

# Spring 2021 Issue 9



Featuring 21 top notch poets, including, 2 Puschcart Nominees, and prospective Best of the Net poets (**Zack Rogrow** and **Lauren Sharbag**) for their poems, *Running through History* and *The Real Meaning of Inferno*, which you can read, laugh and weep at, in our current edition.

As always, keep submitting, and spread the word that **POETiCA REViEW** is back from the dead, after being hacked and almost completely destroyed. We thank you **ALL**, for your continuing support, and wish you **ALL** only good things, in these dark days of Global Pandemics, and the **Fifth Great Extinction Event**, unfolding as we write our laments, and fight the good fight.

## Featured Authors:

Vera Gan  
Mukand Gnanadesikan  
Abigail Baker  
Tom Montag  
Emilisa Rose  
Stephen Page  
Thomas M. McDade  
Aido Quagliotti  
Kami Westhoff  
Catherine Karnitis  
Keith Welch  
Giovanni Mangiante  
Linnet Phoenix  
John Grey  
Gonzalino de Costa  
Kyle Mendelsohn  
Zack Rogow  
Lauren Sharbag  
Geoffrey Heptonstall  
DaH  
Pawel Markiewicz

**POETiCA REViEW** is a quarterly literary journal of poetry. We aim to give voice to the many disparate and marginalised voices within the artistic community, locally, and internationally, regardless of notoriety or who is currently favored by this or that magazine. Our mission is to inject new blood into the poetry scene.

ISSUE 9  
DECEMBER 2021

Chief Editor: Mark A. Murphy  
Asst. Editor: Kieran Conway

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## **Artwork**

Cover design by M.A.M [www.poeticareview.com](http://www.poeticareview.com)

[Contributors](#)

[Submissions and Guidelines](#)

**POETiCA REVIEW**

For the many, not just the few.

# Vera Gan 1 poem

## Moscow Rhapsody

Buried in far-ocean thoughts  
Sitting in her prison-like garden

The moon pouring lurid light  
Over the weeping willow

No quarrel, no squabble  
Her soul-boat softly sliding

On the memory-flow  
To what was expunged long-ago

From the book of her life  
The aquatic bounty of the earth

The moment they were  
Approaching the station

Facing the icy air of winter  
The sea-surge train

Imminent as scissors spiriting him away

# Mukund Gnanadesikan 2 poems

## Hope

Hope is a four-letter word  
obscene in its audacity

An iron-jawed challenge  
to authority's clenched fist,

she lobs olive branches  
over hands that toss flash-bang grenades.

As despots growl their dark appeal to fear  
her short, sweet arrow

shall pierce oppression's shield  
bidding masses rise.

United voices build to a crescendo.  
Powers on the balcony above

will use all forces,  
seek to stain the streets a morbid red,

but though they try  
it is no simple matter,

to bury blinding light where none may see it.  
Thus, future dreams spring forth, resist restraints, unbox.

Run through the meadow, friends.  
Let us sing this opus, this unfinished symphony of dreams.

## World Sickness

Empathy's failure  
strands children at water's edge  
allows them to expire from thirst

How dare we practice ignorance,  
eyes perceiving mocha shadows  
then glancing sideways?

Thus, we become  
ossified souls, hardened,  
anesthetized flesh, nerveless

A holiday's uplifting paeans  
raise disillusioned spirits  
lighting hope's holographic candle

I look west to boastful peaks;  
Under a salmon sky

Rushmore's idols crumble.

# Abigail Baker 2 poems

## São Bento Station

As if the world had been wheel rotated,  
an ocean placed where heaven resides,  
the cobalt mural muses a blur of steam.

Butterfly leaves trembling in departure  
on iron aerial platform arches for angels,  
sunlight a drifter seasonal ticket holder.

The ghost passengers of hallowed days  
mind the gap between slant step histories,  
stoking the fires in timetabled language.

A lit stop lamp person has disembarked  
leaving daubed echo of Schindler's coat,  
an acrid smoke puff blown in God's eye.

The pilgrimage begins in mind's stumble,  
a rail ticket journey for a self-rediscovery.  
I smile in this pixel painted waiting room.

**Art work is:**

**Title: Azulejo**

**Artist: Peter Wilkin**

**Medium: mixed (photography/mobile art)**

**Created 17 February 2020**

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## Foxtrot

She whispers promise  
to a summer breeze.  
Skirt hem lifting dance,  
clad in thigh-high boots.  
She writes follow me  
on a kissed envelope.

Fragrance of night jasmine  
lingers on skin beckoning  
to he who hesitates,  
waiting see if she truly  
meant to call his name.  
He follows up heel line,  
her breath a quick foxtrot.

In darkened room, door shut,  
she turns to show him,  
hands on, lips move tenderly  
then drawing him close,  
curls in tight this warmth,  
her den of earth  
in which she made him.



# Tom Montag 5 poems

## The Woman in an Imaginary Painting

Tell the woman  
in the painting  
what you know

of imagination.  
She has been  
shaped by it

and cannot  
escape. We are  
all more than

anyone can  
dream. She is  
no different.

---

If nothing  
escapes a

black hole,  
what of

this woman's  
shadow?

Something  
as heavy

as God pulls,  
keeps pulling.

---

In this  
moment

she has  
every-

thing she  
might want,

except  
movement --

free will  
is not

something  
art can

offer.

---

She knows: you pray your way  
out of nothing you choose

to sin your way into.

---

The texture  
of canvas  
and paint is

all the soul  
she has. So  
light works its

magic and  
she glows as  
if to say

she chooses  
to stay, to  
be this, in

this moment --  
that nothing  
else will do.

# Stephen Page 1 poem

## Sea View

This window is my T.V.,  
My seven-day a week Saturday morning show.

The neighbors in the apartment below  
Have asked us to not feed the birds.

The yellow throated kiskadees,  
The red-breasted robins,

The orange-crowned sparrows,  
The purple feathered thrushes,

The masked Mozart mocking birds,  
The cooing wood doves,

All because they sit on our railing  
And shit on their awnings and deck.

