

JANUARY REVIEW

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Paul B. Roth

Juan Pablo Mobili

David Chorlton

Brian Kates

Silvia Scheibli

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Ace Boggess

Al Fournier

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Art

Esther Sadoff

Robert Moorhead

Kenneth Pobo

David Chorlton

Ginel Basiga Ople

Andrea Moorhead

Andrea Moorhead

Daniel Brennan



Simon Anton Niño Diego Baena		Editor
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Xandelyn Racel Baena		Design
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januaryreviewjournalofpoetry@gmail.com for electronic submission.

Issue 08

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Patty Dickson Piezcka

Our Voices

were vines steeped in honeysuckle,
so intertwined my words
came from your mouth
before I finished thinking them.
Your voice lived in my mind,
grew from seeds into
an endless, jasmine-wild jungle.

This morning, I found
one of your sentences dropped —
stones on pavement, meanings crumbled,
crushed beneath passing feet.
My voice, hollow as a throaty reed,
is the sound the moon makes
when it peels back its skin.



Patty Dickson Piezcka

Another Year

The old year turns its back
on me, rolls over in bed, pulls
our blanket of warm-woven days
with it while I wait,
wrapped in a sheet of chills.

Next year's shadow lurks
behind the final page
of the wall calendar.
Cold-fingered shapes escape,
brittle-cracked and cobbled,

holding pillows
over the mouth of memory
in time's weft and warp,
smothering laughter
and sun-silken mornings.



Patty Dickson Piezcka

A Drink from the Root

Stir this dwindling twilight
until trees have visions.

Let me drink
from their deep roots,

dark, musky elixir
from the earth. To see

the hidden, the true purpose.
To know why one tree

slowly dies, held upright
by another's limbs,

protected from storms.
How the leaning tree somehow

helps nourish
the one left standing, how

when one falls, it takes
part of the other with it.

As your limbs
bend my branches,

dawn has a mouthful of silence and
morning forgets to ripen.



Juan Pablo Mobili

Over a drop of Port,

sharp as the thorns on my mother's roses
Shymala Dason

after dinner, we discuss
what to do with the leftovers.

We can always put an egg on top,
I say, quoting something she says often,

and my wife smiles, knowingly, confirming
that an egg never ruined anything.

These days, I wish, in secret, to be an egg,
that noble, that worthy of trust,
but even roses hold on
to the sharpness of their thorns.

Blood will not stop flowing.
The yolk will break; there may be riots.



Juan Pablo Mobili

Sacred Confluence

I'm tempted to write about three lonely gods
walking into a bar, but they are not drinkers,

devoid of bodies they'd rather whisper
how we should live, flow within us,

watch over our incarnation,
a sober task for deities, an achievement

comparable to watching the rise of a full moon
holding my granddaughter in my arms,

holding her tightly as awe flows between our bodies.



Brian Kates

Burnt Offerings

Words rise from the smoke
like sacrifices to the gods
as I rip up my old diaries
and feed them page
by page to the flames.
Rancor, disappointment, dissolution,
dispatched to the afterlife,
the ashes of a man
I barely know.



Patrick Williamson

Lightly, lightly

Sometimes I'm thinking without thoughts.

It's not the mind's a blank, just
I only sense the body's sounds, and texture,
if you see what I mean.

Often when I can't sleep
or during a mid-afternoon lull, after a nap
on Sunday usually.

It's as if I'm looking for the next step or line,
but nothing is taking shape.
I just have to decide what to do with time ahead.

The episode passes, duly noted.
It's because I'm trying too hard,
must learn to do everything lightly.



Al Fournier

Card from a Woman I Never Dated

I only recognized her crush on me
years later, discovering a card she'd sent—
two sailboats by Seurat, swaying
in dappled water.

I felt for the first time
the surging tide of her words.
Swerving swoops of red cursive,
faded to pink.

She said she'd been receding
for some time. Her boyfriend
had moved away
to pick up contract work for the Navy,

and she'd gotten what she wanted,
without having to do anything.
She hoped that soon
we might get together,

ending buoyantly,
"The warm weather is almost here."

I really like the picture.
I use it as a bookmark.



Ray Keifetz

Safe Haven

Old men cry at night,
squat on the curb,
a pot, a plate,
mutter themselves
across the gutter

onto a chart.
Blood today,
tomorrow their hearts.

Hospital sheets
blinded by the moon,
old men cry at night
to God, to geese.
I send them postcards
wishing they were here.



