

POETiCA REViEW

Autumn 2021



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Issue 11

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 11
AUTUMN 2021

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Editor's Note

Nate Hoil's poem, [\[I am going to capture your flag.\]](#) and William Cotter's poem, '[THE TAKING OF WAUBA DEBAR](#),' will be nominated by **POETiCA REViEW** for this year's **Pushcart Prize**.

POETiCA REViEW
For the many, not just the few

Helene Fisher 1 poem

SOMETIMES OUR ONLY SONG IS WEEPING

from a Lutheran hymnal

His mother slept under the crib
to listen for the baby's breath.
She wanted to crawl into him,

take refuge beneath his ribs,
do the breathing for him.
The quilt from the hope chest kept him warm.

His small lungs choked on smog
from the steel mills and chemical factory
where her husband worked making baby aspirin: an irony.

On Sundays she prayed
hoping her breath together like a patchwork or soup,
made ends meet with syllables and hymns.

Did best I could, she'd say. *All can ask*.
Funny how she always dropped an article or a word
as if there was never enough oxygen to fill her sentences.

Josey Bryant 1 poem

A New Shadow

A liberation,
A stripe formed by the morning light.
The cock and the robin
Serenading a man with an Arab strap.
My benefactor,
A magnificent monolith.
Has graced the empty fields of Man,
With the gentle rains of summer.

A new shadow,
A new truth replaces a lie.
Why should I have to hide myself,
On such a beautiful day?

Nate Hoil 3 poems

[I am going to capture your flag.]

One in three agents will be killed
by another agent.

They will not be born again unless
permitted by science.

Don't let their cuteness fool you.
They will eat you alive.

They will keep eating you
when you are dead.

I become what I am chasing.
I modify my donor organs

with my murderer silent behind
the shower curtain.

There is no such thing as karma.

[Celebrity duos who no longer like each other.]

Don't think about how the womb of the wine glass is growing a child
just keep brushing your teeth.
Belong to the crowd, a whole bone fire of evening.
Canker sores cover the garden you keep.

Every time a bell rings, an angel lights its stomach fluid.
Your slow force doubles through your voice resemblance magazines.
I've got poems you can't bench press.
My shit should be taught in schools.

Cheery packs of poets buckle pillows to their postage stamp.
I do the hokey pokey with some butterflies with drinking problems.
You can cuddle-cactus your opinion of me.
I've got so much money that I hide it in my vacuum cleaner.

Greater minds than mine get confused at this altitude.
Nothing I feel in the room has a pulse.
The embryonic cell damage cooks in the frying pan and time is running overboard.

I purchase protective sporting equipment.
You enter the scene like a missile directed towards sleeping koala bears.
If you like it then set it on fire.

Therese Pokorney 2 poems

It's Tuesday, Isn't It?

1. i don't know how time keeps moving
2. i am the poet laureate of my bed
3. there is no lethal dose of naps
4. i fear the unknown and also the known
5. everyone is doing the best they can sort of
6. i am so so excited to experience
the exact same week
as the one before
and the one before that.

My skin feels like spring

i went someplace in my dream last night;
someplace with a pink sky and an ocean

when i said you were beautiful this is what i meant

i backpacked around countries with strangers;
strangers with kind eyes and dirty fingernails

when i said you were beautiful this is what i meant

then i saw my sister give birth in august
and i'd give anything to be called this type of beautiful

you told me my eyes were so
blue
i know
what color they are

don't tell me my eyes remind you of the sea
tell me they look like winter
tell me my skin feels like spring

don't tell me i take your breath away
tell me i'm a fresh heartbeat
tell me i'm summer

Maria Ostrowski 1 poem

Serpent's Tale

While driving home at dusk

The witching hour

Familiar roads slither

Black beneath the bruised and bloodied sky.

Almost night and leaves rattle like my thoughts

Bouncing with sallow headlights.

Doubt creeps — do I know where I am?

I hit a pot hole.

Loud bang

Violent jostle

I grip the steering wheel

As the serpent bites.

What if that was a baby?

My heart quickens.

Cold sweat

White knuckles and tingling hands.

I can't swallow.

It was not a baby.

It was a pot hole.

“Yes,” the serpent says. “But did you see the pot hole?”

No. The road was too dark.

“So, it could have been a child.”

Impossible.

“Is it?”

The fear-seed grows.

I now see the child.
The ghost child of my dreams.
Lying on the road. Death of dreams.
I think —
It was my fault.
This death of dreams.

I remember the miscarriage —
This loss of hope started in church
With the teenage girls giggling in the pew behind me.
When I stood, I felt virtue ebb into
My red-dyed jeans;
into the fear I whispered to my husband

“I’m losing the baby.”

As we left the church,
The girls’ faces read
Dead
End.

Stop.

I brake at the red sign
A clot in the flowing black road.

What is happening?

I am driving home from the gym.

I hit a pot hole.

But
I remember the girls
who took my eyes
As I was losing

Hope.

They watch me now —
Sad eyes full of
doomed virtue.

Loss.

Guilt shackles me in irons.

I think —

I could never forgive myself if...

“Yes,” the serpent says. “Why don’t you turn around and check?”

