

JANUARY REVIEW

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Alicia Hoffman

I Don't Want to Grow Old and Die

My cats like jazz. They tend to prowl
around the saxophone on the speaker,

that sonorous drip and purl. Right now,
they pounce onto each other, skip quick

into the other room before flopping
belly down on the brown kitchen tile.

I do not want this poem to be about me,
or my inability to express what I want.

I want to eat and eat. I want to expunge
the world's disasters. I want to love

so closely it ends in devourment. Yes.
Let us enemy the real killer in the room.

Let us slash the blade across that apocryphal
throat. In this room, there are only rubies.

In this stanza, the claws come out. We
all know there is safety in numbers,

that innumerable cliché, but there is also
safety in slaying this fake play, like the toy

mouse the big tabby one is destroying now
on the carpet, stuffed with a little bell inside,

small warning this might be alive. The obvious
parataxis is imminent. Of course, I don't want to

grow old and die. I don't want to leave this sentence,
this beautiful yard, prison where even wildflowers

grow from the crumbling seams and animals crawl
like an alphabet through the small spaces till I crack.



Alicia Hoffman

No Proper Animal

I remember Guantanamo. Fox News
at my parents' house, smoke rising

from the grill. Nothing is ever here
until it is. After, the stakes, higher

then the crows long soar into
the northeastern park, a remedy

for all the spaces it has lost, are
apparently changing, and here,

no one knows the rules to the game.
When I sat at the table, I trusted

the officials. When everything is
ephemeral, who am I to blame?

Last night, a black cat crawled
across the car I haven't started

in fifteen days. Yes, I do wonder
if the engine works. I wonder

at our immediate exhaustion.
Cables tied and untransmittable

in this heat and stink. I find myself
looking up the antonyms for cyclical.

For rain. Every recourse an atom, re:
imagining. Did you know one lone moth

developed is an imago? But a whole train
of them is a landscape unbecoming? White

knights of armageddon, do you witness
the sleeve pulled quick from the elbow

of the beautiful girl in the corner? As
the ship's masts sail, bound towards



another unknown coast, do you herald
the time, the luxury of oil, and the salt?

Orange slick, a rind upon on my table.
Tell me, now that you have become

my only brother, where do you wish
to port to? How do you expect a drink?



Maximilian Heinegg

Grace

For Jeff Buckley

I was a busboy swapping ashtrays when I heard
a soprano in the basement of the Fez, NYC,
climbing octaves like a valkyrie.

A singer myself, I traded my shift,
saying it was for second-floor tips—
when the audience emerged from the stairwell

like they'd seen the loveliest
ghost. I sat with Miracle Legion,
agreeing he was just a voice.

I left the city soon after, but caught the fault,
angling to the front of Tower Records,
bowing to Grace in its entirety.

After, he signed my Nietzsche. That young,
& knowing, he wrote, May you be luckier
in love. We lost the leaf, but we were.



Maximilian Heinegg

The Way We Say We Drive

Defensively, we tell the children
our public lies. Any highway proves
middle fingers lust for a fling,

signal balls with ring & index. Trigger
petty outrage or longbow it, stranger
to stranger. Secret assholes, all auto-

crats, musclers, tailers, snap honkers,
swervers, off-parallel parkers, kings
of stymie, slow booth change grabbers,

left lane jerkers in the night's zen
dazing me with high beams. Bleeding
my rage out when the rotary's tourniquet

loosens, helpless in the commute's triage,
where every urgency is privileged, trumps
patience. Caught between the flag tattooed

truck's Don't Tread & the charter laurelled
hybrid tailing us, we entirely fail to conceal
ourselves, rearing yellow-snobbers, banging

rights on denied reds. We don't signal or wave
a pre-emptive hand for apology. Hypocrisy is
what you see first on the road: no cops around.



Maximilian Heinegg

Future Butterfly

Spent the day, higher than high, fortunate transient
ripping through bags copped from papis
weaving beneath Alphabet awnings,
with fresh works from addicts scored at the clinics,
ascending parent-rented apartments with tonight's friends
from the Sidewalk or Under Time, from the Bank
or the Fez or from Brownie's, late teens returning
with cash from elevated cages, stripping their way
through Hunter & together, busboys & waiters &
barbacks, managers & bartenders' pockets full
for now spilled into the effortless evening,
& no one overdosed until they cut it harder;
then pleasure turned poison, & the poorer
stayed with the hand, two wings rotting in
a sticky chrysalis the rich kids quit & flew.



David Chorlton

The Final Battle for Tenochtitlan

In a city built of marble and feathers,
stones fall in sheets
and priests run with their hair
like roosters' crests, crimson
with old blood. As dust

beats down the fires, Moctezuma
rolls a jaguar skull in his hands,
fingering the blue rocks
planted there. Imagining jugglers

in the streets, he calls for his canopy
of blinding green, a necklace
of live birds, and a bath filled with pearls.
He offers his aviaries
for peace, and tears the gems
from his sandals

but everything that Spaniards want
they take. Arriving with a string of beads,
they traded an empire
for musk scented glass, and claim
the markets, tobacco
and fountains. They will possess

all they destroy.
Hearts glow
on clay altars in the temple,
beating on the gentle coals

while the next god waits
with gunpowder and chiles
enough to survive. As they crumble,
the defenders cry:

*Whether for us or for yourselves
you will rebuild this city.*



David Chorlton

Silk

Silk is the far side of the Tigris,
half a year
across Asia, beyond

the elephants' homeland.
It rustles in the room
where an emperor sleeps

and lines serpentine tombs
under the sand.
Silk plains

are covered with bones.
Torn silk
marks borders all the way

from the ceramic gates to a city
afloat in palm groves
to the Chinese Wall. The steppes

are expanses of burnt silk,
black beneath the wind
guiding travelers

through the narrows
between Heaven and Earth
to the mulberry

where silkworms spin a continent
to spread
before the dark ambassadors

from the other end
of the unmapped world.



David Chorlton

Cicada Fire

The sky in the east turns silver
for a second, then becomes
dust again.

Cicadas pour themselves back

into last year's shells,
empty for months in sheltered
garden corners, and tune

themselves for a shrill
summer. They are an army
of musical clocks
whose wheels

grind sand, and spark
a storm of storms

chain reacting
inside every one
where the springs
melt down in the furnace.



Alan Britt

A SUDDEN POEM ABOUT IRONS

Irons, scalded over coals,
irons balanced over many flames
that existed as swarming thoughts,
irons in unassuming pastel garb.

Irons, with dark ink bleeding through
the onionskin paper of existence,
the thin membrane shielding us
from constant death.

Irons, singing our mortal attempts
to appease the universe,
universe with symbolic doilies twisting
from the strings of hopeless violins,
twisting from umbilical cords of cats
easing their grey and white foreheads
beneath our chins plus knuckles
that tend the Weber grill wafting chicken,
salmon and ribeye smoke
through the lusty branches
of a yellow Norway maple.

Well, these irons resemble the skeletons
of neglected pets: iguanas, potbellied pigs,
and pit bulls, plus a feral population
of Maryland domestic shorthaired cats.

Irons, because I no longer recognize
the sentimental code for existence
(see Baudelaire), after Chuck envisioned
a code better than most folk's depraved
vision of reality.



Irons are the wrought that thumps us
without a sound to the bottom
of the infinite,
a la Jiménez.

Irons twinkling like ballasts,
like drunken solar systems
above sacred mass,
above rehearsal for band neon tangos
to camouflage deceitful angels
who sometimes lure us to the promised
land and other times
panic the entire flock
dazing peacefully
in the exhausted branches of amnesia.



Alan Britt

TEMPORARY AMNESIA

I stand beside a furnace,
a wrought-iron, roaring furnace.

I would be about three years old
and sleepwalking through a quasi-strange house.

The flames of the furnace blasting blue oboes.

Actually, I'm a smidge less than three years old
and the furnace a 50-year-old WWI
fully-functioning antique.

Anyway, I stand beside that furnace
while strangers in the house, from every direction,
flow in flannel robes across a chilly Indiana linoleum floor,
brushing aside thick darkness to rescue me.

Somehow this furnace, blazing when I was between two
and three years old, awakened recently, quite unexpectedly,
in a basement apartment just outside Baltimore with its
single blue oboe tongue like a pilot light engorged
by the frost covering my temporary amnesia.