Ray Keifetz

Passing Through

Through a bug lit screen
townies shout *hallo*
at a shadow
walking the muggy street
their light can't reach.

Where I've been
no escaping the yellow bulb.
Where I'm going
no pretending.
But here where porches glow
through moths and trusting *hallo's*
I face the screen,
the night perfect
without me.



Ray Keifetz

He Wears My Father's Mask

He enters my room
nibbling
a slice of coffee cake.

Who invited him?
Who let him in?

My mother let him in.

He wears my father's mask.
The mask whispers
Shall I tell you a secret?

No
I answer.
I already know.



Ray Keifetz

Winter Poem

The dead fir drifted
into February,
brown needles dropping
onto Florentine wrapping
as we kept giving
and giving . . .



Esther Sadoff

In my fearfulness

I might ask for a scrap of something soft.
I might tell you I'm always cold because I am.

I might tell you that warmth has so many layers—
and so does fear. Fear is an anchor.

It's the impossibility of two lives on opposite
ends of the map, two tracks running simultaneously.

I've felt fear like an anchor sinking in my fingertips.

I've stopped searching for deer. I only search for rabbits—
and to our surprise, I see so many.

My mother says they come out for me, but they don't.

There are no coyotes here, no predators. No threat.
Just fear. Fear in the footprints that separate us.

I keep a wide berth for the rabbits, their backs
arched and bristled high in the spring frost.

I lift my fingertips to the sky, an ocean refusing anchors.

I send those anchors tumbling back.



Kenneth Pobo

October Maple

Please, maple,
be gentle while
releasing your leaves.
Each day they gold
and yellow my car's
windshield. Do you
miss your leaves,
your boisterous children?
The sun walks

down the empty staircase
of your branches, watches
sunrays tangle up
a couple of squirrels.

I won't invite winter
to a Welcome Back party.
Winter says
he's coming anyway,
no locked door
to keep him out.



Ginel Basiga Ople

Lumberjack's House

Through the window, the remains
of a proper home: a child's crib,
a grandfather clock & a TV cabinet.

Beside the door, a coffee mug
from a girl's birthday party
has turned to its side, pointing
at the road overcome by weeds and time.

It is one of the many houses
built from the wood that grew
on this same ground

back when the sawmills still ran
and wooden Jesus in the chapel
made sure the trees
would keep on coming.

On a porch step
were the dust marks
of a man's back pockets,

as if after a few weeks,
the owner came back
to gather a few more things
and sat down

to let everything else go.



Andrea Moorhead

Perhaps an old photo

Thistle fleece caught in her hair, she’s reading the night paper, creases from rain and wind, flower petals staining the edges, it’s cold out this evening, lights dim along the street, people quickly, cars, bicycles, the occasional passing bird. Night in the city, glowing pavement, it’s raining again, the wind, the light, flower petals falling to the ground.



Andrea Moorhead

Perceptions

Holes in the light when someone moves too quickly, a shadow, a murmur, a rippling under the skin, sensation of voices too close, against and besides, continuing when the light splashes over the body, blue waters from a child's book, rainbow pebbles and silver seeds, the light is never steady, moving against and beyond, holes appearing and disappearing whenever someone approaches or when the night falls too quickly.



Andrea Moorhead

A Child's Daydream

Folded blankets, a basket of tender leaves. It couldn't be a still-life, there's something moving in the basket, in between the blanket's folds. Woven rushes, fibers from brown sheep. Sun on the blanket. The basket is swaying again. Carrying a miniature fawn, wrapped in new leaves. Layers of soft wool, spun from the silken threads of dream. He slept all morning, gently rocking the basket, moving the dream out into the sun.



Andrea Moorhead

Requiem

Bones by the side of the road. Oscillating, porous. A thin coating of dusty snow. Picking up stones. Carrying the wind along. It's almost midnight, no one else out here. The bones have their own song. They don't belong to anyone. It's snowing somewhere far away, in a curled leaf, a torn field.