A female sea lion has been visiting a shore rock,  
In front of our lawn in front of our building

Every day for close to a week now.  
Will she make this her home and birth pups?

Today, two snorkelers flippered by,  
Spotted her, and speed-flapped toward her.

She jumped off the rock to submerge,  
And disappeared for hours.

Last night, more protestors  
Ran the streets of the United Colonies.

# Thomas M. McDade 1 poem

## Palma de Mallorca

Don Quixote statuettes  
in every shop  
Sancho Panza  
Not forgotten  
The hotels near the water  
Remind me of University  
Buildings in Bridgeport  
On Long Island Sound  
*Under the Yum Yum Tree*  
Is playing at the English cinema  
A taxi ride down a windmill lined  
Road is contrasted by  
A gaudy carnival  
Of barrooms on  
the other side  
Driver has a shark tattoo  
On his exposed bicep  
A naked woman aboard  
Only American car so far  
Is a 1956 Ford I point out  
To the hack who says  
he's owns two  
I meet a shipmate at a bus  
Stop who claims  
He's a Conscience Objector  
He's fishing for a discharge  
We hitchhike  
A Russian picks us up  
No Soviet he vows  
As we pass a tall, beautiful  
Woman I think of Quixote  
And his love for Dulcinea  
I recall the windmill  
Street and a ray of sun  
As a lance attack but  
No breeze to spin its wings  
And none now either  
To fan her long, dark  
Luxurious hair

# Aldo Quagliotti 1 poem

## AlfaBeta

Death might be a tableau vivant  
portraying this absurd equipoise  
awaiting a misstep from us  
a whirlpool of surprises, sei là  
a new alphabet, a simplistic rendition  
maybe branded flummery  
I am present now, I see  
colors try to hit upon summer to outshine  
I have a grudge against winter, nowadays  
but I'm sealed to the *right now*  
I won't be horsing around with perspectives  
or improbable futures  
I want to write the tattoos I get from life  
to show my barcode, once I'm done  
I want to chew this today  
spitting the fishbone stuck in my throat  
onwards I go  
finché ne ho

## Kami Westhoff 1 poem

### Once in a Lifetime Night

What I remember most is what we did to the frogs. Not my sister and me unzipping the tent tick by tick, crouching past the camper where my mother sipped Tab and my dad, sloppy with R&R, singing “You Are Always on My Mind,” dissolving into a night so dark each inhale blackened our lungs, stars so thick they smeared the sky like scar tissue. I don't remember the boys we met behind the lodge by the pond, how the tall one with the knit cap took my sister's hand, and the other with eyes the colour of berry blue Kool-Aid, slipped first his fingers into the loops of my button fly Levi's, then his tongue into my mouth, or how he tasted like salami and cigarettes. I don't remember that the next day my mom asked if we'd seen the meteor shower from the tent's open dome, streaks of light turning sky to geometry, said it was a once in a lifetime night. I don't remember getting lost on our way back to the tent, our bodies aching in new places, our tongues sticky and thick as slugs, or how we ended up back at the pond, where the air was choked with croak-song, which brings me back to what I do remember, the sticky-cool of the frogs in my palm, how easy they were to quiet.

**Catherine Karnitis 2 poems**

**Lovers**

- *"In Love," Pierre Delattre*

in a giant eye,  
the lovers lie,  
to everything  
that is not a daisy.

the moon watches  
as pelicans rise  
from the sea  
like ghosts.

her delicate breast,  
her uncovered chest,  
he listens, draws her

to an inner  
country, one  
with-  
out cruel borders

against the horizon  
of marbled awareness  
stalks of  
pussy willows.

her fingers,  
the curve of her foot,  
rest in a field  
of pink poppies.

(gaslight removed): The Splendor of Myself II, Zofia Kulik, (Poland) 1997  
<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/219908>

## gaslight removed

*-The Splendor of Myself II, Zofia Kulik, 1997*

in the archive  
in the studio  
what does it look like  
outside the box  
royal flush  
see through my glass windows  
prostrate men with no clothes  
dried leaves of dreams  
crown of paper  
feathers fly to heaven  
our era, an era  
of banality bears  
a cross and a sickle  
a dandelion and a pickle



## Keith Welch 3 poems

### Burrs

At fifteen I did my private business down  
by the creek. Back beyond the rotting  
barn, past the fangs of a rusting cultivator,  
behind the abandoned vine-wrapped silo.

The touch of field nettles was a sting  
of hot needles against my bare forearms,  
the air thickened by the scent of distant cows.

Hidden by scrub trees at the field's edge  
with only slick green frogs for witness  
I could be alone—I could get my sinning done.

If it wasn't sin, why was I ashamed? Burned  
by summer heat or frozen by winter snows  
I chased urges I barely understood.

I would return home in burr-starred blue jeans:  
burrs like anemones, like arrowheads,  
like the horned egg cases of sharks;

fecund with the seeds of their mother plants.  
I was ashamed, they were shameless, but all  
were driven by the force of undeniable nature.

## History of Murder

A murder lurks in my locust tree  
they croak and croak—  
their speech is a roadkill  
obituary.

I hear them mutter of  
flattened corpses, unfortunate  
bodies well-plated  
on the steaming asphalt.

Startled by my attention,  
they wheel and dive,  
wheel and dive, shrieking  
danger to the sky,  
ashes lifted from a cold fire,  
a stuttering storm cloud  
of death's best friends.

Do crows remember the days  
of rich battlefields where  
they gorged on the sun-softened flesh  
of once-proud warriors?

For a crow, it must be  
a tale told in the treetops;  
a tale of a golden age.

# Graveyard Tree

Lightning-struck—  
the silent oak  
has found  
its voice  
in fire.

All around it lie  
the discarded dead  
in their sacred holes.

The dead don't care  
about the tree.

The tree? Never cared  
about the dead,

although

beneath the soil,  
Its threading roots  
embrace their  
deep unlit houses.