Steve Sleboda

IN A VAGUE HEAVEN

Never saw the Robin fly.
It's land glow
Kept a voice
from falling off
the cart.
Two, three in a
blue formation
facing the same stone,
leaves and
their print sounds
were heard in a vague heaven
and evaporated into
a mirror-held wind cloud.



Steve Sleboda

FORGET FOREVER

These stars stand everywhere to sing
tonight between oceans that collapse
Into mounds of morning sky.

A cough, a breath, stretch the map across
the wasteland to enshrine pollen as the
biggest piece of damp in the room.

Ho Ho huff and puff and blow that brick
house down. Life forever, laughter to-
gether, grind that age old apocalypse
down.

Singing, a song released toward lamp-
shade waters, it goes green memory
stream along the other black dawn.

Take in creak-filled wagons, hilarity-
hinged, basically rust without that
orange-brown tint.

Another song bursts through the screen,
from a voice nearby an anvil rings the
rhythm home.

Alleluia, the globe already dressed to
dance with Mother's weary grin
beautiful beauty
bountiful plains
golden stillness
forget forever.



Diane Doty Averill

On the Last Day of Summer

As my sister walks towards me

her hair once raven

becomes silvery

shining as her face

nears mine.

We breakfast alongside

autumn crocus, a lavender lantern

breathing beside an ancient grey rock.

Returning home to a phone that

cries, an eighty-year-old widower

in a distant city

tells me he wants

to take his wife outside in the sun

because the last thing she could enjoy

was turning her blind face towards the warmth

without punctuation I cry with him



she was my friend, too.

This opens the afternoon to another voice,
a woman I love, now thirty years under the earth,
urges me once again to cross the shaded sidewalk

to the other side of the street, saying
Let's walk in the sun as long as we can.

So I stroll along the dappled day
stopping for a wooly caterpillar crossing
and as I bend to watch
it moves along so slowly it grows older---
by the time it gets to the other side
its orange band has lengthened
predicting a severe winter.

I could have held it curled in my palm
helped it to the other side
but I am only a watercolor my shadow paints.

In the evening
a black dog curls around another
darker dog, old girlfriends.

A few jewels shine through the clouds,
singing them into another season.



Diane Doty Averill

In the Morning City

The face of a news anchor on my big-screen TV
turns emoji-sad. “And now we’ll focus on “The Homeless Problem.”
An earnest young reporter in a Patagonia jacket appears on the screen
while a blood-red geranium petal falls,
floats down from my window box to the concrete below
as I look at him from my sixth-floor condo.
He tells viewers that more and more people appear each day,
making it sound like a magic trick.

I wrap my warm fleece closer around my shoulders,
keep looking down
while a shadow steps out of a blue tarp tent
right behind him.
A woman curled on a curb cries under shifty clouds.
The reporter zooms in to ask her why.
“I was raped one night and am afraid to go to sleep.”
He nods sympathetically then turns away,
showing us three men fighting with sticks
and I know this happens every day. Avoiding them,
he sweeps along the concrete, showing the detritus of human tragedy:
used needles, Styrofoam plates and cups. Such a public nuisance.
People sit crowded around eating from brown paper bags
given to them by shelters where they no longer are able
to eat or shower inside. He shakes his head in dismay.
“There’s no social distancing here.”



I sleep beneath a flowered down comforter,
knowing there is no room for dreams down there.
He points to orange porta-potties, unaware of how often
I've seen drug deals made within them, then to an occasional hand-washing station
before the cut-off for a commercial break.

I click the remote: blank screen.

I don't know if I'll get my old job back, or what is coming next,
so I count my gratitudes one more time.

Tonight the spin doctors will wrap up everything
talk to medical experts and then to politicians about the pandemic.
Are we all flies in a world-wide-web?



John Compton

september fragments & other things on a monday

our arms will remind you about time,
if you remember my existence.

don't crush ice for faster results -
the gentle melt will retain cold longer.

320 pm: the weather tore the porch
in years, the grey bones bow.
the nails, rusted freckles, hangnails

clip the flesh. 322 pm and the fly hasn't figured
how to crawl through the window.

the room has a quiet whisper
from the television behind a door.
something is *dangerous to ride*.

i am not afraid of north korea. their warheads
which bring passion and fear.
i don't believe trump's propaganda.



325: my coffee has avoided steam.

it came to my cup the temperature of my tongue.

salt & sodium are similar but altered:

diamonds and zirconium.

the brine of the body. coal, but more beautiful.

the leaves look weary in the sun. it is september.

there is no longer o'clock. the age of technology.

autumn has become fall. it's easier.

i understand how to become lonely.

eventually it converts to the simplest thing.

sex has evolved to twink and whores

and thirty-one years old, i am neither: too old

even for the elder. too ugly. too complicated.

love & commitment. taboo.



John Compton

[sylvia's lioness] cut

what a lioness and cub,
blue eye and brown -
you sit there quite chill
except for that stare.

of fur, fabricated
with paint: bronze
medal than
that clump white.

little curious
the audience of weeds.
hands made still,
fingers taunt the hair.

straight from the canvas
the brush stroked life
erratic things suffocate
to bring rare beauty
to the sight:
one million little lines,
one million little lies.

what god made you?
with their imagination
to cultivate such beasts
into existence.



the bleak
feeling,
wild yet careful:
mother.

the both of you see,
i realize,
me watching you.
the helplessness
in pause -
a transition -
confused me with the eerie
pondering...

how do you go
from a boundless originality
to such a frozen
sadness?



John Compton

[anne sexton at home reading wanting to die]

anne sexton's lips curl up
to suicide, like a candle to be blown out
the excitement flares and melts her tongue.
her kind words with dying
not once, but twice -
now, how it too has turned its back.
the way her fingers trail her face
right before her eyes eat
her immortality.



Jesse Wolfe

Quotidian Throne

His dream was to stride through corridors of years
secure, unscarred by pain,
ultimately alone.

He knew how to acquire admirers:
he excelled at school and basketball,
he'd lived on both coasts and abroad,
had three languages at hand,
and, like chameleons of sea or land,
could blend,
magician-swift,
into gray or tropical atmospheres.

Now he'd been married several years.
His wife understood that when he escaped
into his caves of books
and drawers of journals tethered
to his adolescence
(his competent, peripheral parents,
a pact he seemed to have struck with himself
to embody a prototype that he'd designed),
he entered a serener place,
one more austere and purified
than she, with her explicit fears,
the honesty carved in her words and face,
should linger in.



They'd have a child or two.

He knew she knew

he'd maintain a bank of love for them:

he'd toss back his head to laugh and smile,

cradle them against his chest,

and warm them with his self-regenerating happiness.

Perhaps they both sensed, asleep side by side,

that if any doubts or candid questions

could guide their family's glittering journey

like a compass rose on a climate map,

they would be hers alone to provide.

Perhaps they knew that long tracts in his mind

would remain—not enshrouded

behind an eminent barricade—

but somehow, although enticing, near,

seemingly unchanging and unchanged

and inaccessible.

As he sensed peace in this accomplishment,

she could be reassured:

the harbor will always be calm,

closed off to tourists and impervious to storms.

His dream was not to be known, surveyed,

but to usher his loved ones toward themselves,

teasing whatever secrets free

they cared—or dared—to share.

In his presence they could dance,

with his blessing they would grow and sing.

His dream was to be calm, kind, trustworthy,

and resplendent like a king.



Jesse Wolfe

Weather Report

The mother, heavy in the final weeks
of pregnancy, her dream and terror, wonders:

if I bring my child to the sea
when he is old enough to sense absences
vaster than he or I can fill, will he
see the only gods—chance and the wind—
who sand our faces into dogged grimaces?

As it rises in parabolas and pounds
shoreline cliffs, will he infer moods
akin to mine—cruel, insatiable—
or will he see a blue intelligence
with thoughts like his, or passion like my own?



Jesse Wolfe

Momentum

—on a coastal train between cities,
facing backward. That always sickens
my stomach. Nor did I want to look
toward faces of forward-facing passengers
who did not want to look at me.
One tapped his phone. Another's eyes were closed.
From the way wrinkles spread from her nose
to the corners of her lips, she seemed at peace.
I could picture them a couple.

I wrenched my neck away
from the rolling ocean, toward hills
lent, by distance, the illusion
of being almost still. Strangely,
I thought of our first frantic months,
as though this could cancel where momentum
had carried us. Flurries of emails,
the plan to rendezvous at LAX.

