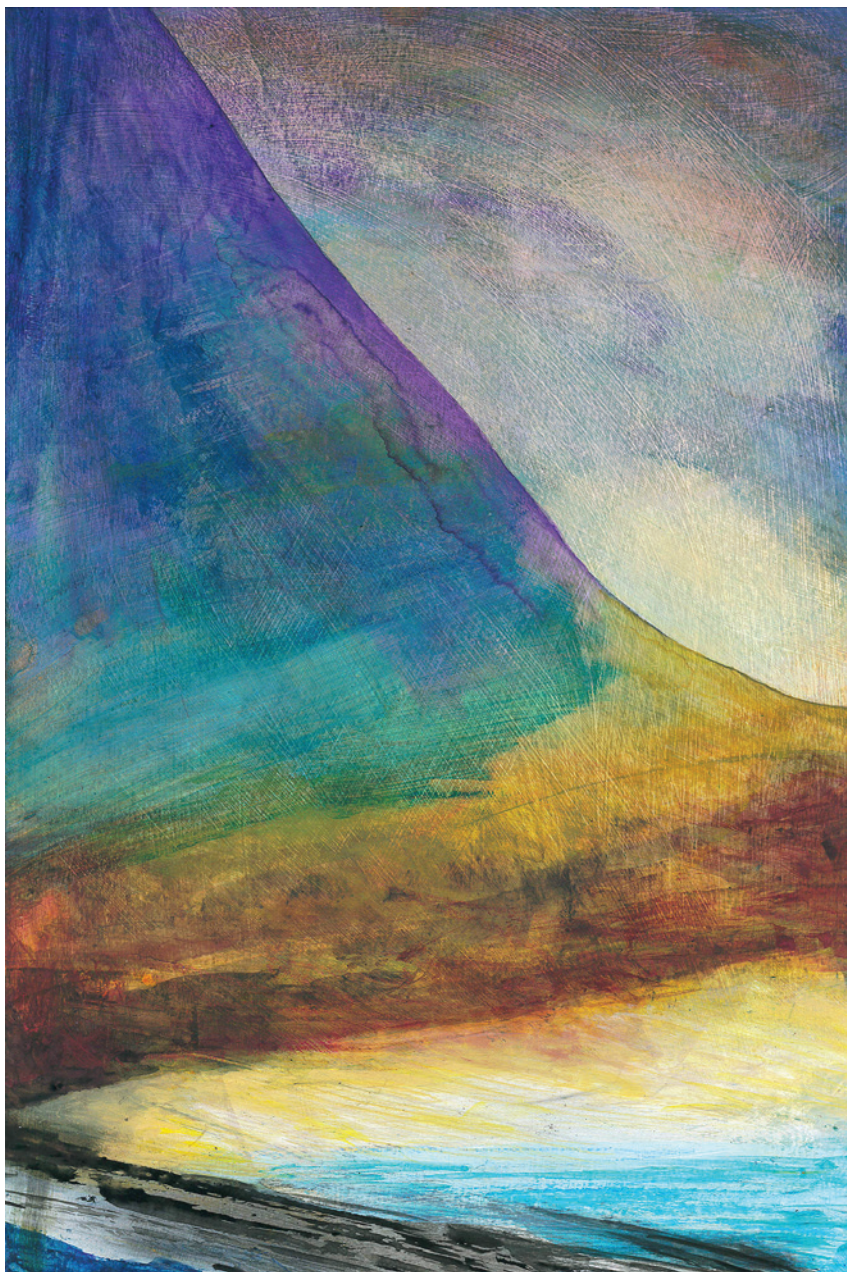
# To Remember

VISPO by J.I. Kleinberg



# Rainbow Cove

Visual Art by Sean Riley



## How to Make Kindling

Poetry by Nora Curry

In any event there was no way out and the phone was ringing. It was cold and the treetops were bare but so what so were the bottoms. What happens in the medicine garden doesn't stay in the medicine garden. In any event no one in the airport really thought that woman was a terrorist, because probably she was just sad. The melted fire alarm is somebody's fault. We wished good things for the ash tree and then hid the remains. For which no one is sorry. In any event an hour later he says thank you for the fortune but actually what he came in for was the time. Surely the dead deer is no one's fault. The question was how many people out of bed constitutes an irregular night. In any event there was no way out or just no easy. The punch line is there's a teaspoon, paprika, and maple syrup, and you don't know what to do. If your fingers are always cold, there's good reason to be concerned, or wear gloves. There was a harpist, a swing dance, more than one suspended knife. When she woke up she didn't know anyone but he would willingly know her. It was raining outside and there were pumas about, or just the figment of an owl and a belly laugh. In any event they were packing up the car boot sale and we had only just barely gotten there. She was trying to relieve herself in the grass but there were shooting stars and only so much focus. There was cardamom in the coffee, the fire bucket back, the laundry hung. In any event these are indelible nights.

## Mailboxes

Poetry by Nora Curry

This is how we do mornings: Dip in with both hands. Dogs after rain. Trowel to the ground, weed the secret pleasure of aches. Small prides saved for palms. The mailbox is never just right. Some days foxhole hollow. The front stoop. The trees make a soup your mother would be proud of. Other days it is not October. Not enough hands to open the door. Outside the window a boy says it's worse than a worm in your apple. For a moment you are sorry for him because you cannot imagine anything worse than a worm in your apple. Some days it is not October. The invitation sits on the scratched table. You have not often loved June, or