The living gather  
to watch the tree burn  
from the inside out,  
a majestic torch.

They feel  
the sight is tragic

and beautiful.

When people are struck  
some believe  
it a judgement  
of heaven.

No one thinks  
that about the  
graveyard tree.

**Keith Welch** lives in Bloomington, Indiana where he works at the Indiana University Herman B Wells library. He has poems published in 8 Poems, The Tipton Poetry Journal, Open: Journal of Arts & Letters, Dime Show Review, and Literary Orphans, among others. He enjoys complicated board games, baking, talking to his cat, Alice C. Toklas, and meeting other poets. His website is [keithwelchpoetry.com](http://keithwelchpoetry.com). On Twitter: [@TheBloomington1](https://twitter.com/TheBloomington1).

## Giovanni Mangiante 2 poems

### god-clipped wings

I'm 24 years' worth of hollowed eyes  
and a noose-shaped shadow  
that forces me to live in the darkness  
in which I've thrived for years  
like a deep sea undiscovered  
atrocity.

because because because because

relapsing is such an easy feat,  
and I'm an overindulgent  
scar-skinned downtown cat  
toppling down a mouse at midnight  
with Lucifer at my back.

## **Trash-fiction mental patient**

In the hotel of my mind,  
every hallway is covered in missed-opportunity doors,  
and in every turn, there's a shadow of unsolicited pain  
creeping from its splintered walls.

I am a vagabond in my own home  
unsuccessfully trying to smash open doors to the past,  
running up and down broken stairs  
while some cosmic creature watches from the outside,  
and places a new shadow in the next hall.

# Emalisa Rose 3 poems

## the better batch

they'll get the polite poems but you're  
getting the better batch. the ones you  
can't show to your mother

they'll get the ones with the editing  
edited, all proper noun certified, muse  
approved topics with a drone on of quaint  
puffy clouds, that conjure up rain words  
in an array of word quips, seen best on  
travelogues from a tight thesaurus

you'll get the ones with the wife who went  
rogue and strutted her stuff, her blondes  
around town, her eyes on the headboards  
and tailgating parties in motels with letters  
long lost on their road sign that nobody  
cares about...anyhow

the snooty with syntax will suck on their  
proper poised poems. But you'll get the  
better batch...ya just gotta know it.

## last train to ronkonkama

you're a tambourine trilogy in a  
halo of heresy, a riddle, a ruse, a  
cross-referenced window seat rail  
rider

pinstriping grey with your nose  
in the Wall street. i was the butter  
blonde free styling floozy type,  
clocking your time sheet doing that  
shuffle downtown on you

that eye batting thing of who undressed  
who as you're stirring the sauce of  
my woozy words

no need for hello or even the vertical

i just want to write poems to you  
with red cursive swirl words in bold  
face italic themed girly words

as this choo-choo train tunnels moans  
groans and mystifies miles from the  
midtowning marathon and the nine  
to five park and ride

and you're spinning me dizzy in this  
theatre of thrill ride obsession on this  
furlough of fabricate fantasy.



# Linnet Phoenix 2 poems

## São Bento Station

As if the world had been wheel rotated,  
an ocean placed where heaven resides,  
the cobalt mural muses a blur of steam.

Butterfly leaves trembling in departure  
on iron aerial platform arches for angels,  
sunlight a drifter seasonal ticket holder.

The ghost passengers of hallowed days  
mind the gap between slant step histories,  
stoking the fires in timetabled language.

A lit stop lamp person has disembarked  
leaving daubed echo of Schindler's coat,  
an acrid smoke puff blown in God's eye.

The pilgrimage begins in mind's stumble,  
a rail ticket journey for a self-rediscovery.  
I smile in this pixel painted waiting room.

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## Foxtrot

She whispers promise  
to a summer breeze.  
Skirt hem lifting dance,  
clad in thigh-high boots.  
She writes follow me  
on a kissed envelope.

Fragrance of night jasmine  
lingers on skin beckoning  
to he who hesitates,  
waiting see if she truly  
meant to call his name.  
He follows up heel line,  
her breath a quick foxtrot.

In darkened room, door shut,  
she turns to show him,  
hands on, lips move tenderly  
then drawing him close,  
curls in tight this warmth,  
her den of earth  
in which she made him.

## John Grey 3 poems

### BRIAN AND DAVE TO THE RESCUE

Brian and Dave are on their way to a picnic,  
but not to chomp down on hotdogs,  
not to splash in the lake.  
Someone's lying on the ground unconscious.  
And the drinking's barely begun.

A teenage girl is being comforted by cousins.  
The older crowd look on in disbelief.  
Tricia's only in her thirties.  
But she's been looking ten years older of late.  
Maybe fifteen when the paramedics  
are bending over her limp body,  
shouting, "Wake up! Wake up!"

They know the symptoms.  
Even better, they know the town.  
Twenty years since the sock factory closed.  
Last night, they dragged a guy out  
of a gas station bathroom.  
A week ago, it was a woman  
slumped over the wheel of her car  
in a strip-mall parking lot.  
So many don't seem to want to live  
and Brian and Dave are charged with  
going against the victim's wishes.

Brian injects Narcan in Tricia's dull flesh.  
He does it slowly.  
Reality's best in small bursts.  
The woman's eyes open.  
"Where am I? Where's Amy?"  
Her words roll out like baby's dribble.  
"You have to go to the hospital."  
Her boyfriend, Carl,  
wanders off into the nearby woods.  
Tricia's mother appears, takes Amy away.

People drop anytime, anyplace,  
as if shot by invisible, noiseless rifles.

Brian and Dave do their best to pick them up,  
get them on their feet  
so they can fall down the next time.  
Folks say it's a crisis.

It's also an interruption to a breakfast  
in a local diner.  
It's a callout when Brian's playing with his kids  
or Dave is captaining the Head-Hunters bowling team.

In a gutted old industrial town,  
life just seems no more than a rehearsal for death.  
Folks organize picnics  
so they can forget for a while.  
And yet down goes Tricia,  
more of everything they know.