On our first nature walk we discovered
an empty lake in Mojave.
It seemed as still as the hills around it,
and—for a moment—so were we,
like wild deer. Its surface: suffused
with the afternoon. Our best time together.
Thinking of it on the train filled me
with illusory peace. When it paused
on the platform, he would be there,



as little as there remained to say.

“How have you been?” “Were you waiting long?”

Then it would continue north.



Beatrice Dojuvne

soaping

from Lisbon i carried
yellow jasmine soaps
in old handmade boxes
the rose ribbons undone
i place the essences
in this white shower tray

as i froth soap and water
i travel back to nights
of the blueberry spices
of ruby red port wine
nostalgic fado songs
strings slowly fading



Beatrice Dojuvne

after the shower

dabbing perfume
on my wrists
behind my ears
when there is
nowhere to go
the world locked
down solitary
self-pleasuring
this scent my
only companion



Beatrice Dojuvne

my hair, a measure of time

uncolored roots

expose their

natural grays

might monochrome

fit the rest of me?

uncut, now i can play

with styles à la

betty grable movie

i watched last night

roll it up into bumper bangs

crowning my face

i look like my young mother

proudly holding me in her arms

in this now beige photograph



Beatrice Dojuvne

Seasons of crying

She leans over and
hugs an earlier me.
My story having
broken her down.

And me? Benumbed.
Tearless.
Have I forsaken him?

Questions like these
betray the tangled
heart of mourning.



Beatrice Dojuvne

Just about everything

I shall learn to give me
what I received from him.

Crocus. Confidence.
Shield. Smile. So many
sunsets. Sunrises.

And his being to love.

I can learn to give me
just about everything
rippled with grief.



Michael T. Young

Phantom Limbs

For years after 9-11, visitors to Ground Zero
photographed the hole. It was like friends coming
to point at the stump of my amputated arm.

The phantom limb aches every morning
I look out my window. Can these visitors
remember the Borders bookstore that stood here?

Does it matter some can only imagine
the Krispy Kreme was over there?
Or is it all the same if none of them recalls

a summer day at the fountain discussing
the subtleties of memory, or another day
spinning between the towers, dropping

to the ground, and looking up as their
monumental height bled and spiraled
in an urban version of the waterfall effect?

Such a simple reflex, pulling and twisting
images in the opposite direction, like memory,
where things receding grow closer and closer

until time reverses and the past crowds the future,
full of unwanted guests and ghosts, a mob
swarming the memory of my son on the day

he was born, his small hand clutching
my index finger, as if he was aware
it was the first thing he was capable of losing.



Michael T. Young

Salt in Water

Like the first photographic prints from paper
soaked in salt water, preserve an image in the retina,

or a current in the flow of seeing. Brush silver
over the residue of an event and offer up

a chalice of saline to starlight, mixing memories
with their furious wishes, risen from children

gazing out night windows. Both what is remembered
and what is hoped. My own recollection: a salt lick

chiseled like an owl. It capped a fence post and melted
in the hunger of lazy horses. That wisdom at the corner

of the pasture, seasoned its advice to the end of bitter time,
back to ancient Greeks who bought Thracian slaves

with the crystal, or Roman soldiers whose salt ration
was their *salarium argentum*, and is my bi-weekly “salary.”

But in every case, it’s war—in Perugia, El Paso—
thrones built from sodium chloride, or toppled,

battles lost or won from Virginia to the last turn
in the mind where salterns burn to recall a name.



That's why a dash of sodium in the diet
sharpens the print in the brain's history books,

and even Gandhi's great soul soared as salt
from his hand, a lump lifted from the beach mud.

Held in sunlight, it blinded the British Empire.
Remembering that, seasons my present, where

hungry bodies sleep and fidget on park benches,
or I look down a pit that once was a library and will be.



Michael T. Young

Souvenir

Peculiar to every bathroom in Utopia
is a sage dish of river stones and soap chips.

Visitors are surprised by the hotels
with their cracked mirrors and creaky doors.

Pipes rusting under the streets go unnoticed.
Although one has a sense of something,

like all a lover isn't saying,
leeching from joints into soil.

Joists soften to a fleshy pulp in the rafters,
threshing the air with a sweet scent

assumed dispensed from the native plants.
Tours of the city leave a lingering expectation

of a symphony about to start. Returning home,
tourists are unable to describe what they saw

but wake in the morning quietly humming
a new psalm for every ache in the bones.



David Spicer

WISDOM OF THE POMEGRANATE

It waits on the shelf with all my books to taste.
My father showed the green fruit when I was young.

When I was young, he said I was green, like the fruit.
I grew older. The pomegranate reddened.

The pomegranate grew older. I reddened.
I tasted its rich color. Its seeds taught me.

Their texture colored the seeds of my thinking.
I ate that pomegranate that stayed the same.

The pomegranate changed me as I ate.
It didn't shrink or rot. Its seeds flourished.

Over the years I ate its seeds and flourished.
They slowly taught me the world's ways.

I was slow to learn the ways of the world.
But the pomegranate and books still wait.



David Spicer

THE WAY YOU SAID GOODBYE

I smelled the crow feathers
your fingernails nudged
before you slipped them
behind my headband.
I stood on the hillside,
the fragrance of canyon flowers
drifting to my nose as thunder blasted
above the riverbank. Your eyes
told me to witness a different
beauty: of the storm,
of the Zodiac's basket of secrets
in your gaze. You smudged
my face with a streak of your
maroon lipstick. Squinting, I stared
at the terrace, smelling lemons.
You said, *Spread our white
bedroom linens. They're my
favorites.* It rained and rained
and rained. *The sea calls,
but I need my coffee.* You smiled,
handed me a tiny quilt decorated
with mustard seeds and cherries.
This is your salvation. *If you
never heal from your sins, remember
its colors and these memories,
remember me, as I leave and say
Goodbye for the last time.*



Martin Willitts

Judith Slaying Holofernes

(Painting by Artemisia Gentileschi, 1610)

(The *Book of Judith* was probably written during the Second Temple Period)

We cannot talk about water without mentioning knives,
or the migration of flamingoes over the marshes.

We cannot open our mouths without spitting flames.

Words bring their own baskets of meaning.

All of this is waking from beauty into revenge.

This is not the better angels you've heard about.

We cannot hear the bedsheets being tortured,
because the sun is incorrigibly perfect
like wasps in the garden, dying off in early fall.

Every negative comment is too human.

Every deaf ear is a barometer ignoring the season.

Every moment is tainted by light.

Knives only have one purpose in life:
the edge of silence,
ruffling cobalt blue dress movement.

This is white retribution, in rolled-up sleeves,
putting you back into work, hacksawing
with no delicacy because none was given.



Everlasting

The everlasting is a vague promise of what will happen
beyond this life, this path of green and water and light.

Every year, I enjoy the spring purple violets,
the quizzical bees following memory, the rapture
of Cataula's one-week white flower, the scarlet cardinals,
the breathlessness of yellow tanagers that never returned
again, the untouched grotto with pure water, the singing
of a child on the other side of a fence.



Martin Willitts

The Day is Speechlessly Broken

my father scuffling
on a deer trail winding
through white pine
into the shockingly
beautiful birds
manifesting trees
their music
he will never hear

I sign *songbirds*

signed *this*
is music



Kenneth Pobo

THE BUCKET

Minnie says her life is
a letter slipped under
her back door.

When she opens it,
she finds two blank pages.

I tell her that life has
a few good moments.

Ice cream. Sunsets. Cats.

She puts a bucket
over her head
and asks me to please
remove it for her
when the dusk sun
slips under the waves--
that she must see.