the way dust reveals itself to sunlight. A small pride, though, in waking at four. Often unset, still drinking last night's coffee. The sky, too, trying to decide itself. Words are nice and nothing, but you've known the weight of this body. That is one verb not tucked under hay in the manger: to miss. To check everything at least twice or not at all. In the line of rooftops. If you had to choose, your unsurety would be a glowing pink streak. Or the better blue mostly unseen. So you'll save your venom for begonias. Start to notice area codes. If you lived anywhere else, your ceiling might not slope. Some nights this seems like a good reason not to live anywhere else. Hot evergreen riptides and pork rinds. We love winter enough to wish for summer. And even now people weep most often over paper. Even now, you'd give up Texas and all the bread pudding for the creases of laundry. Small prides. Hip bone bruises and the run of cold water. There are few reasons why we are still alive, but the ones we have are good. Avocadoes. Synesthesia. Nights it rains without falling. Happy now. The stomach settles in years. The leaves crunch ebullient. You would not know how to have the things you want.



# Night

Poetry by Tessa Micaela

where the sands are made from waves  
where waves were once  
a burning train  
runs down the ridge  
where a body watches  
with a box small enough  
to carry  
whose body carries  
whose possibilities of beforehand  
where before circumnavigate  
bloom  
and celandine  
and cerulean roots return  
to their germinating form  
where we is a seed and the wind takes us  
where the sand is not made of feeling  
where I am not ache  
and it is night  
it is one single night  
where burning runs  
missing  
on an empty edge  
and enough  
and call back before  
ever blooming certainty  
where bodies residue  
in a room  
uneven with the earth  
where roots are vermillion

actually golden  
with red fibers  
actually the bones hold a bird's nest  
and it is not night  
I dig and watch  
not ruined enough  
to be where  
the flames trace the sinews  
and seeds are uninhabited  
and a body is a veil  
drawn for occurrences  
in which I speak  
without burning  
and I am not unearthed  
all of night  
lives in a throat  
small enough  
to balance the sea