## BAR ON 10<sup>th</sup> STREET

jukebox speaks for another life,  
a quartet picks up the tune,  
there's more pink  
skin and gender related  
breathing  
like a butterfly in a storm,  
candle-flame wishes,  
cigarette puffs,  
everything out in place  
except for gravity,  
fear of unrelated happenings.  
sludge reeking with  
glimpses of ghosts,  
acid-rain-filled day,  
toxins filling every cavity,  
calendar nailed in place,  
big-toothed bugs  
chomping on virgin arms,  
mother's grave – a necessary prop –  
night is still but enticing  
like alcohol.  
thoughts set aside,  
nothing felt but thirst,  
woman with blue hair and fingernails,  
rouged cheeks –  
please handle roughly –  
beaten to a pulp  
regardless -  
another's slippery slender,  
in service to her own dreams,  
and soundtrack  
mostly played on a piano –  
her moods, Persian silk,  
her props, the stars –

## SORRY BUT...

You wonder why I'm this way.  
It's not just because of the way you are.  
It's bad programming, flat tires,  
my family, my job,  
body hair, and boring sex,  
cracked mirrors, plastic straws, Trump –  
and there's more –  
lids that refuse to unscrew,  
songs on the radio,  
loud neon scenery,  
the unsuspected sharpness of some blades,  
spam and junk-mail,  
the bus system, the crappy Wi-Fi,  
the pain I have to overcome,  
Kardashians, heavy traffic,  
tasteless fast food, aggressive panhandlers,  
food coloring, superhero movies,  
the siren eyes of alcohol,  
busted guitar strings, empty ink cartridges,  
lines of reasoning, rusty pipes.  
humidity, bills, neighbors,  
the borrowed book that's never returned,  
the never again good times,  
Fox news, a friend's divorce,  
religions that kill,  
that render their believers brain dead,  
the cost of replenishing those ink cartridges,  
dentists, big game hunters, Brad Pitt,  
the worn-out soles of my shoes,  
cigarette butts strewn across the lawn,  
dog shit on the sidewalk,  
some long-ago incident that  
occupies the space between us.  
It won't leave,  
would rather stay,  
be more annoying than the competition.

## Gonzalinho da Costa 5 poems

### THE LAKE

In autumn chill I sat at the edge of a deep blue lake.  
It was placid as the moon in solitary space.  
Silently as if stirred by the slightest briefest breath,  
Perfect circles in a series broke the surface, moving outward.  
I watched the widening whorl travel to the edge then bounce back.  
Something—someone—had touched the water.

Maybe it was a bird dipping down...fish twitching its tail...  
Dry leaf riding a draught making a splash landing.  
When the waves had spent their energy, the lake becalmed again.  
It shone purely, a polished mirror of the sky: blue to blue.  
I felt the cold wet air rise but did not hear the wind swirl.  
One hour lapsed, the surface blankly serene, whispering along the marge.

# IRONY

Darkness is luminous:  
It bends as light.  
Day is over:  
It rises with night.

A clock is a statue;  
A desert, a lake.  
Sorrow is joy;  
A festival, a wake.

The moon is the sun;  
The universe, a box;  
Truth, appearance;  
Reality, paradox.



# RAGNAROK

When Ragnarök comes, it will be bleakest winter.  
The moon will turn black on black.  
Petroleum clouds, writhing, will deform into chimeras.  
The sun, reduced to a shadow, will darken the sky.  
Memory of light will be forgotten.  
Snow will fall, gray porridge burying the world.  
Treetop brambles will spike through ash heaps  
As rivers clot into mud, and lakes,  
Thickening volcanic soup, pop bubbles, sullenly.  
Oceans will degrade into slurry.  
The wind will whistle between broken teeth.  
Bags of dust will fill the air.  
Harkening to the long horn, warriors will grasp their hilts.  
Full well, without seeing, they will know its meaning:  
Fenrir has broken his chains, he is vaulting towards Asgard.  
Once formidable, barriers between the worlds will disintegrate.  
Earth will shake at the approach of giants.  
Monsters will battle the gods.  
Father of all the gods, Odin will push with his mighty arm Fenrir's snout backwards  
As his boot pins the animal's lower jaw to the ground.  
And then in one overpowering motion the wolf's mouth will slam shut,  
Breaking Odin's back like a stick.  
Of what use will it be to be all-seeing if you cannot escape your fate?  
Beyond the horizon, the Midgard Serpent will rouse, thrashing about.  
The seas will churn in turmoil, frothy egg batter, water not boiling.  
Tidal waves taller than fortresses will collide against the coastlines.  
Cliff walls will slough off, sliding, as rocks, debris, and sand,  
Sucked into the ocean by retreating vortices, excavate cavernous holes.  
At the outmost perimeter of the farthest waters, Thor will swing downwardly  
His impetuous hammer, striking at the very apex of the Midgard Serpent's head, bulbous.  
Suddenly going limp, the worm will blast hot venom in spurts,  
Bathing the hero, unvanquished heretofore, in poison, head-to-toe.  
Nine steps, he will fall dead.  
Gloating over slain Frey, now bedimmed, a lump of cold slag,  
Cackling Loki will turn to face Heimdall, striding.  
Evenly matched, they will destroy each other, passionate in their excess.  
Roaring Surtr will raise his flaming sword, igniting the universe.  
The world will end to recreate itself anew.

## MODERN HISTORY

Shakespeare's plays describe about 155 deaths, less than half onstage, involving 13 suicides, 33 stabbings, seven poisonings, five beheadings, three dismemberments, a host of gruesome ends, including two men baked into a pie and fed to their mother, all told in plots involving jealousy, greed, fighting for power, vanity, dishonesty, cruelty, arrogance, vengefulness, delusion, rage, hypocrisy, and paranoia—the entire range of human iniquity. The Bard is celebrated today as one of the foremost exponents of Renaissance humanism, and we are right to wonder why.