Silvia Scheibli

Conversations with Athena

Macedonia

Although
Athena abhorred shopping
Especially now
As the plague
Raged in this spectral city
With centuries-old limestone benches
Painted facades &
Hellenistic warriors mounted on
Marble colonnades

She hoped to discover
The latest palace intrigues
Of strategic marriages & diplomacy
So characteristic of this
Hyper-masculine society

Also she needed to find
A lion skin headdress
To bribe her brother
Who believed that war brought glory
So that she could pursue
Her secret pan-ethnic studies
At her sanctuary
In Vergina



Silvia Scheibli

Mieza Sanctuary of Nymphs

Athena felt safe at Mieza

Evading her father's security detail
Eluding one or two still glowing funeral pyres
After the latest blood-sport intrigue at the palace
She was elated to arrive
At the caves and hidden springs
Of Mieza

Here Athena sought out
Sappho, who with her own circle
Of poets and artists
Knew more ethics and philosophy
Than anyone she had ever met -
Being in her presence was itself
A symposium



Silvia Scheibli

Sappho

Much beloved
Admired and slandered
Sappho had promised to meet her
In the peristyle whose mosaic floor
Was created entirely of beach pebbles
In a botanical motif
With jade, emerald and cerulean hues
Accenting the deeper greens
Of the Mieza's lush, wind-combed grasses

Her star-warmed eyes
Met Athena's at breaking point
Beyond which nothing felt real
Except the inlaid fire of
Imagination &
Insight



Silvia Scheibli

Oracle at Delphi

Quivering

Sappho and Athena

Travelled to Athens

Crossing pomegranate-studded terrain

To Delphi

Where the oracle's hand-raised goats

Roamed olive groves

Intending to learn their fortunes

They assisted with

Washing bones in wine

Wrapping them in a purple cloth &

Placing them in a golden larnax

Inside a marble sarcophagus

Before sealing the tomb

While the god Hermes

Conducted the warrior's soul

To the underworld



Silvia Scheibli

Hermes

Deciding to join the party
Hermes stirred Sappho's pulse
Undressing her mind
With quips, quotes & gossip

Leaving Athena to socially
Distance and daydream about
Twirling those ebony loose curls
At Sappho's serene temple

The toasted their friendship
With Campari
Enjoying bowls of saffron rice
With squid, mussels and clams

For dessert
Sappho read poems about her
Newest lover
Who slept all day &
Would only pee in silver vessels
Handed to her by a young page
Wearing scarlet slippers
Embossed with golden
Phainopeplas



Paul B. Roth

FOUND OUT

Between us are no names. Signs ingrained by repetitive gestures are all that's necessary. Deep in bird song is the forest where we stand. Gurgling over split rock across which we step, a flat stream wets our pant cuffs. One of us insists on taking another path, the other urges going ahead, making this body, a shared one, spin in place. Making this body a past, played out where gymnasium children stood on each other's' shoulders and crawled from basement windows in a desperate attempt at regaining their parents. A past when having escaped, they find their parents gone, their brothers and sisters missing. Where once a warm bread was shared at dusk among roses whose aroma was colored the hue of a Danube sunset, the same dining room's once butterfly embroidered wallpaper has now been stripped in uneven lengths alongside the steaming peeled skins of boiled cow tongues. The future we dreamed was a reality, now drags our hearts' pace down to the vertical spray of light that dusty champagne bottles pop in French wine cellars. We toast the sky that floats atop our bubbling goblets and in one gulp swallow it down. Having no longer any kind of sun in its midst, it may be our final hope for survival.



Paul B. Roth

GOING NOWHERE

No one comes back. Still, we wait without being convinced. So many we've known, so many unknown over centuries who met horrible ends. Eyes gouged out, ears sliced off, noses butterflied, teeth filed flat, lips sewn shut, arms and legs severed at the elbow and knee, torsos hacked while still squirming, even castrations producing eunuchs who alone could be trusted to protect Sumerian harems or the Chinese Emperor's wives. Not to mention all those others whose chests were hollowed out, and whose children were allowed to feel around an expanse of sea water and honey for fragments of their mothers and fathers. Until one night, a particular heart was scooped out before holding its beat for some time hung just over a fire pit's rising flames. Grilled as a special meal the king had requested his adulterous queen be served with her choice of wine that very night, it was to be prepared so as not to arouse his lady's suspicions in the least. After all, was he not entitled to emulate the same gratified pose his queen has recently shown over her most recent repast?



Paul B. Roth

DIN

Choirs a golden chrysalis cracks open, heard only by a marching column of black ants across a discarded soda straw, drift off towards the very end of their muffled hymnal. Earth's aroma is all that's left of their song. I could taste this remnant were it not for my mouth wasting so much time speaking and not enough time salivating. More time translating identity into words lassoing rain clouds in the desert. And yet, were it not for these words, would there be any need for greeting this anonymous page everyday with nothing written that will surprise or reveal the unexpected. Perhaps I've been tricked into thinking every world I create is habitable for those who have no need of others. Perhaps unable to be halved, there hasn't been a measurable whole to my being. Then again, that may be only when either the past has vanished or the present's seemed a far less generous gift from the future.



Paul B. Roth

PUSHING THROUGH

I never think about backing off. Yet having come so far to this forest, I hesitate at its edge. Before I step into its midst, my eyes adjust to its thick density. Differing compositions accumulating layers of this forest's floor over time—thick crusts of buried leaves, brittle pine needles, incidental feathers, cracked nut shells, moth wing remnants, ridged worm casings, fragile seed hulls, exhausted flowers, hollow insect corpses, tiny bits of predator discarded bone, decaying logs of moss under crumbles of softened bark, manure in all colors, shapes and volumes—all release, from beneath each step taken, an ever-changing aroma steeped in the moment to moment death that self-perpetuates, intoxicates, and dizzies my brain, all while reintroducing my imagination to a living soil of dead things. So much silence is there that even my breathing cries to be heard. If a rock filled stream slows itself down to a trickle, the songs of unseen birds which its usual downhill torrent suppresses, would be better heard. Trapped by my longing and my losses, everything about me turns up missing. Paths my feet trample before walking off the edge of the world, vanish in the air I leave behind. Now all that's left of me is what I've forgotten. Now all that's left of me *is* forgotten.



Andrea Moorhead

Migrations

The child carried a turquoise amulet
on a hemp cord
someone told him the wind would pass over
and rain never soak
but snow remained on his heart
building a tower of phantom ice.



Andrea Moorhead

*

A corner of light caught in the curtain
disappearing
shadows as we move around the room
dropping dusty cells and floating hair
tripping over accumulated stones
swept in on an errant sea



Andrea Moorhead

If dreams were porous

The orphanage had neither doors nor windows
wind and rain slipped in overnight
soaking the blankets
every face suddenly and turning towards
the open spaces
shafts of dark and light
repeatedly hitting the frames.



Andrea Moorhead

If one were to communicate now

He's buried words along the edge of the woods, somewhere near the granite boulders. There's a small, fast stream on the southwest boundary. No words down there, maybe a comma or a semi-colon, nothing heavy. The water is still clear. The oak leaves have a bluish cast now, their veins intense emerald. I can't recall seeing this before. The leaves shine while you speak, almost disappear in the silence that follows.



Andrea Moorhead

Quick Images

Rounding the corner, a streetlight on stilts, the way a child imagines it late at night after everyone else is in bed and the books have been shelved, there's something in the darkness that glows and moves, following the path of least resistance, moving down the street, swaying with the wind.



Andrea Moorhead

If the window were open

Distant lights from a passing train
it's windy close to the house
the windows are stained with pollen
buzzing around the door
the screens still in the shed,
I haven't seen anyone out walking tonight
the train has slowed down
its lights twinkling,
a child opens his window
hoping to catch the sound of the whistle
as it crosses into the far fields
cutting its lights, turning into the night.



Justin Hamm

<Cosmic time, it seems,>

Cosmic time, it seems,
is nearly as wobbly
as musical time is steady.
Maybe this is why we advance
in such uneasy lurches
like those first wagons
propelled by engines
minus mule or horse.

Some of us are deer
and move blithely through
shivering bluegrass,
some proud, imperfect
mathematicians,
some the piston hearts
of young mothers
who tremble as doctors
score our babies' arms
and insert them
with the infectious pus
during the first few
frightening rounds
of smallpox vaccination.

What our elders knew
hangs low like heavy fruit
in an orchard we mistrust,
or trust too much,
or simply torch--not for heat
but the pure pleasure of fire.

Maybe this is why,
when the serpent unhinges
its jaw and takes in its own tail,
it may or may not be
considered a cannibal.



Justin Hamm

Gratitude for the Poets

Thank you for the blood of peaches
and the scarecrows boogying in the breeze.

Thank you for taking the time
to polish the face of the moon.

Thank you for your slant rhymes
and your lovely lyric wind chimes.

Thank you for the beers, the coffee,
the warm cookies. Especially the beers.

Thank you, poets, for your postcards
from the inner circles of hell

and for speaking your particular spells
into the shade of death.