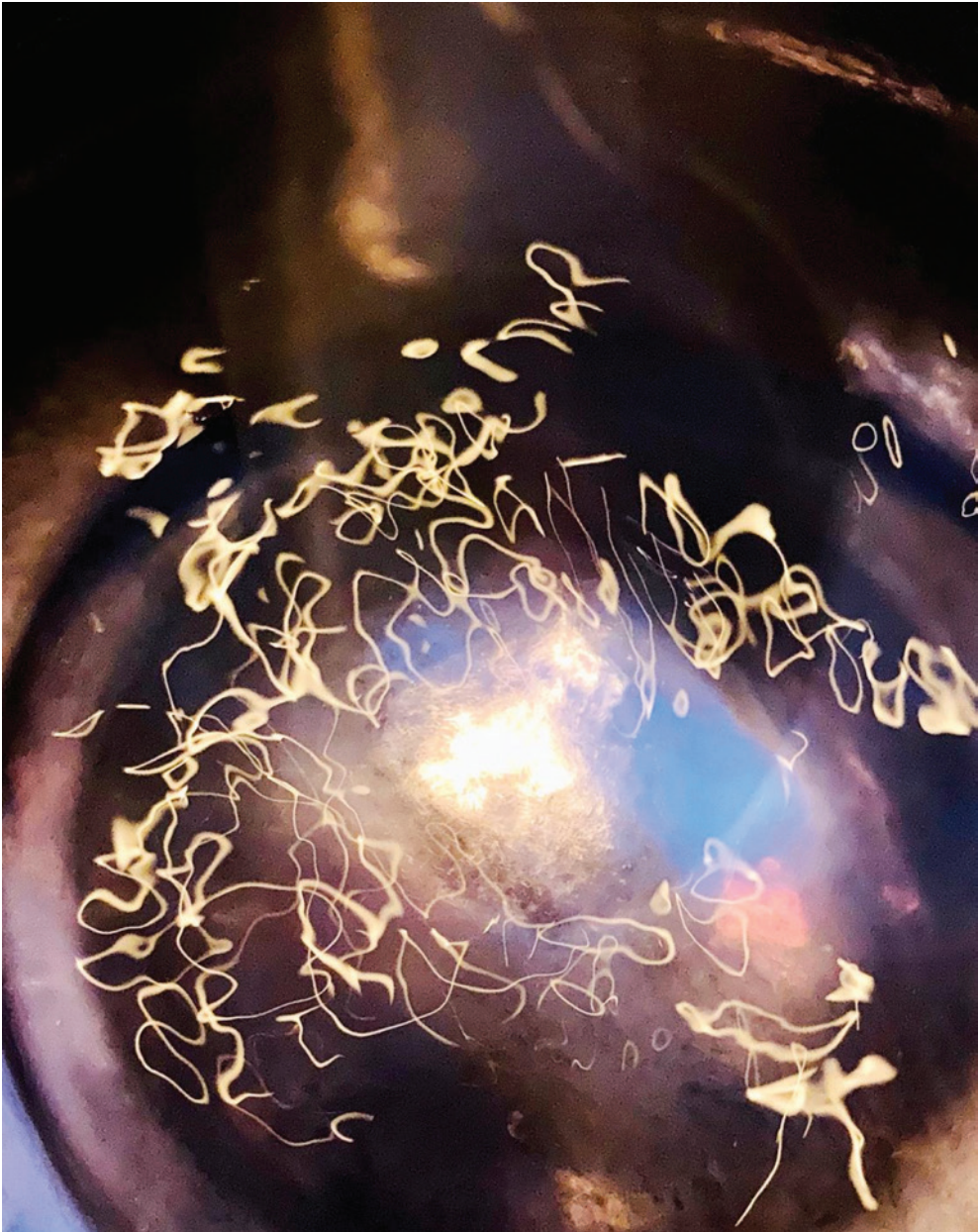
# Clowning Around

Visual Art by Howie Good



# Young Woman Writing with Light

VISPO by María DeGuzmán



# Lullaby

VISPO by Rachelle Scott

A  
scarecrow  
hangs  
in the field outside my house.  
I fall asleep to the sound of the wind  
whistling  
through  
its  
mouth.  
Manichaeon

## Manichaeon

VISPO by Rachelle Scott

Tree,  
shadow of a tree,  
white cat balanced on a limb,  
shining branches, sunlit wings,  
on the ground a black cat  
crouching in the leaves,  
a black bird  
hanging  
from  
its  
teeth.

## Contingent after Eva Hesse

Poetry by Rebecca Faulkner

From my hospital bed  
I read the weather report  
so I can imagine you  
wearing your tan  
trench coat with  
missing buttons  
in Riverside Park  
my headaches are seven feet  
of latex            I stretch them  
till they hang suspended  
spend days smothering  
irregular edges            my scalp  
thick with wood shavings  
in your absence I am  
my own materials  
hours crackle & drag  
you write to me on legal paper  
yellow lined    one sheet  
longer than the rest because  
you have so much to say  
it's absurd    this tumor  
resin thick    I read  
the doctor's report            rigid  
rectangles            cheesecloth vowels  
anything is possible  
everything is worth the risk  
even my recovery            a little red  
lighthouse            resolute  
at the edge  
of the Hudson River

# Space #9

Visual Art by Ellen Mary Hayes





# Interview with Maureen Thorson

Maureen Thorson is a poet living in I Maine. She is the author of the essay collection *On Dreams*, (Bloof Books 2023), and the full-length poetry collections *Share the Wealth* (Veliz Books 2022), *My Resignation* (Shearsman Books 2014), and *Applies to Oranges* (Ugly Duckling Presse 2011). She is also the founder of NaPoWriMo, an annual project in which poets attempt to write a poem a day for the month of April.