Coming across Martin Luther eating a hearty breakfast of two sausages, five barley loaves, three scrambled eggs, and a pitcher of milk, John Calvin quoted Philippians 3:19, “Their god is their stomach.” Luther responded with Proverbs 13:4, “The diligent soul is amply satisfied,” adding that it was the Doctrine of Justification.

The Spanish conquest of the Americas led to the fusion of cultures and in many ways to the mutual enrichment of disparate peoples. Mixed populations of the Spanish and Portuguese empires adopted the dominant religion of the Europeans—Christianity?—no, soccer.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who published his calculus in 1684, claimed that Isaac Newton's calculus was *derivative*, based on their exchange of letters and notes. Newton retorted that he started working on his calculus in 1666, that is, it had long been *integral* to his physics.

James Watt made groundbreaking improvements to the steam engine in 1776, and for the first time, in contrast to the politics of the preceding centuries, the inventor put hot air to good use. He jumpstarted the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain so that the world was changed forever—harnessing cheap, plentiful power, factories output buttons, pins, textiles, and all sorts of products in huge volumes, with the side effect that human beings in assembly lines were transformed into robots in almost the same quantities.

The French Revolutionary calendar divided the year into four seasons of three months each and the months into three weeks of ten days each, which proved to be too revolutionary for the hardworking French. It reduced weekends from four to three per month, inciting Napoleon Bonaparte to execute the calendar by guillotine on January 1, 1806, to the cheers of millions.

Abraham Lincoln, the architect of the abolition of slavery in the U.S., had a difficult relationship with his wife, Mary Todd. Historians agree that he showed himself to be a steadfast man of principle—when he signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, he did not include his marriage.

The advent of photography coincided with the rise of Impressionism, not only in the visual arts, but in all aspects of Western culture. Claude Debussy, who led this trend in music, displayed the proverbial artistic temperament—he flitted between women, some married, in relationships that were temperamental, dissonant, experimental, unpredictable, emotional, moody, and free-spirited—interestingly, just like his music itself.

When Lenin attacked the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg on October 25, 1917, ousting the Provisional Government of Kerensky, he promised the Russian people, “Peace, Land, and Bread.” What they got was Stalin.

Medical records from 1923 confirm that Adolph Hitler had only one descended testicle. Widely attested, what has not been verified is that he had only half a brain.

In August 1946 the Americans dropped atomic bombs on a wartime enemy for the first and only time in history. Massively destructive blue-white flashes exploded over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, giving unexpected new meaning to the Japanese term *Shōwa* or the era of “Radiant Japan.”

During the late forties, a struggling American artist refurbishing his New York City apartment spilled yellow paint on a large canvas he had laid out on the floor—liking what he saw, he decided to do it again, this time with red paint. Thus was born the legend of Jackson Pollock, master of Abstract Expressionism.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, hero of Indian independence, switched to wearing a poor man’s clothes and often walked barefoot. He came to be known as “Great Sole.”

Communist China hailed Mao Zedong as “The Great Helmsman” of what at times appeared to be a sinking ship. History revised his revolutionary slogans—“Great Leap Forward” became “Great Leap Forward into the Pit of Famine,” and “Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom” turned into “Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom and Rot in Jail Afterwards.”

The Cold War saw the success of spy novels like Graham Greene’s *Our Man in Havana* (1958), Ian Fleming’s *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1962), and Tom Clancy’s *The Hunt for Red October* (1984). Ghost writers in the former Soviet Union sought to cash in with knockoffs—*Our Hottie in Havana*, *The Spy Who Loved McDonald’s*, *The Hunt for Red Borscht*—for some reason, they didn’t catch on.

## **SAILING**

Swiftly I sail the perfect blue water, slicing through the sea.  
Clouds charged with electricity fill broad sky vistas.  
At night I am guided by the geometry of the stars.

## **Kyle Mendelsohn 3 poems**

### **Phone Call to the Kids Who Killed Themselves**

We placed our hearts in mason jars  
To replace the dead leaves falling  
Off the trees. Swaying our bodies like they're just  
Fragments waiting to be struck through by light.  
Snow and hardened ground are on the horizon  
So, I'm not sure we'll be able to reach each other  
For a while. We're all just a blip: a flame  
Fighting through for oxygen, an intangible static  
That doesn't always interact. When it does, find me  
Underneath the same oak tree beneath a sky  
With its mouth held open trying to say  
I love you. Goodnight.  
See you someday.

## Somnambulist's Soliloquy

Wake up. Come back I promise it won't be like last time. I will change everything. I'll paint the house seven different colors and eat your name seeped in rain if it means resurrection. Sometimes I find ways to become more like the dead. Cut my body off from rest and dream with my head under blankets of bright light. Can you see me now? I can't remember what happened yesterday or even last month. My lungs ache the way that November feels like one last labored breath. I've taken all the steps to get closest to the edge of nonexistence. I spend all day asking my skin if the mole on my thigh will melanoma me into nothing or if my heart is its own time bomb because this is all very precarious. To me autonomy is crawling out of another man's stomach and directing his hollow body toward the door. But then, I worry if an explosion goes off inside my ribcage and no one is there to hear it will I greet a death wagon casting red and blue projections? I'll never forget the night I learned how to conduct a call for help, a blind dirge directed at probability running through the telephone wires. In my dream, I am lying next to a corpse. There are red and blue veins pulling us apart and everything fades back out of focus, back into a frostbitten world. I start today by rewriting the name on my birth certificate. The brain is its own time machine, yes, but memory only feels like sleepwalking back into the sky still like nothing. Never mind. It's probably just another day with grief or something else that I can't let go of, but if you must know I'd like to call myself, a moving target.

# Recovery

Learning how to say  
No.

Sheets stained  
With ink and ash

Tattoo your wicked name  
On my throat

So that I can get it removed  
and sport the scar

Like the avalanche  
I survived.

I learned how to drive  
This year

Without throwing myself  
Over the wheel.

Tomorrow  
I'll take

This vulgar shadow  
And hit it

A deer  
In the road.