Thank you for Wednesday night church
and all fifty-two ways light can fall upon a leaf.

Thank you for the broken pencil tips.
Thank you for teaching me butterflies

have hearts inside their wings.
Thank you for sneakers on city pavement

and for bottling the acid of all
the wars I never had to fight.

Thank you for the mangers in your lips
and the tears in your guitars.

Thank you for knowing. And wondering.
Doubting, suggesting, insisting.

Thank you for your loyal horses
and your dark woods filling with snow.

For your pool sharks shirking school
and the judgment of the midday sun.

For the invisible drums thrumming
beneath your pyrotechnical songs.



For the ten-minute vacations
and the laying on of hands.

Thank you, poets, for giving
love its own language.

Thank you for giving language.
Thank you for giving love.



Justin Hamm

First Flight: Chicago to Keflavik

At 30,000 feet I photograph the sunset.
Fall asleep and dream of the time
my old man dropped five feet from a ladder

and bounced off the winter-cold concrete
outside our trailer, eyes rolling and white,
low gurgle of panic humming in his throat.

When I wake an hour later to a new sun,
I realize the hum is only the groaning
of the airplane's engine. Through the clouds

I glimpse pockets of glass-blue sea
six miles down and consider how cold
it must be among the whales and porpoises.

I press closer to you, find that place on your neck,
the scent by which I'd know you if my eyes
turned to ash or my ears sealed with rubble.

Before we left, you spoke of a will; I avoided it.
Now, the first song on my playlist shuffle, Jeff Bridges:
Funny how fallin' feels like flyin' —for a little while.

I pull my earbuds out, surrender to the engine.
Try to decide if 30,000 feet is high enough
to actually make out the old gods' laughter.



Paul Mechko

Ceremonial Life

You drank the ceremonial dilution following a line of precursors into a softer form of the usual savagery

a harsh world of dust and words of labor and poetry where strong men battle the television night and dogs hold the jungle at bay

your home is a country is a place inside a country is a specific intensity of place that lacks forgiveness is a blinded intensity of living

all of this exploding with a sense of terror that subsides into bafflement

and shadows stretch from whatever it is that we call home to whatever it is that we call forest

and somewhere inside the forest there is a thing that we might call possibility if we could just catch a taste of it as it flees with all of its wildness into the darkened depth of the unrecoverable cry

and so we cling to each other waiting for all of this to end

hoping upon hope that we can survive the need to live.



Geoffrey Himes

MARRIED UNDER THE MOON

In the world of my first marriage,
the eclipsed moon rose each evening,
a black coin floating in the purple sky,
an empty hole in the blanket of stars

Every once in a while, however, the moon
above our marriage burned harvest orange.
The neighbors would come out on the lawn,
point to the sky and say, “Look, it's a lunar shining.”

Those rare events convinced me to stay
in the marriage far longer than I should have.
From the roof, I'd watch the disc's flickering edges
and murmur, “Maybe it's about to catch fire.”



Geoffrey Himes

MIGRATION

One snow goose is impressive enough:
the long, curved lines of its large white body
stalking the shore in search of seeds,
its pink-orange legs disappearing when it swims,
the black fingers of its white wings
visible only when it leaps into flight.

But one hundred and five thousand of them,
according to the rangers' count, is chastening,
a reminder of what a small part of this planet
we primates in clothes actually inhabit.
We cluster behind a fence, our binoculars and
cameras pointed at a mystery we can't quite grasp.

Like gently bobbing boats, the snow geese
cover the lake hull to hull, gliding to the right.
Without apparent cause, the far edge of the fleet
rises in the air, pulling the rest of the flock with them,
as if peeling the plastic wrap off a casserole,
curving over themselves, over humbled, hushed us.



Psycho Kanev

Hunger for Everything

*Between the idea and the word there is much more
than we'll ever know.*

*There are ideas for which
there will be no words.*

Standing on a moonlit winter mountaintop
with dark clouds racing under dead stars.

The Proof?

The eye sees how the hand moves.

You were created. Now move on
to your existence. And go somewhere.
Everywhere.



Psycho Kanev

Not the Schrödinger's Cat

Charlie, sleeping on the black leather couch
as if the rest of the humanity

is gone forever, us—

then he goes to the rattan sofa, moving
with that grandly aristocratic air, indicating

that he does not care about us at all.

But

he's still alive here,

he's still alive there.

We just to have find ourselves.



Psycho Kanev

Pour Two Cups

The light of dawn through the kitchen window,
illuminating empty cups and black ladles

like question marks hanging over the sink

and the esoteric metaphysics of the black coffee
brewing in the pot.

*

Rustle of sheets and cackle coming from the bedroom.

*

*What if there's nothing else but the emptiness
of nothingness.*

*

Pour two cups and drink those and go.

Be exactly there.

But where?

Exactly!



Tim Suermondt

THE GREAT ARTIST

Obviously, this poem isn't about me
though of course it will be.

Stay with me. Now that I have the Great
Artist out of the way, bundled into a car

and driven to a mansion where he or she can
contemplate matters of art in serenity, I can

continue moving and thinking and writing,
working on lines and images and in hope

given my ridiculous belief that writing a poem
automatically makes the world better.

Today, pressed against a window of a city bus
I'm gathering all the ammunition I'll need

to start a poem I anticipate will be a decent one,
one the Great Artist wishes he or she had written.



Tony Goeggler

12/8/80

I can't remember what we ate
or anything we talked about
as you and your sister sat
on our ugly pillow couch,
lifted gas station giveaway
glasses filled with cheap wine
to your lips. I sat with my legs
folded indian-style on the floor,
back pressed flat against
the base, my head between
your legs while you knitted
my hair into two loose braids.
I don't remember music,
but I can easily hear Van
or Ralph McTell playing.
It was nearing midnight. Wind
blown snow was falling harder,
starting to cover the streets.
We found extra blankets, sheets,
gave up one of our pillows
to make Dana's night as cozy
as possible. You followed me
into the bed room. We had only
been living together for a month
and I watched you undress,
slip under the comforter, fit



into a fetal position, burrow
into me and whisper something
about tonight being the kind
of night that made getting old
at twenty-five seem nearly
bearable. I kissed your neck,
never thinking about Dana's
long, wrap-around legs,
her excited eyes always
hinting she was up for anything.
You reached behind, found
my cock and brought it to life.
When I pulled you close,
you were already wet.
I remember everything
growing quiet, the world
slowing down, settling
into one sweet moment.

That morning, you and Dana
had early classes. Working
an afternoon shift, I was still
lying in bed, trying to find
a few more hours of sleep
when you came in crying.
The radio was playing Beatle
songs, cuts from Double
Fantasy and when the set
ended, the DJs voice broke in,
hushed and deep, saying



John Lennon was dead,
killed last night by a gunman.
You came back to bed and Dana
joined us. No one said anything
and we stayed there for maybe
fifteen minutes. While Lennon
and The Beatles never meant
to me what he meant to the rest
of the world, you loved him,
his music, and sometimes
I still miss you and I'll never
forget where I was and who
I was in love with the night
John Lennon died.



Tony Goeggler

THIS MONTH'S VISIT

After Jesse gives me the quick hug
I still have to ask for, he says paper
and walks to the table. I unlock
the room that's called the office,
come out carrying a blank sheet,
settle into my seat. He prints
September 6 2019 across the top.
I ask, What should we do today?
He always begins with the city bus
like he's spent either all morning
or his whole life waiting to ride
that bus into town and I feel
I am fulfilling my one holy
purpose helping to make this guy
happy. We continue down the page:
Starbucks, Blackbird Books, a long
slow Deerborn bus loop where
he asks to switch seats at least
twenty times and I shake my head
sideways, beg him to please zip
his lip as he laughs so loud
that everyone looks our way until
he moves closer, widens his eyes
and stares longingly into mine.
I am forced to say okay just once.
He slides into a new seat, smiles,
then says, change, one more please,
while I make faces, act enraged.