## **What was a key moment in your stepping into being a poet?**

My mother had a great influence on my interest in poetry, but not in a way she probably intended! Over the summer one year, when I was around nine years old, I made the mistake of confessing to her that I was bored. She set me to memorizing *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*. I don't think she expected to wind up with a small girl following her around the grocery store endlessly intoning rhymed quatrains. But that's what she got – and well, I was hooked.

## **What and who were your early inspirations around poetry? Who are your influences/favorite poets now?**

My parents made me Christmas presents of whatever poetry books the local B. Dalton's had on tap that were biggest and thus seemed most likely to keep me happily occupied for the longest possible time. That wound up being things like Oscar Williams's *Immortal Poems of the English Language*, which meant I knew far too much didactic 19th-century verse for a child of the 1980s.

I didn't really start writing poetry until I got to college, however, and could

suddenly attend readings by Big! Famous! Poets! It wasn't so much any one reader's individual poems or style that inspired me, but more the idea, which I hadn't really understood until then, that "poets include people who have not yet died." And college was really the first time in my life that I was moody enough to even try writing poems – and that I had access to a computer lab so I could type things up and print endless revisions (I've never been much for writing longhand).

### **Do dreams play a part in your writing or writing process? And if so, how?**

I wish they played more of one! I struggle in my poems with allowing things to be, if not illogical, then not strictly logical. If I could use my dreams more effectively (though that seems like an almost-crass and backwards thing – "an effectively used dream"), maybe I'd be better at that.

### **What are your creative methods? How do your poems develop? How do you work with revision?**

I'm quick to start and slow to finish. My first draft often comes out in a rush, but with an ending that is very pat and unsatisfying. A lot of those drafts just go by the wayside, but if the initial work seems strong enough, I'll keep them in my "hopper" of poems-in-progress and make periodic attempts at getting an ending to stick. For some poems, several years go by and then –whomp– suddenly it comes to me. Beyond that, I do a lot of revision of the "delete comma, replace comma, rinse and repeat" variety – not so much editing as dithering around the edges while I wait for the ending to arrive.

### **Name three poets that you think everyone should know about who not everyone knows about yet.**

I always think everyone knows about all the poets I know about, but then they'll mention poets I've never heard of and so – well. I officially give up on feeling sheepish about any recommendation on the basis that everyone already knows about who or whatever.

I will never resist an opportunity to play up Chris Nealon. Read more Chris

Nealon! Whenever a new book of his comes out, I am so very happy.

Barbara Guest's *The Countess from Minneapolis* is one of my favorite books and she definitely seems like one of those "people who know her know her but that's not all the people" sort of poets. The same goes for Rachel Loden – I think I've bought about six copies of *Dick of the Dead* because I keep giving them away.

### **What are you reading now? What are you planning to read next?**

The pandemic put paid to any kind of engaged reading for me for a long time. I could read individual poems, and go through mystery and romance novels like popcorn, but for anything more sustained, I had the attention span of a gnat. But now – finally! – I'm starting to feel more focused. I've had a Vintage paperback of Stephen Mitchell's translation of Rilke's selected poems on my shelf for years, and have recently begun reading my way through it. Next up will probably be more Rilke, or maybe Celan.

### **What was your creative method(s) around your book? How did the book develop? How did you work with revision?**

*On Dreams* is a series of lyric essays, laid out in short "statements" rather than paragraphs. My most direct inspiration for the form was David Markson's novel *Vanishing Point*. It reads as a series of unrelated factoids interleaved with occasional personal statements/interjections – all supposedly notes for an unwritten book. Over the course of the novel, the connections between the facts and observations become more obvious. In writing *On Dreams*, I wanted to experiment with writing prose in a similar style -- logical, but airy. I wanted to invite the reader to stop and think their own thoughts as they read.