Fracture  
My front headlight

So, I can drink  
From the stars

And pluck matted fur  
From the glass.

Remove my depression  
Like an unnamed tumor

Even if  
My fingers bleed.

Throw my grief  
In the goddamn ocean.

# Zack Rogow 3 poems

## Soggy Jazz

Drizzling in San Francisco  
and I'm listening to a quartet with a voice  
travel along "On Green Dolphin Street"  
in this store with walls of books

The singer glides between the notes  
teasing the melody  
*And through these moments apart*  
*Mem'ries live in my heart*

My thoughts glissando back an hour  
when not even a sheet could  
fit between us

The baritone sax with its extra-terrestrial architecture  
picks up the melody

Your tongue  
a dolphin in an underwater cavern

I can't help weaving to the music  
inside the clockworks of this song

the window looked out on a bridge across a California freeway  
its old-fashioned lamps surprisingly Parisian

The band starts to gather the fringes of the melody  
saxophone notes shaping the air  
*Green Dolphin Street supplied the setting*  
*The setting for nights beyond forgetting*

and hours later  
when I get home  
and take off my meadow-coloured pullover  
its arms  
still hold your perfume



## “It’s Not You, It’s Me”

A lifetime later,  
the turns of phrase stay with me:  
“You’re a wonderful person, but...”  
“This is more of a friendship for me.”  
“I know you’ll find someone  
who’s more right for you.”  
*“Je ne veux pas, je ne peux pas.”*  
The last, at least,  
in French, and rhymed:  
“I don’t want to, I can’t.”

They still slap, those words.  
I keep waiting for the rejecters  
to phone me out of the blue,  
to explain it was all a Godzilla of a mistake,  
their life has gone off the rails  
since refusing me—but  
not a chance.

All those words of rejection  
remain absolutely intolerable  
but what other phrases can I use  
now that I’m the one  
who has to deliver the bad news?

# Running through History

**3:37**

**3:52**

*I realise*

*the treadmill's blinking*

*rectangles of light*

*counting minutes and seconds*

*could be years of history*

**4:10** I jog through the sack of Rome

**6:18** the Tang Dynasty rises

The angel Gabriel whispers to Mohammed to write the Qu 'ran

**7:11** I turn up the pace as the Moors pour into Al-Andalus

Troubadour Arnaud Daniel rides toward a Provençal hill town playing air-lute

**12:38** the Alhambra's delicate fortress rises above Granada

A puzzled Geoffrey Chaucer glances up from his writing desk

I sprint right through the Great Vowel Shift

Into the greenery of Botticelli's Primavera

Deftly I step over the Black Plague

**14:53** Ottoman cannons breach Constantinople

Columbus sets sail I race him to Hispaniola

The French Revolution breaks out to my left

**18:21** Bolívar wins the Battle of Carabobo the Spanish Empire cracks apart

**19:19** My parents are born and plenipotentiaries sign the Treaty of Versailles

**19:44** D-Day and then the year of my own birth almost before I see it

I slow dance to "Mister Moonlight"

My first kiss

Crowds unbuild the Berlin Wall as I become a father

South Africans wave hats and hankies for President Mandela

**20:12** the Mars Rover cuts me off

The present-day rushes by

Then the years I hope I'll live to count

My daughter stands beneath the chuppah

My unconceived grandchild laughs for the first time

*I slow the treadmill*

*step off*

*and even though I'm not moving*

*I'm still running*

## Lauren Scharbag 1 poem

### The Real Meaning of Inferno

Four winters on the transplant list,  
and you are always cold. We bundle you  
in long johns and sweatshirts, blankets  
and stocking caps, and park you next to  
a space heater, and still, you shiver, while  
I sweat. I sweat the medical bills and the  
regular bills and whether you have a fever  
again, and if you are eating enough and how  
we will ever pay for more medicine and  
I'm going to have to get a second job. I burn  
crimson like my grandmother's red Depression  
glass oil lamp. I burn blue-white like the  
rings on a gas stove. I burn like the gold  
and orange flames on the cast-iron furnace where  
we used to heat our clothes on winter mornings,  
and still got dressed under the quilt. *Inferno*  
is a word that's synonymous with hellfire,  
but originally, it had nothing to do with heat. It  
meant *the lower regions*. I think of this as I go  
down into the basement of our sixty-year-old house,  
past the cracked walls where slugs and spiders  
and snakes slither in, past the exposed foundation  
stones and the water stains where it's flooded  
each spring, past the shelf where we store  
your dialysis supplies, to examine our own  
beast of a unit. I've always thought it looked like  
Doc Ock if Doc Ock had sprouted a few more arms,  
if he'd grown feeble and rickety and might,  
at any moment, give up the ghost. If it goes out on us,  
no second or even a third job will be enough to help me  
replace it. I come back upstairs and make us cups of cocoa.  
You tell me how you dream of the sea, of sun-warmed  
sand, of tropical paradises. I do not tell you that I dream,  
too: nightmares of a furnace-less house in January  
and frozen pipes bursting in the walls. Hell isn't hot,  
but it's real, and it's here. I crack open a window  
away from you and try to breathe. I'm hotter than  
particles smashing around the Large Hadron Collider.  
I'm hotter than the torch Prometheus saw fit to pilfer.  
I'm hotter than molting phoenix feathers, than

a morning-star supernova. If the furnace goes out,  
split me like heartwood. I will be your hearth  
and your kindling. Cook a meal over my radiance.  
Bask in me. I will see you through to summer.

# Geoffrey Heptonstall 2 poems

## STATE OF PLAGUE

What if by a lightning strike  
the tree is turned to stone,  
soundlessly moving in moonlight?  
We must feel an ending begin.

Another time we are released,  
never to be heard again  
through such restful sleep  
if what happens is no more.

And wild, pale horses ride  
when the day rises.  
Things are not as they seem.  
The world is not at peace.

The hand that grasps the nettle  
from the blessing of certainty  
takes the sting into its flesh  
so close to the bone.