We grab jackets, file out the door,
take the elevator and hit the street.
He walks fast, I move slow as shit.
He keeps looking back at me, down
the street, in case a bus appears
and we wind up trotting a few blocks
to catch it. But no, we can take it easy.
I start thinking about Brooklyn,
carrying Jesse out to the curb
for his first day of mainstream
schooling. With his six year old legs
wrapped around my waist, I felt
like his father. His mom aimed
a camera at us, juggled his backpack
filled with Winnie the Pooh books,
his lunch box stocked with Oreos,
Extra Spicy Doritos, the only things
he ate back then, and an index card
with all his information printed on it.
She was worried about the other kids
bullying him, laughing at his flapping
fingers, constant percolating sounds,
out-of-nowhere leaps of frustration
and delight. I knew he had no use
for other kids, wouldn't acknowledge
their existence unless things escalated
to physical cruelty. Jesse carries everything
he needs inside himself, stored beneath
his beautiful blue photographic eyes.
Sometimes, I try to be more like him.



We had driven a few practice runs,
repeated short simple phrases
while he looked out the car window,
hummed. We parked in front
of the school building, walked up
the steps, moved around back
and let him fly high on the swings.
Still, I'm not sure he knew where
he was going that morning, how
long he was expected to stay, what
they might try to make him do there,
or if he was afraid of not coming
back and ever seeing us again. When
the bus arrived, his mom lifted him
out of my arms, nuzzled his face
with swarming kisses that tickled him,
then finally placed him on the ground.
He walked up the steps casually,
that light bounce in each of his steps
as if he knew where he was going.
He found a window seat. We waved
until the yellow bus turned the corner.



Today, I lean in the doorway shade
of the nail salon. Jesse stands
ten feet away, sometimes taking
a quick little jump as cars flash by
or he turns to trace the lettering
in the shop's window and I try
to keep him from scraping it off.
Periodically, he walks over to me,
time please. I dig through pockets,
hand him my cell. Giving it back,
he says, Friday October 4, come back,
two nights, Sunday October 6, go home,
Tony New York, and I have to answer,
Yes, for sure or the whole world stops.
When the bus pops into sight, he skips
to the curb, bouncing on the balls
of his feet and waits for the door
to unfold. He drops five quarters
into the slot and walks down
the aisle like he owns the bus
and every single person on it.



Tony Goeggler

THREE SPEED

You walked home slowly, trying
to find words to tell your father
your new three speed was stolen.
You had pedaled past the overgrown
lots, the dumping grounds, all
the way to the new soccer field
at the edge of your neighborhood.
You and John Calamari stayed late,
took turns kicking field goals
through uprights. Riding home
on the narrow path, three older
kids ambushed you, pulled you
to the ground, punched, stomped.
You stopped fighting back when
one kid pulled a knife. A few
more kicks and they were gone,
racing away in the opposite direction.

Cal somehow got away, only lost
his football, which made you
feel worse, slower, dumber
and weaker than him. Home,
your father yelled what the hell
were you doing over there, letting
them take your bike like that.
There were no good answers
and you knew he was right.

His face muscles tightened,



the strain spread down his neck,
to his arms, into his right hand.
He smacked you once, twice.
and you knew enough to quietly
take it, After doing what
he thought a father should,
you both sat down to dinner
and he sort of apologized,
saying how it was just a bicycle,
maybe you'd get a new one
for Christmas, your birthday.



Grant Clauser

The Way Back

After hiking the horseshoe loop,
I build a campfire, pour a tin cup
of wine, then coffee,
listen to rain on the cabin roof
and think about how
there are so many points
where things could go one way
or another. I could have followed
the blue-blaze trail, reached the ridge
before sundown or taken the lower trail
by the lake following the crazy duck calls
and hunters coughing in their blinds.

Hours later rain has snuffed the fire
and I'm halfway to being two-thirds
drunk. Sometimes going back
is tougher than going forward.
Regret a hard cousin of inertia
the way brothers will keep moving
apart once one stops talking
and another takes that for an answer.
I think how birds' thin bones
can hold onto the whole sky,
the world just a small trembling thing
shrinking beneath them.



Grant Clauser

Box Turtles

My father had to stop me
when the collection reached eight,
and he found me walking a road at night,
flashlight scouting the shoulder for more.
I can't truthfully say if it was reverence
or envy for the way they carried
their burdens everywhere. I was only ten
or eleven, knew I liked how slowly
they walked, easy to catch, trusting
in the sureness of their shells,
how even wild they'd open up quickly,
explore the pen I built for them in the yard,
and soon enough they'd take food
directly from my hands.
How can you not love an animal
who's body is hinged and hardened
against the world, but will stop
in the middle of a road
to stretch out its neck, testing
how many cars will pass overhead.



Grant Clauser

Feral

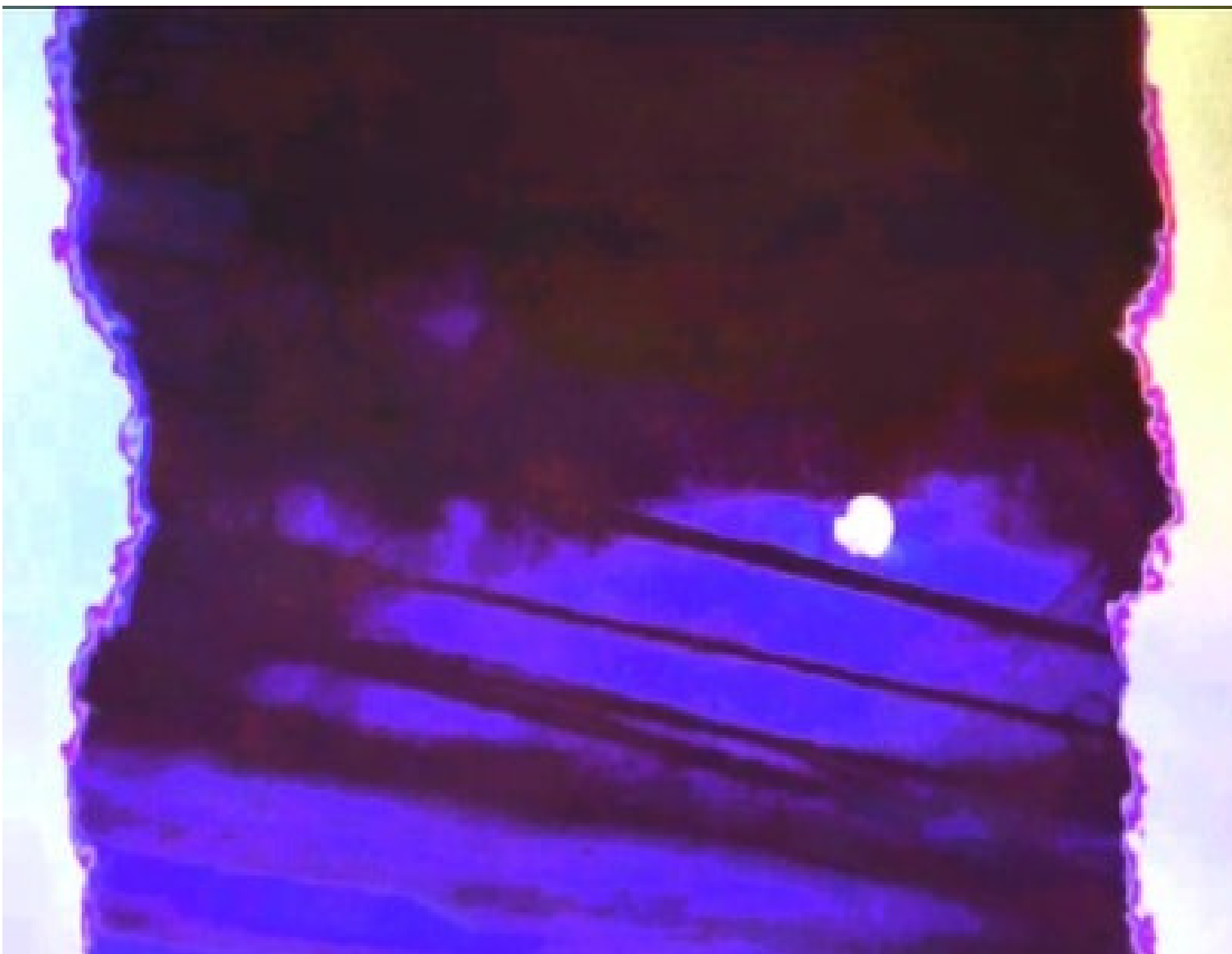
It's true he snarled like an animal
and ran on all fours, not like a wolf,
but more a gargoyle or the imp from
Fuseli's *Nightmare*, and despite the smell
and dirty fingernails, became the toast
of the town, a court favorite of the duke.
And for a while after the bar for what counts
as a man was lowered, included the occasional
growl from deep in the belly, pissing
where he ate his food and always
the need to look out through an open window
and dream of running again, hunger
pulling fear from his limbs, anger
at the permutations of seasons, what
the moon did to the wolves, what
the wolves did to the lamb until what,
finally became of him was lost,
where grunts and the tendency
to hoard meat made him just another
speechless spectacle the village, half-
wild, this Hyde-image of a man