The very first essay (which became the Preface), was first published as a chapbook-in-a-box in which each statement was printed on its own index card, with the idea that you could arrange them in any order. I jettisoned that idea as the book grew into multiple essays, but the majority of my revisions

were aimed at trying to maintain a sense of space and dilation.

As I expanded from that original essay, one of the collection's central premises became the idea that we aren't perfect perceivers of the world – everything we think and sense needs constant back-stopping. At the same time, the book is full of quotations and factual assertions. Confirming these led to many more revisions, as I found that I had misquoted or misremembered things, and as sources I had originally relied on – particularly online ones – disappeared. The endnotes to the final book are almost as long as the text!

### **How did you come to the naming of your book, *On Dreams*? What does it mean to you and to the book?**

Back in 2012 or so, I read an article online about the philosophy of sleep. It quoted a phrase from Aristotle's treatise *On Dreams*: "The soul makes assertions in sleep." I found that rather charming and, wanting to learn more, read the complete treatise. It contained another, far more bizarre phrase, which then became the lodestone for the book: "If a woman chances during her menstrual period to look into a highly polished mirror, the surface of it will grow cloudy with a blood-colored haze."

Aristotle tosses out this statement off-handedly while explaining that external stimulus can affect our dreams. To broadly paraphrase, he's saying something along the lines of "if your alarm goes off while you're asleep, you may dream of birds screaming." But then, to support his (not very radical) claim, he compares it to menstruating women's effect on mirrors, as if that much stranger, physically impossible idea was something that the reader would naturally know of and accept.

The book's initial essay grew from my bafflement with this statement, and I think of all the other essays as engaging with it in some way – by questioning how we determine who or what is an "authority" on a topic, exploring how women's bodies are still poorly understood and subject to fantastic claims, and even the mechanics of vision and how that impacts artists' choices in painting and sculpture.

## **What was the most challenging thing about writing *On Dreams*? What was the most surprising thing?**

The most challenging thing was definitely the fact-checking! There were several rounds of it over a series of years as the collection grew.

The most surprising thing is that what started as a single essay grew into a sort of manifesto, an attempt at stating a personal philosophy. It's not "cool" to say that writing is self-discovery or therapy, but it also seems to me that these things are too completely true to get away from. Perhaps it's better to say that writing shouldn't only be self-discovery or therapy. But the process of writing *On Dreams* forced me to confront certain things that I cared about – even to recognize that I cared about them – and then to articulate why as clearly as I could.

## **What are you working on now?**

*On Dreams* is the only creative prose project I've done. My prior work was all poetry and what I've been writing since then is, too. I've been mostly writing "one-off" poems – inspired by whatever inspires them, rather than by any particular theme. I'm starting to feel like taking on a more unified project again. But I haven't figured out what it will be yet.



# BIOS

**Brian Michael Barbeito** is a Canadian poet, writer, and photographer. Recent work appears at *The Hamilton Stone Review*.

**Kate Chadwick** is a disability support worker, dream facilitator, and visual artist living in Brisbane, Australia. As a long-time dreamwork practitioner she is deeply interested in how storytelling and un-storying heal and restore our lives.

**Katie Cloutte** spent four years soaking up some much needed poetry wisdom at the University of Richmond before receiving her MFA from New England College. A Pushcart nominated poet, you can currently see her work in *The Homestead Review*, *Ping-Pong Magazine*, and *Certain Circuits*. She is currently collecting years living abroad in addition to some near-death experiences and the thickening of her snarky vocabulary.

**Nora Curry** works as a librarian in Maine, seeking to foster a love of poetry in her community. She is a poetry and creative nonfiction reader for the literary journals *Wild Roof Journal* and *Kitchen Table Quarterly* and has had her poetry published in the *Aurorean*, *Bennington Review*, and *Cimarron Review*.

**María DeGuzmán** is a scholar, photographer, writer, and music composer. Her photographic work has been exhibited at The Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston, MA, USA), Watershed Media Centre (Bristol, England), and Golden Belt Studios (Durham, NC, USA). She has published photography in *Typehouse Literary Magazine*, *Apricity*, and *Phoebe*; creative nonfiction photo-text in *Oyster River Pages*; photo-text flash fiction in *Oxford Magazine*; visual poetry in *TAB: The Journal of Poetry & Poetics*, *Roanoke Review*, *45th Parallel*, and *Inverted Syntax*; and short stories in *Mandorla: New Writing from the Americas*, *Huizache: The Magazine of Latino Literature*, and *Obelus Journal*. Her SoundCloud website may be found at: <https://soundcloud.com/mariadeguzman>.