In time beyond the bounds  
is the sound of birdsong  
before the sun of the day.  
This was not foreseen.

The darker the enchantment  
the deeper down the long regret  
Its light is not denied.  
The circle has no ending.

# WHENEVER

Of an architected ending  
I see angel fingers wakening  
a future in exquisite designs,  
I wait for your touch on my face.  
I think of conversations  
where I walk down again.  
A flight of birds shall pass  
in my imagined sky

There are so many streets ahead.  
Always the same hour chimes  
the moments of thought,  
knowing I am still far away.

In a desolate mansion  
I find myself stumbling on stones  
as sharp as the knife that slices.  
My eyes do the talking  
in regular rhythms  
reflecting the moon rising  
somewhere that is not here.

Voices whisper in my sleep,  
careless in what they say.  
So often the song I sing  
fades like yesterday's wishes  
away from varieties of whatever.  
To live for all the years  
where I hear no more of now,  
nor of any time but then  
whenever there may be time.  
There are no calendars in memory.

DAH

**fragmented no. 34**

when winter is a string of rain  
between bone and skin /

in cold rivulets / this wet in  
-ventory / stops the sun fr  
-om breathing

## The Tick of a Broken Clock

She begins the day writing sombre poetry  
but only has a short space of time, always  
the solitude before storms, before the sky  
returns to blue, before the mirror, empty  
and cold, shatters like a map of her life

She stands near the window looking at the  
dreadful countryside, the strong wind moves  
trees in distress, and the wretched melancholy  
reflecting from three small cracked panes  
that reveal her age, the black gown in tatters

She has said, so many times, never anyone  
but you for my eyes to behold, for my lips  
like rope around your tongue, for my hands  
in the gentle sleep of your heart, for my tears  
like fragile globes of pearls, each one a fugitive

She remembers a song that died before  
it could finish the story of a hard break up  
lost forever in the skipping of a needle on  
the vinyl, over and over, again, skipping  
like the tick of a dull, broken clock

She lives forevermore in a time of mythology  
bleeding the loss of age, of youth, the loss of  
darkness that was her allure, the bed of lovers  
now a clouded nothing, her dire loneliness, like  
an old sea that never dies



## Fragmented No. 21

Screwed in like a glass eye, the moon's  
circular vision / a swagger of seabirds  
in the air, gray apparitions / unbuttoning  
the distance / the horizon's kernel un-  
folding its darkness.

If there was heat then it faded to nothing  
and / like the stone teeth of jagged rocks  
swallowed by a liquid mouth, the sea's  
hunger / spilling salt into the sky  
/ like melancholic litter.

Winter's cracked jug leaks / and  
spears of rain jab the sand, slanted and  
tilted / the faint light, like a loose body  
spreading December's shrivelling  
wet skin.

Walking, but not in loneliness / like a homing  
pigeon, but with more tracks / and without a  
nesting place / I'm haunted by the beauty of  
your legs, those magnificent wings  
in dazzling flight

Memories, in which detachment destroys  
their clarity / drifting and sinking / the tragic  
freedom of loss, the distant emptiness / after  
the moon leaves / after the tide leaves, after  
... complete silence.

I did not see the imperfect reality / one must  
age first / to be quick enough / Now, for a  
cliché: I wrote your name in the sand / but  
like an old tree in a flood / it washed away  
and the nameless sand returned.

# **Paweł Markiewicz 1 poem**

## **Confession of the Poetical Firefly to Muse-Butterfly of Poesy**

You must excuse me. You dear dreamer!  
I have overly felt my dream about the Golden Fleece.  
I built my small paradise without any other ontological beings.  
I based the dreamiest sempiternity on the tenderness of my wings.  
Thus. I painted my wings in color of an ambrosia.  
Withal: I liked the dew of dawns for the sake of elves.  
I loved too much the wizardry of mayhap Erlking's.  
I had to read many fairy tales of the Winter Queen.  
I have enchanted your night rainbow.  
I have become a magician of dawn.  
I loved the Morning Starlet.  
I collected all shooting stars.

Excuse me. My dear butterfly  
fulfilled in the same after glow  
and bewitched by lights of moon and star.  
Let us dream over night  
toward an epiphany of first angels  
of red sky in the morning.

## Contributors

**Vera Terekov**, currently living in France, speaks four languages in which she composes poems. She particularly enjoys penning poetry in English, for its musicality and its flexibility. During the lockdown, she wrote poems about general topics and intimate memories.

**Mukund Gnanadesikan** was born in New Jersey, the son of two Indian immigrants. His poetry and short stories have been published in *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *Ayaskala*, *The Bangalore Review*, *Calliope on the Web*, *The Cape Rock*, *Cathexis Northwest*, *Meniscus Literary Journal*, *Blood and Thunder*, *Poets' Choice*, *Kreaxxxion Review*, *New Verse News*, and *Dream Noir*, among others. His first novel, *Errors of Omission*, is due out in fall of 2020 from Adelaide Books. He lives in Napa, CA, where he practices psychiatry.

**Tom Montag's** books of poetry include: *Making Hay & Other Poems*; *Middle Ground*; *The Big Book of Ben Zen*; *In This Place: Selected Poems 1982-2013*; *This Wrecked World*; *The Miles No One Wants*; *Imagination's Place*; *Love Poems*; and *Seventy at Seventy*. His poem 'Lecturing My Daughter in Her First Fall Rain' has been permanently incorporated into the design of the Milwaukee Convention Center. He blogs at The Middle westerner. With David Graham he recently co-edited *Local News: Poetry About Small Towns*.

**Emalisa Rose** is a poet, dollmaker, animal rescue volunteer. She lives by a beach town which provides much of her inspiration. Her work has appeared in *Beatnik Cowboy*, *October Hill*, *Poettree Zine*. She works as a lunch lady in a NY public school, which provides much joy and laughter too.