Andrea Moorhead

A Children's Story

Follow the night closely, it often wraps itself in the skirts of a wild eagle, in the teeth of a boar, in the cascades behind the fence, streams flooded and the road impassible. A children's story illustrated by an unknown artist. Blue and purple trees, soft grey stones, and the wild flickering of the midnight sun. It's snowing in the story, and the eagles are high in the trees. Shadows along the path, sudden moons rolling along, and the children accept the irregularities of narration, adding their own flavor to the air, their own commentaries when the words seem a bit too pale, and the artist clings to the blue and purple trees, children flashing their teeth with the boar, and the flowers that sprout from the moon seeds are silver and yellow. It's still snowing when July begins. Polar bears and seals, Arctic owls and some bird that even the children can't identify. It comes with the wind, whistling and murmuring, singing and soaring so high above us all that the sky turns vermillion when we try to look. The last page has no drawings, the ink is bleached, almost invisible from many hands touching and turning, kissing, and creasing the corners, leaving the cover with its bold midnight sun.



Andrea Moorhead

Sundays by the River

Sitting by the river, watching the boats, the fishermen on the wall, passing children, ducks. The day quiet, chilly. I had put on my thick red sweater, the one I had worn all summer in the woods. A clearing out along the horizon. There's no mist on the river. It's not mysterious. It's mesmerizing, though, watching the water, the boats, the fishermen, the passing clouds. It's cold with the wind coming in from the lake. It picks up at the mouth of the river. We're sitting here the way we always sit here on Sunday afternoons, after church, after the cemetery, after lunch, if I'm lucky, baloney sandwiches, an apple, part of a peanut-crusted donut left over from the ride home, a tall glass of cold milk. It seems a miracle to be here on the stone wall at river's edge, warm in my thick red sweater, watching the fish glint, squinting out into the water, my eyes following the curve of the light, everything else so far away. You never say very much on Sunday afternoons. That's what's so nice. Sitting here by the river, gazing across to Canada, following the ripples of light on the cold, dense water.



Daniel Brennan

Solipsism

On Twitter I'm served
an advertisement for a hunting game

the sight locks-in on a
wolf and then a

deer and then the bullet does
what a bullet does best

gamifies death makes
oblivion a beginner sport

it calls to me and asks me
to taste the red meat of violence

its simulation a masturbatory
stroke a slight of hand and I wonder

why would anyone dare to
practice that which comes

when we least expect it?



Paul B.Roth

What Else is Lost

Eventually, we overcome our thirst and search until there's no more words, no more languages, grunts, cries, whines, screams, dialects or whimpers, so that the only silence we hear is ourselves not breathing. The last thing, after feeling our heart pump its final liters of blood, is the ache our fingers feel from writing what's never been of interest to anyone else. Writing about a donkey's well-fed belly swelling like a gray-haired moon. Or a muddy white horse scratching its neck against a weathered fence rail imagined as a rain cloud hanging in a marsh of dead trees. Or being mesmerized by the frantic cries baby ducks peep while scrambling aboard their mother's back on their first outing over rough lake waves. Or imitating the honks of territorial geese chasing goats beside whom they somehow end up resting in the warmth of afternoon's sunlit grasses. Still, it's unfortunate that nothing's any longer important or heard. It's unfortunate how headphones, ear plugs, or cell phones block with their insatiable and nonsensical chatter, their deep bass-driven music, the very silence we lose by not listening for it. We've often offered help to others who wanted to regain and honor this silence, but after so many attempts to meet on such and such a date, we're the only ones who ever show up. We imagine that once the noise level starts peaking again, it won't be long before excessive demand from the masses for more silence in their lives will make it impossible to hear what anyone has to say.



David Chorlton

Ahwatukee AM

The turkey vulture flying low
along the street this morning casts a graceful
shadow on the asphalt. The light
of the world balanced on its wings, a slight
dip left, another right, the work
of cleaning up has just begun. Sunlight
in its feathers, embers

in each eye it moves with such purpose the mountain
each day brings to life
stands back to give more room. It doesn't need
a password to log in
to information posted in the clouds
pertaining to souls

the owl coughed up at night.
A peaceful time. The heartbeat of high noon
is bright and slow, the West
is still the West beneath
the city's laws and order. Coyotes

patrolling the sky, a hundred degrees and rising,
another day, more hair and bones
discarded by the stars.



David Chorlton

Sunday Grey

The Sunday sky is whispering light,
cloud down to desert
where the last rains sing
inside each saguaro standing. A few degrees

below where it hurts
to be outside, time for the mountain
to reveal its inner life. Rocks know all
about the standoff on the west side,
wildfire to the north

and a number to call for help. Come and go,
ebb and flow, siren crying out; is anybody
home? For whom does the bell
toll today? Which channel

has the friendly forecast? One
with showers all month long
and somebody to answer
when the call comes in. Please hold,

the sun is only resting. We appreciate your patience.
Call back when a storm breaks,
lightning is above the law.