Alicia Mathias

unnamed

you abandoned us. once
again as we drove
into a belly
of blue. everywhere
we looked was tinted.
twinged.
a corset of bruises
wound in lacerations.
yet the moon
was found
still
in tact
swallowed
whole
a tiny bulb
fighting
your
darkness



Sheree La Puma

I Dream of Summer with My Dead Daughter

before your wedding.
before the heat of a morning sun
penetrates the cold of skin. before we sit
up top a comforter listening to a
chorus of waves.

before surf unrolls on sand.
before a carpet of blue, grey, & white
beckons us to swim free of wounds,
pressed deep. before divorce robs
you of childhood.

i stroke your curls
with the soft of my hands. make
promises i cannot keep, feast
on the sweet of you,
sacrificed.

today, memories come like bomb
blasts. roots are dying here. let
me weep now. later, i will shed my
mother skin like bark on an old
sycamore.

no longer needed in the dark
nights ahead. i rise with the sun.
we part ways like strangers. i
dream of summer. you grow
new leaves.



Justin Hamm

Collage



Justin Hamm

Collage



Andrea Moorhead

Photography



At the Seamstress 1



At the Seamstress 2



Andrea Moorhead

Photography



east swamp tracks 037



Andrea Moorhead

Photography



east swamp tracks 038



Andrea Moorhead

Photography

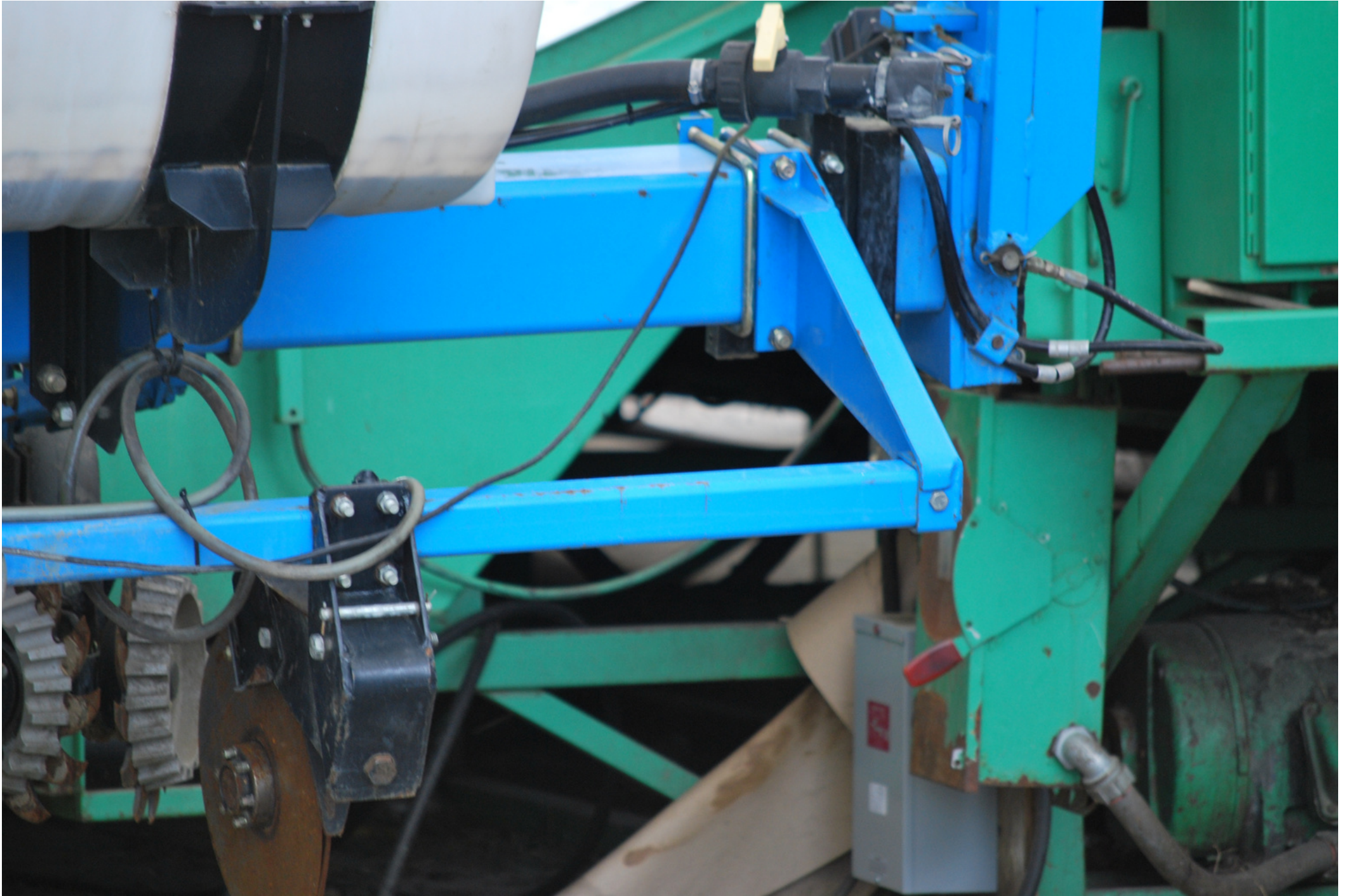


Deerfield Pipes 1



Andrea Moorhead

Photography



Deerfield Pipes 2



Ontario Farmhouse



Andrea Moorhead

Photography



Stafford Mill 1



Stafford Mill 2



Andrea Moorhead

Photography



Tarentum Flowers



Originally from Pennsylvania, *Alicia Hoffman* now lives, writes, and teaches in Rochester, New York. Author of two collections, her poems have appeared in a variety of journals, including *Radar Poetry*, *A-Minor Magazine*, *The Penn Review*, *Softblow*, *The Watershed Review*, *Rust + Moth*, *Glass: A Poetry Journal*, and elsewhere. Find her at: www.aliciamariehoffman.com.

Maximilian Heinegg's poems have been nominated for Best of the Net, and The Pushcart Prize. He was a finalist for the poetry prizes of *Crab Creek Review*, *December Magazine*, *Cultural Weekly*, *Cutthroat*, *Rougarou*, *Asheville Poetry Review*, the Nazim Hikmet prize, and the Joe Bolton award from Twyckenham Notes. Recent work appears in *Thrush*, *Nimrod*, and *Love's Executive Order*. Additionally, he is a singer-songwriter and recording artist whose records can be heard at www.maxheinegg.com

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. A new book of older poems, *Unmapped Worlds*, will appear in 2021 from Future Cycle Press.

Alan Britt has been nominated for the 2021 International Janus Pannonius Prize awarded by the Hungarian Centre of PEN International for excellence in poetry from any part of the world. Previous nominated recipients include Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Charles Bernstein and Yves Bonnefoy. Alan served as judge for the 2018 The Bitter Oleander Press Library of Poetry Book Award and was interviewed at The Library of Congress for The Poet and the Poem. He has published 18 books of poetry and served as Art Agent for the late great Ultra Violet while often reading poetry at her Chelsea, New York studio. A graduate of the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University he currently teaches English/Creative Writing at Towson University.

Steven Sleboda lives in Western Massachusetts with wife, two daughters, Halo our rescue hound & Gnockie Nocturnal. Recent publication from Amherst Collective 2019, *WHEN THE FOOTBRIDGE TURNS INTO THE DRAGONFLY'S WING*, available for online reading or through slebodes@gmail.com.

Diane Averill's first book, *Branches Doubled Over With Fruit*, (University of Florida Press) was a finalist for the Oregon Book Award as was her second book, *Beautiful Obstacles*, (Blue Light Press.) She has also had three chapbooks published. Her work appears in many literary magazines such as "*The Bitter Oleander*," "*Poetry Northwest*," "*Tar River*," and most recently "*The Avocet*," "*Cirque*," "*Mom Egg Review*," "*Santa Clara Review*," and "*Sparks of Calliope*." Her work also appears in several anthologies. She is a graduate from the M.F.A. program and taught at Clackamas Community College until retirement.