**Stephen Page** is part Native American. He was born in Detroit. He holds degrees from Palomar College, Columbia University, and Bennington College. He wears a mask and socially distances whenever he ventures outside in public. He loves his wife, long walks through woodlands, nature, solitude, peace, meditating, dog-eared pages in books, spontaneous road trips, smashing cell phones with hammers, and making noise with his electric bass.

**Aldo Quagliotti**, and I'm an Italian poet based in London. In 2019 I published my first collection of poems, *Japanese Tosa*, published by London Poetry Books. The anthology debuted on October 2019 at the Tea House Theatre in Vauxhall and has then been promoted throughout the London open mic nights such as *Flo vortex*, *Paper Tiger*, *Poetical Word*. My poems have also been published in Italian anthologies, such as *Il soon del selenium* 2008 and 2008, and Brazilian magazine (*Revest Torquate*). Nationally, my work has been included in English anthologies such as *Reach 253*, *Murmuration's*, *Cannon Poet Quarterly*, *Poetry in The Time of Coronavirus*, *The voices Project*, *The Writers Club*, *Fleas on the dog*, *The Materialist*, *The Essential anthology*. and *Word doodles*.

With a diploma at the London College of Media and Publishing, I also review music and write live reports on *Peek-a-boo* magazine and *Gigsoup*. I also offer review and genuine feedbacks to emerging poets/musicians on <https://quaquaversalweb.wordpress.com/>.

**Kami Westhoff** is the author of chapbooks *Sleepwalker*, winner of Minerva Rising's Dare to Be award, and *Your Body a Bullet*, co-written with Elizabeth Vignali. Her short story collection *The Criteria* is forthcoming from Unsolicited Press. Her poetry and prose have appeared in *Meridian*, *Hippocampus*, *Booth*, *Carve*, *Third Coast*, *Passages North*, *The Pinch*, *West Branch*, *Waxwing*, and others. She teaches creative writing at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA.

**Catherine Karnitis** is an emerging poet, working on an MFA in Writing at the University of San Francisco. I serve as a Poetry Editor for Invisible City literary journal. I earned an MA in History at the University of California, Berkeley and an MA in Art History at The Ohio State University.

**Giovanni Mangiante** is a bi-lingual writer from Lima, Peru. He has work published in Three Rooms Press, Fearsome Critters, The Raven Review, Cajun Mutt Press, Crêpe & Penn, Impspired, Open Minds Quarterly, Necro Magazine, and more. In writing, he found a way to cope with BPD.

**Linnet Phoenix** is a poet who lives in North Somerset, England. She has been writing poetry for years. Her work has previously been published in Impspired, Punk Noir Magazine, Raven Cage Zine and Open Skies Quarterly. She also enjoys horse-riding.

**John Grey** is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published in Soundings East, Dalhousie Review and Connecticut River Review. Latest book, “Leaves on Pages” is available through Amazon.

**Gonzalinho da Costa**—a pen name—is a management, communication, research, statistics, and artificial intelligence consultant. A lover of world literature, he has completed graduate degrees in the humanities, management, communication, and statistics, and writes poetry as a hobby.

**Kyle Mendelsohn** is a poet and photographer based in Watertown, MA. He lives with his two best friends and their toothless cat, lovey. In his professional life, he works as a freelance arts manager and writer. His art focuses mostly on grief, recovery, and his experiences as a queer person.

**Zack Rogow** is the author, editor, or translator of more than twenty books or plays. His ninth book of poems, *Irreverent Litanies*, was issued by Regal House Publishing. He is also writing a series of plays about authors. The most recent of these, *Colette Uncensored*, had its first staged reading at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, and ran at the Canal Café Theatre in London, and in San Francisco and Portland. His blog, [Advice for Writers](#), has more than 200 posts on topics of interest to writers. He serves as a contributing editor of *Catamaran Literary Reader*. [www.zackrogow.com](http://www.zackrogow.com)

**Lauren Scharhag** is the author of fourteen books, including *Requiem for a Robot Dog* (Cajun Mutt Press) and *Languages, First and Last* (Cyberwit Press). Her work has appeared in over 100 literary venues around the world. Recent honors include the Seamus Burns Creative Writing Prize, two Best of the Net nominations, and acceptance into the 2021 Antarctic Poetry Exhibition. She lives in Kansas City, MO. To learn more about her work, visit: [www.laurenscharhag.blogspot.com](http://www.laurenscharhag.blogspot.com)

**Geoffrey Heptonstall's** publications include a novel [Heaven's Invention, Black Wolf 2017] and a poetry collection, The Rites of Paradise [Cyberwit 2020]. A second collection is now in preparation. Recent fiction has appeared in Pennsylvania Literary Review and Scarlet Leaf Review. Six play texts have been published.

**DAH** is a multiple Pushcart Prize and Best Of The Net nominee, and the author of nine books of poetry. DAH lives in Berkeley, California, where he is working on his tenth poetry collection, while simultaneously working on his first collection of short fiction.

Visit: [dahlusion.wordpress.com](http://dahlusion.wordpress.com)

**Paweł Markiewicz** was born 1983 in Siemiatycze in Poland. He is poet who lives in Bielsk Podlaski and writes tender poems, haiku as well as long poems. Paweł has published his poetries in many magazines. He writes in English and German.

# Submissions and Guidelines

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All are welcome to submit. We believe a poetry ezine/journal with the philosophy of 'inclusivity' at its core can act as a springboard to support further artistic development, and encourage writers to keep producing and to participate more widely in the art scene.

**POETiCA REViEW** appreciates the hard work of others involved in the arts. It is our belief that all thinking beings are capable of producing good art, talents vary enormously among individuals, but we humans share a common language of ideas and feelings and can all make our individual contributions felt in the social and artistic life of our society. We look for the 'good' in everything, whether it is enjoying a good meal or looking at a painting or reading a poem.

Please submit up to 5 poems at a time (40 lines max. each poem) in the body of the email and as an attachment. Times New Roman. 12-point font only.

All submissions to be sent via email to: [poeticareview@gmail.com](mailto:poeticareview@gmail.com)

Response to submissions, from 1 week to 3 months.