David Chorlton

Secret Trail

Overlapping planes of sun and shadow
on a day addressing
the issues that concern stones
and the boulder lodged
above an arroyo once
discovered, twice lost,

three times found as a refuge
from wheeling and dealing with two
for one and one for all, fifty dollars
for a soul and ask your doctor

whether it's safe to walk here
amid dragonfly light and the dust
fallen from overnight stars
where a trail sews foothills to the mountain.



Silvia Scheibli

Bodega Bay

Cormorants stand etched
like silent syllables on murky pilings —

Whisper about fecund waves of fog
on Goat Rock Beach

Clouds banked in honeycombs
foreshadow rain



Silvia Scheibli

Yard Birds Know I'm Back

The swaying teacup tilts

Sparrows avoid each other —
Dew droplets stand apart

Butterflies are gone &
the air is crisp

Morning peels sleep's mask
from the moon without effort



Silvia Scheibli

After the stroke

Played our song on the piano
the screen of our universe split

Green hidden inside glances
vanished with our imagination

Leaving only
immovable stones to ponder



Ace Boggess

“Was I Sober Then?”

question asked by Mike James

So far, the whole pandemic,
the election & its aftermath,
one blistering, dreadful day
at a time—not a slip, a lean
toward relapse. I’ve kept
a clear head while watching
weeks of lies, virus, rising toll.

Often, I wanted to crawl
under my bed & hide,
knowing Fate would find me,
its icy calm enticing.

I thought about holding
my addiction like a tender lover
with cruel moods & sadnesses.

In those weakened phases,
no one came with temptation.
I fought when I could,
found no enemies
when my strength had failed.

Perhaps the virus saved me,
torturer pausing to keep
the subject alive before returning
with batteries & knives.



Ace Boggess

“Do You Still Drink?”

question asked by Paul Lee

Self-abasing rules of rambling NA orators
sharing details of their yesterdays
compel no religion in me. I will worship

every doorknob in the house,
not turn one to walk through a space into emptiness.
In my mythology, tablets & powders

transformed me into a grizzly by night,
shaken rabbit in the afternoon;
a shot of vodka has never left me

ready to tear the arms off a statue
or stab the back of a sofa with a kitchen knife.
I grant the sober priests their need for not

my drug equating still a drug—
belief that keeps them safe, as faith
in anything, unflinching, always does.