John Compton is a 33 years old gay poet who lives in kentucky. His poetry resides in his chest like many hearts & they bloom like vigorously infectious wild flowers. He has published 1 books and 4 chapbooks: *trainride elsewhere* (august 2016) from Pressed Wafer; *that moan like a saxophone* (december 2016); *ampersand* (march 2019) from *Plan B Press*. his latest chapbooks: "*a child growing wild inside the mothering womb*" from Ghost City Press will be published 6/16 & "*burning his matchstick fingers his hair went up like a wick*" from dark heart press will be published in the summer (2020).

Jesse Wolfe is a professor of English at California State University, Stanislaus. He is the author of *Bloomsbury, Modernism, and the Reinvention of Intimacy* (Cambridge UP, 2011) and the recipient of an award from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Wolfe is the winner of the Hill-Müller Poetry and August Derleth Poetry Contests, and his work has been published in *New Millennium Writings*, *Penumbra*, *Red River Review*, *River Poets Journal*, *Henniker Review*, *Shanti*, and elsewhere.

Beatrice Dojuvne is a licensed psychologist with a private psychotherapy practice. She is the author of *In Strangers' Arms: The Magic of the Tango* (McFarland, 2011) and *Don't Be Sad After I'm Gone* (McFarland, forthcoming) and has published numerous articles in peer-reviewed psychoanalytic journals.

Michael T. Young's third full-length collection, *The Infinite Doctrine of Water*, was published by Terrapin Books. His chapbook, *Living in the Counterpoint* (Finishing Line Press), received the 2014 Jean Pedrick Chapbook Award from the New England Poetry Club. His other collections include *The Beautiful Moment of Being Lost* (Poets Wear Prada), *Transcriptions of Daylight* (Rattapallax Press), and *Because the Wind Has Questions* (Somers Rocks Press). He received a fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the Chaffin Poetry Award. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in numerous print and online journals including *The Cimarron Review*, *The Cortland Review*, *Edison Literary Review*, *Lunch Ticket*, *The Potomac Review*, and *Valparaiso Poetry Review*. His work is also in the anthologies *Phoenix Rising*, *Chance of a Ghost*, *In the Black/In the Red*, and *Rabbit Ears: TV Poems*. He lives with his wife and children in Jersey City, New Jersey.

David Spicer has published poems in *The American Poetry Review*, *CircleStreet*, *Gargoyle*, *Moria*, *Oyster River Pages*, *Ploughshares*, *Remington Review*, *Santa Clara Review*, *The Sheepshead Review*, *Steam Ticket*, *Synaeresis*, *Third Wednesday*, and elsewhere. Nominated for a Best of the Net three times and a Pushcart twice, he is author of six chapbooks, the latest being *Tribe of Two* (Seven CirclePress). His latest full-length collections, *American Maniac* (Hekate Publishing) and *Confessional* (Cyberwit.net) are now available. He lives in Memphis.

Martin Willitts Jr has 24 chapbooks including the *Turtle Island Quarterly* Editor's Choice Award, "*The Wire Fence Holding Back the World*" (Flowstone Press, 2017), plus 16 full-length collections including the Blue Light Award 2019, "*The Temporary World*". His recent book is "*Unfolding Towards Love*" (Wipf and Stock).

Kenneth Pobo has a new chapbook out from the State Poetry Society of Alabama called *Your Place Or Mine*. Forthcoming from Assure Press is his book called *Uneven Steven*. He has recent work in: *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Illuminations*, *Brittle Star*, and elsewhere.



Silvia Scheibli lives on her finca, near the borderlands in south-east Arizona - a hot-spot for photographers and birders alike. And as long as there is no border wall, wildlife will be able to move freely along his unique Sky Islands Corridor, home of jaguars, bobcats, coatimundi, white-tailed deer and javelin. This exceptional landscape is very valuable for forming fresh Immanentist perceptions or way of seeing, that which Heidegger called 'Dasein.'

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).

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*, and elsewhere.

Justin Hamm's most recent books are *The Inheritance: Poems and Photos* and *Midwestern*, a book of photographs. He is the author of two other poetry collections, *American Ephemeral* and *Lessons in Ruin*. His poems, stories, photographs, and reviews have appeared in *Nimrod*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Sugar House Review*, *Pittsburgh Poetry Review*, and a host of other publications. Recent work has also been selected for *New Poetry from the Midwest* (New American Press) and the *Stanley Hanks Memorial Poetry Prize* from the St. Louis Poetry Center. In 2019, his poem "Goodbye, Sancho Panza" was chosen as part of the curriculum for the World Scholar's Cup. It has been studied by approximately 50,000 students worldwide. In September, the WSC flew Justin to the Philippines to deliver the keynote address for their Manila global round.

Paul Ilechko is the author of the chapbooks "*Bartok in Winter*" (Flutter Press, 2018) and "Graph of Life" (Finishing Line Press, 2018). His work has appeared in a variety of journals, including *Manhattanville Review*, *West Trade Review*, *River River*, *Otoliths* and *Indicia*. He lives with his partner in Lambertville, NJ.

Geoffrey Himes's poetry has been published by *Gianthology*, *December*, *the Delaware Poetry Review*, *Salt Lick*, *the Baltimore City Paper*, *the Loch Raven Review*, *the Bhubaneswar Review* and other publications. He has co-written songs with Si Kahn, Walter Egan, Pete Kennedy, Billy Kemp, Fred Koller and others. He has written about popular music and theater for the Washington Post, New York Times, Rolling Stone, Smithsonian, Paste, Downbeat and others since 1977. His book on Bruce Springsteen, "*Born in the U.S.A.*," was published in 2005.

Peycho Kanev is the author of 6 poetry collections and three chapbooks, published in the USA and Europe. His poems have appeared in many literary magazines, such as: *Rattle*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Evergreen Review*, *Front Porch Review*, *Hawaii Review*, *Barrow Street*, *Sheepshead Review*, *Off the Coast*, *The Adirondack Review*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *The Cleveland Review* and many others. His new chapbook titled *Under Half-Empty Heaven* was published in 2019 by Grey Book Press.



Tim Suermondt is the author of five full-length collections of poems, the latest *JOSEPHINE BAKER SWIMMING POOL* from MadHat Press, 2019. He has published in *Poetry*, *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Georgia Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Stand Magazine*, *december magazine*, and *Plume*, among many others. He lives in Cambridge (MA) with his wife, the poet Pui Ying Wong.

Tony Goeggler is resident of New York City and have managed group homes for the mentally challenged in Brooklyn for 40 years. His work has appeared in *Rattle*, *Poet Lore*, *New Ohio Review*, *Spillway and Juked* and *BODY*. His full length books include *One Wish Left* (Pavement Saw Press 2002), *The Last Lie* (NYQ Books/2010) and *Until The Last Light Leaves* (NYQ Books 2015). His next book will be published by NYQ Books in 2020.

Grant Clauser is the author of five books including *Muddy Dragon on the Road to Heaven* (winner of the Codhill Press Poetry Award) and *Reckless Constellations* (winner of the Cider Press Poetry Award). Poems have appeared in *The American Poetry Review*, *Cortland Review*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *Poet Lore*, *Tar River Poetry* and others. He works as an editor and teaches at Rosemont College.

Alicia Mathias is a poet, artist, and photographer. Her poems and artwork appear in: *Ann Arbor Review*, *The Bitter Oleander*, *Unlikely Stories Mark V*, *Clockwise Cat*, *The Canopy Review*, *January Review Journal*, *SetU Magazine*, *bradlaughsfinger*, *Porter Gulch Review*, and *Sore Dove Press*; with new work forthcoming in *Chiron Review*, *Fearless*, *Newington Blue Press*, and elsewhere. She lives and writes in New York, with her favorite muse, Zeppelin the Wonder Cat. You may contact Alicia here: nancydrew22@gmail.com

Sheree La Puma is an award-winning writer whose personal essays, fiction, and poetry have appeared in or are forthcoming in *WSQ*, *Chiron Review*, *Juxtapose*, *The Rumpus*, *Plainsongs*, *Into The Void*, and *I-70 Review*, among others. She has a micro-chapbook, *The Politics of Love*, due out in August and a chapbook, *Broken: Do Not Use*, due out in Fall. She received an MFA in Writing from California Institute of the Arts and taught poetry to former gang members.





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