**Kelly DuMar** is a poet, playwright and workshop facilitator from the Boston area. She's author of four poetry collections, including *jinx and heavenly calling*, published by Lily Poetry Review Books, March 2023. Her poems and images are published in *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Thrush*, *Glassworks*, and more. She lives on the rural Charles River where she photographs the wetlands and woods. Reach her at [kellydumar.com](http://kellydumar.com)

**Rebecca Faulkner** is a London-born poet based in Brooklyn. The author of *Permit Me to Write My Own Ending*, (Write Bloody Press, 2023) her work appears in *New York Quarterly*, *Solstice Magazine*, *The Maine Review*, *CALYX Press*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. She is a 2023 poetry recipient of the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund for Women, the 2022 winner of *Sand Hills Literary Magazine's* National Poetry Contest, and the Grand Prize winner of the 2021 Prometheus Unbound Poetry Competition. Rebecca was a 2021 Poetry Fellow at the Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts. She holds a BA in English Literature & Theatre Studies from the University of Leeds, and a Ph.D. from the University of London. She is currently at work on her second collection of poetry, exploring female identity and artistic endeavor. [www.rebeccafaulknerpoet.com](http://www.rebeccafaulknerpoet.com)

**Sarah Featherstone** (she/they), is a neurodivergent artist, writer and trainee psychotherapist based in Wales. She holds an MA in Creative Writing from Bath Spa and facilitates Creative Wellbeing sessions for community groups. She has written for *Wales Arts Review* and is currently working on her first collection. [www.sarahfeatherstone.com](http://www.sarahfeatherstone.com)

**Howie Good's** newest poetry collection, *Heart-Shaped Hole*, which also includes examples of his handmade collages, is available from Laughing Ronin Press.

**Ellen Mary Hayes** is a poet and visual artist exploring the transcendent qualities of the creative process. Her work is born from reflections on creating sacred homes, contemplations on the spirit, and meditations on the natural world. Ellen's work has been featured in the Easthampton City Arts Post Pause exhibit, *Last Leaves Magazine*, *Sonic Boom*, *Anchor House of Artists*, *Mystery Train Records*, *Red Noise Collective*, *Eclipse Lit*, *Meat for Tea*, *Equinox*, and elsewhere.

Paul Ilechko is a British American poet and occasional songwriter who lives with his partner in Lambertville, NJ. His work has appeared in many journals, including *The Bennington Review*, *The Night Heron Barks*, *Lily Poetry Review*, *Stirring*, and *The Inflectionist Review*. He has also published several chapbooks.

**Stacey C. Johnson** writes and teaches in San Diego County. Her work appears in a variety of journals and publications, and her poetry chapbook *Flight Songs* is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press (February 2024). You can find her at [staceycjohnson.com](http://staceycjohnson.com) and on Twitter @StaceCJohnson.

An artist, poet, and freelance writer, **J.I. Kleinberg** lives in Bellingham, Washington,



USA, and on Instagram @jikleiberg. Her visual poems have been published in print and online journals worldwide and were featured in a solo exhibit at Peter Miller Books, Seattle, Washington, in May 2022.

**Eric Lunde** is a practicing Pyrrhonist living in Minneapolis, MN USA. He has worked as a noise artist, a painter, poet, critic and parking lot attendant in Chicago. He posts at <https://endythekid.blogspot.com>

**Jen MacIntyre** is a lens-based artist that spends her time between Montreal, Quebec, and Western Massachusetts. Working with photography since childhood, she has always been curious about the emotional responses and associations that images elicit. Oscillating between portraiture and studies of the natural world, her work is deeply interested in the threads that connect us with nature, and each other. More of Jen's work can be seen at [www.instagram.com/jen.macintyre\\_](http://www.instagram.com/jen.macintyre_)

**Tessa Micaela** is the author of *where bells begin* (Rescue Press, November 2019), *there are boxes and there is wanting* (Trembling Pillow Press, 2016), and the chapbook *Crude Matter* (ypolita press, 2016). Tessa writes poems, essays and letters, some of which have appeared in *jubilat*, *baest journal*, *ELDERLY*, *Make/shift*, and *Dusie*. Tessa was born and raised on the Lenni-Lenape land of Philadelphia, and resides on the unceded Abenaki land of central Vermont. Tessa is a midwife, clinical and community herbalist, care-worker and educator. More information can be found at [tessamicaela.com](http://tessamicaela.com) and [thresholdapothecary.com](http://thresholdapothecary.com).