Robert Moorhead



Terrestrial Edge



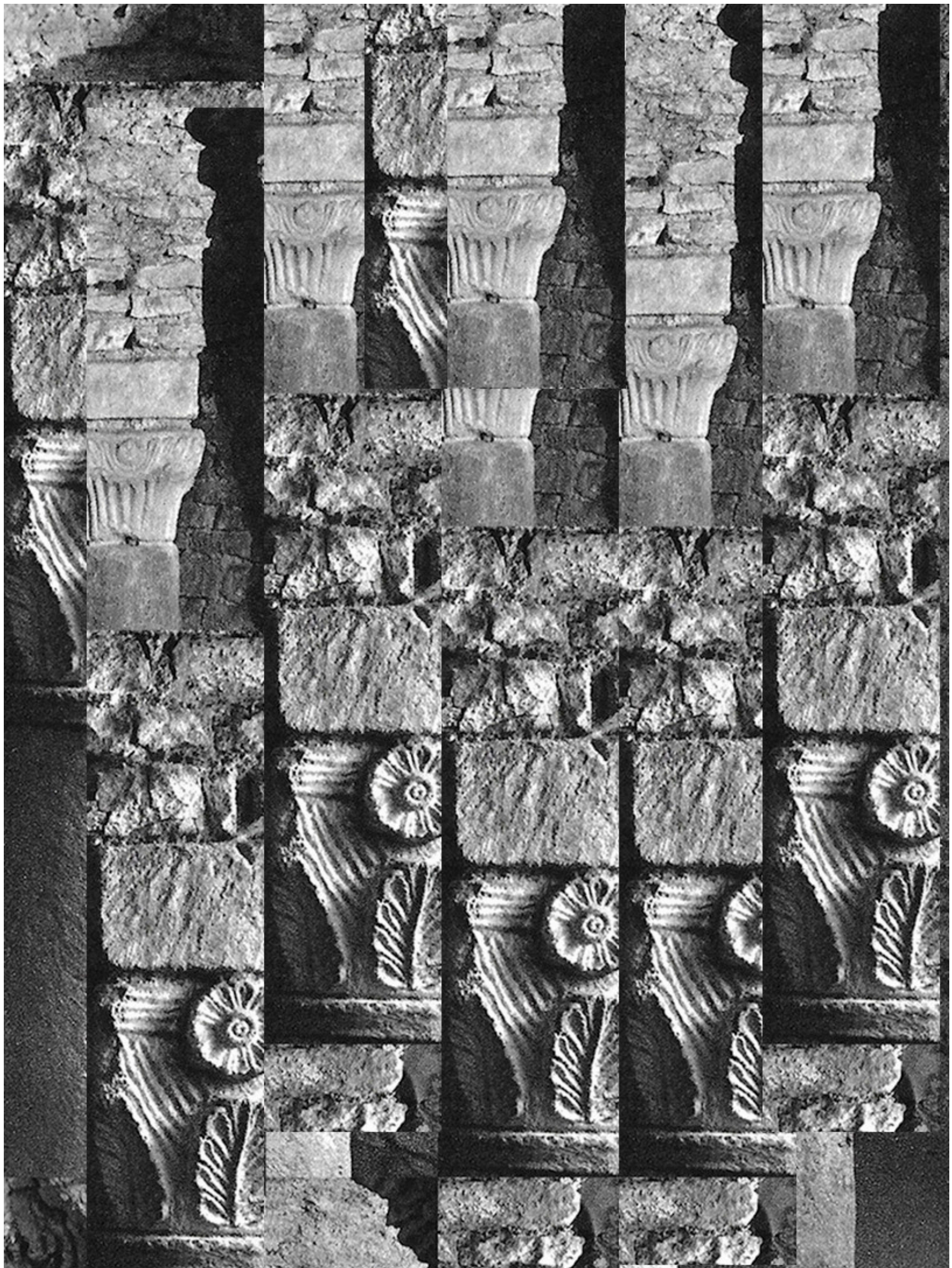
Robert Moorhead



White Trace



Robert Moorhead



January Flavigny



Robert Moorhead



Arabic Vision



Robert Moorhead



Stars January 3



Robert Moorhead



Stars January 3



David Chorlton



Andrea Moorhead







Andrea Moorhead



Andrea Moorhead



Andrea Moorhead



Andrea Moorhead



About the Authors

Patty Dickson Pieczka's second book of poetry, *Painting the Egret's Echo*, won the Library of Poetry Book Award for 2012 from The Bitter Oleander Press. Other books are *Lacing Through Time* (Bellowing Ark Press, 2011), and a chapbook, *Word Paintings* (Snark Publishing, 2002). In both the 2012 ISPS contest and the Maria W. Faust Sonnet Contest, she placed first and has had writing contributions in more than fifty literary journals. She graduated from the creative writing program at Southern Illinois University. Her short play won first prize from the Paradise Alley Players, and she received first place in the fiction contest at John A. Logan College.

Juan Pablo Mobili was born in Buenos Aires, and adopted by New York. His poems appeared in *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Hanging Loose Magazine*, *South Florida Poetry Journal* and *Louisville Review*, among many others in the United States, as well as international publications such as *Impspired* (UK), *The Hong Kong Review* (Hong Kong, SAR), and *The Wild Word* (Germany). His work received several nominations for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net, and his chapbook, "Contraband," was published in 2022. He's also a Guest Editor for *The Banyan Review*, and currently finishing the manuscript for his next book of poems.

Brian Kates is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist. His non-fiction book, "The Murder of a Shopping Bag Lady," was hailed by the *New York Times* as "a book in the grand journalistic tradition." His poems have appeared in *Paterson Literary Review*, *Third Wednesday*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Banyan Review* and elsewhere. He is a founding member of *River Hook Poets*, which works to make poetry part of the landscape of the lower Hudson Valley.

Patrick Williamson is an English poet and translator from French and Italian. Latest poetry collection: *Presence /Presenza* (Samuele Editore). Editor and translator of *Turn your back on the night* (The Antonym) and *The Parley Tree*, *Poets from French-speaking Africa and the Arab World* (Arc Publications). Member of the European board of *The Antonym*.

Alfred Fournier is the author of *A Summons on the Wind* (2023, Kelsay Books). His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *South Florida Poetry Journal*, *January Review*, *Hole in the Head Review*, *Welter*, *The Indianapolis Review* and elsewhere. He lives in Phoenix, where he serves as a community volunteer.

Ray Keifetz is the author of two poetry collections: *Night Farming in Bosnia*, Bitter Oleander Press, winner of that press's Library of Poetry award; and *Museum Beasts*, Broadstone Books. His stories and poems have appeared in the *Ashland Creek Press*, *Gargoyle*, *Kestrel*, *Osiris*, *Phantom Drift*, *RHINO*, and others, and have received three Pushcart Prize nominations. He lives and writes in rural New Hampshire.



Esther Sadoff is a teacher and writer from Columbus, Ohio. She is the author of four chapbooks: *Some Wild Woman* (Finishing Line Press), *Serendipity in France* (Finishing Line Press), *Dear Silence* (Kelsay Books), and *If I Hold my Breath* (Bottlecap Press). She was nominated for a Pushcart Prize by *Hole in the Head Review*.

Kenneth Pobo (he/him) is the author of twenty-one chapbooks and nine full-length collections. Recent books include *Bend of Quiet* (Blue Light Press), *Loplop in a Red City* (Circling Rivers), and most recently, *At The Window, Silence* (Fernwood Press). His work has appeared in *Asheville Poetry Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Amsterdam Quarterly*, *Nimrod*, *Mudfish*, *Hawaii Review*, and elsewhere.

Ginel Basiga Ople is busy being born in Cavite, Philippines. When he's not reading, he's being terrible at music and sports. His poetry has recently appeared in *Rattle*.

Andrea Moorhead, born in Buffalo, New York, is the publisher of the prestigious international magazine, *Osiris*. Her most recent book is *The Carver's Dream* (Red Dragon Fly Press). Her poems have appeared in journals such as *Abraxas*, *Great River Review*, *The Bitter Oleander*, *Phoenix*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, and elsewhere.

Daniel Brennan (he/him) is a queer writer and coffee devotee from New York. Sometimes he's in love, just as often he's not. His poetry has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize/Best of the Net, and has appeared in numerous publications, including *The Penn Review*, *Sho Poetry Journal*, *Puerto Del Sol*, and *Trampset*. He can be found on Twitter @DanielJBrennan_

Paul B. Roth, editor and publisher of *The Bitter Oleander Press*, is the author of seven collections of poems, including *Owasco: Passage of Lake Poems* (Finishing Line Press, 2018) and *Long Way Back to the End* (Rain Mountain Press, 2014).

David Chorlton has lived in Phoenix since 1978 when he moved from Vienna, Austria, with his wife. Born in Austria, he grew up in Manchester, close to rain and the northern English industrial zone. In his early 20s he went to live in Vienna and from there enjoyed many trips around Europe. In Arizona, he has grown ever more fascinated by the desert and its wildlife. As much as he loves the Southwest, he has strong memories of Vienna, and that city is the setting for his one work of fiction: *The Taste of Fog*, from Rain Mountain Press. *Selected Poems*, appeared in 2014 from FutureCycle Press, and *The Bitter Oleander Press* published *Shatter the Bell in my Ear*, translations of poems by Austrian poet Christine Lavant.

Silvia Scheibli's forth-coming book, *Coyote Woman*, is scheduled for release in January 2026 from Dream Tyger Press, Reisterstown, MD. It includes an article by Dr. Jose Rodeiro entitled, "The Legacy of Creative Collaborations among Immanentist Poets and Artists (1968 to the Present); plus five illustrations by artist Marlena Lisac.



Ace Boggess is author of seven books of poetry, most recently *Tell Us How to Live* (Fernwood Press, 2025) and *My Pandemic / Gratitude List* (Mōtus Audāx Press, 2025). His writing has appeared in *Indiana Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Hanging Loose*, and other journals. An ex-con, he lives in Charleston, West Virginia, where he writes, watches Criterion films, and tries to stay out of trouble. His first short-story collection, *Always One Mistake*, is forthcoming from Running Wild Press.

Robert Moorhead received his M.F.A. in design from Carnegie Mellon University in 1969. Following graduate school, Moorhead worked as a transportation designer for the Rensselaer Research Corporation in Troy, New York. Next, he joined the faculty at Deerfield Academy, where he taught architecture, design, and calligraphy. Moorhead creates paintings characterized by geometric compositions as well as calligraphic-inspired abstract work. Many of his paintings combine his varied interests, including typography and poetry.





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