**Jory Mickelson's** first book *WILDERNESS//KINGDOM* is the inaugural winner of the Evergreen Award Tour by Floating Bridge Press and the 2020 High Plains Book Award winner in Poetry. They live in the Pacific Northwest.

**Charlene Stegman Moskal** is a Teaching Artist for SPRAT and the Las Vegas Poetry Promise Organization. She is published in numerous anthologies, print and online magazines including: *TAB Journal*; *Calyx*, *Humana Obscura*, *Dewdrop* and *Mac Q*. Her chapbooks are *One Bare Foot*, (Zeitgeist Press), *Leavings from My Table*, (Finishing Line Press) and *Woman Who Dyes Her Hair* (Kelsay Books) and a full length poetry manuscript, *Running the Gamut* (Zeitgeist Press), Fall 2023.

**Caleb Petersen** lives and writes in the Near South neighborhood of Lincoln, Nebraska. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Creative Writing - Poetry from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. He teaches at the University of Nebraska and with the Nebraska Writers Collective.

**Vivian Faith Prescott** lives and writes in Lingit Aaní, at her family's fishcamp on the land of the Shtax'heen Kwáan in Wrangell, Alaska, Kaachxana.áak'w. She's the author of several poetry chapbooks and full-length poetry collections, in addition to works of non-fiction and fiction.

**Victoria Punch** is a voice coach and musician. Curious about voice and identity, the limits of language and how we perceive things – her poetry comes from these explorations. Published in *Poetry*, *Candlestick Press* and *One Hand Clapping*, forthcoming in *Magma*. On Twitter and Instagram @victoriapunch\_

**Sean Riley** is an artist and writer living in Washington, DC and central Italy's Turano Valley. His artwork has been shown throughout the Northeast US. His art and writing have been published or is forthcoming in *SHIFT*, *Open Doors Review*, *Heavy Feather Review* and *Gigantic Sequins*. His work can be seen at seanrileystudio.com and @studioseanriley.

**Laura Rockhold** is a poet and visual artist from Minnesota. She is the inventor of the golden root poetic form and 2022 winner of the Bring Back The Prairies Award and Southern MN Poets Society Award by the League of Minnesota Poets. Her work appears in: *Black Fox Literary Magazine*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *The Hopper*, *Yellow Arrow Journal*, and elsewhere. Find her at [www.laurarockhold.com](http://www.laurarockhold.com).

**Jan Roes** began her art journey about 7 years ago and is a self-taught artist. She uses her morning art as a form of meditation. A way for her to explore night thoughts or early morning observations. She hopes her small art brings other people a bit of joy and perhaps a moment for their own soul-searching

**Rachelle Scott's** poetry and fiction appear in [published in my previous name, Rachel Crawford] *Rock and Sling*, *Mudlark*, *RiverSedge*, *Crack the Spine*, *The Lyric*, *Shot Glass Journal*, *Anima*, *r.cv.ry*, *Adanna*, *The Wayfarer*, *Panther City Review*, *Gravel*, and others, and [in her current name, Rachelle Scott] the upcoming issue of *Southwestern American Literature*. She is an editor of the anthology *Her Texas* (Wings Press 2015) and a poetry editor of *A Fire to Light Our Tongues* (TCU Press 2022). She is currently a doctoral candidate in Arts and Humanities at the University of Texas at Dallas.

**Lee Varon** is a social worker and writer. Her poetry and prose have been published in various journals including *Constellations* and *Ibbetson Street*, among others. She has published a children's book, *My Brother is Not a Monster: A Story of Addiction and Recovery*. You can read more about her work at <https://www.leesvaron.com/>.