I turn the car around.

Search for that stretch of road.

In the headlights I look for the pothole

For a tree branch

For a child

For relief.

The radio blares

But my thoughts are louder.

Another car drives by on the opposite side of the road.

Two bright lights like staring eyes.

I fear —

What would they think if they knew...

What?

I had done.

I hit a pothole.
Bang
I saw it this time.
The big pock mark in the asphalt.
Relief pillows my conscience
I exhale.

Then —
“Was that the right pot hole?”
Black hole.
“You had better go...”
Check.

What if it wasn't a baby the first time?
But this time — it could have been...
A baby
Lying in the black hole
Grave.

“You can't go home until you...”
Check.
“What kind of horrible person wouldn't go...”
Check.
“You won't find peace unless you...”
Check.

Caught in the serpent's labyrinth
Circling black snake roads.
Exhaustion.
Tears.
I see the baby.
Death of dreams.

I pull over in front of a juvenile detention center.

Think — they would jail me

If they knew...

What?

I had done.

I hit a pot hole.

Black hole.

Hell.

I crawl out.

Only when the serpent sees that I have suffered enough

Weeping for a pot-hole baby

His grip lessens.

I breathe the air of the moment.

Where am I?

In my car.

On my road.

Going home.

Worn from being judge, jury, and jailer

Grieving for the pot-hole baby

And fearing I am mad because I know that I am not.

I pull in my driveway — park the car.

Shaken, tired, hunted

By my own mind

By the hole in the night-road

The grave for the child who never existed.

I sit, looking at the red-painted door.

Heart-pounding — I see my husband stand at the threshold

Of light and darkness.

His warm dark silhouette greets me and his deep voice

Love-scolding

“You’re late. I thought something happened to you.”

So did I.

R. C. deWinter 1 poem

brief brilliance

a shooting star
of uncommon beauty
you flashed across the heavens
oh so briefly

unlike halley's eternal return
we will never see the like of you again
it is our loss
the world is a poorer place without you

but i know somewhere
you are playing beautiful music
i would trade whatever time is left
to hear one measure of your song

Kelli Allen 1 poem

A thief, a nakedness, a boat far from shore

My legs are apart, twin otters
sharing a stone between them.
No longer on the windowsill
of my mother's womb, this body
is not her body. The minnows
we vomit we swallow back down—
These slithering selves too much
under water. Once upon a time
Everything ends—the village,
the woodcutting, the orphans'
hunger, and their fullness, too.

William Cotter 2 poems (Both these poems are published by "Polestar Writers' Journal.")

DEATH OF A WARRIOR

The black, club foot body slumps,
Kicks, lies still in a splash of semi light
And the settler stands,
Sets his musket down
And traces its slow, spiralling cords of smoke.
Kangaroos burst back into the forest.
White as scattered petals,
Cockatoos screech and rear away.
The sun spreads its red, spear sharp rays.

Time recovers its rhythm and slouches forward.
The invasion of cattle, sheep and settlers can continue.

But, in the damp recesses of the forest,
The tribal women are weeping.
Pemulwuy is dead.

THE TAKING OF WAUBA DEBAR

Bicheno, Tasmania.

Your familiar hills,
Your family and the spiralling camp fire smoke
Should have kept you safe.
But, they didn't and when they found you,
The white settlers with their guns and lust,
They gave your body to a sealer man
And probably called the trade a marriage.

You rescued him once,
Dragged him, with his mate,
From a tangle of surf and rigging
To the shore.
Perhaps you got a guttural word of thanks.

Certainly not your freedom

And when, years later,
You fled,
Cloaked yourself in the welcoming forest,
They found you,
The settlers and the sealers,
Murdered you,
Left the locals to bury you,
High up and alone above the sea,
Complete with a headstone
And the bay named after you.

You might have expected peace, then.
But they found you again, those settlers,
Wrenched you from the earth,
Parcelled you up
And sent your skull away to be measured.

Only the snow drops come to remember you, now,
White, perfect tear drops,
Silent and watchful each spring.

HERE LIES
WAUBU DEBAR
FEMALE ABORIGINE
OF VAN DIEMENS LAND
DIED JUNE 1832

Joshua Jones 2 poems

JUNE

The joke goes like this:
I'm in the clearing, watching
some kind of hare, hopping

through the grass-flowers' upturned heads.
So I ask it to stop, but it won't
stop for anyone, anyone dreaming

on their knees, in the copse of telecoms,
half-drunk, like me, polythene
bags blowing in an elm.

VARIATIONS

This is your way, burning
candles in undusted apartments,
lay out on the bed.

I found your glove in a grate,
middle-finger raised to the sky.
Then I brought it back.

Even so, you ask me
to leave, trailing along the hallway,
closing each of the doors.

And there's sense in this.
We know too much about the night.
Before I go, I'll say it.

Please, if you find a hand, gloveless -
fill it up with your own
words, hold it to your mouth.

P. A. Levy 1 poem

Adam's Cloud

the prowess of the animal
fresh from crawling
out of the sea to
stumble into an awkward silence
it was the discovery of that first footprint
that led to the invention of love ...

the rivers run to the sea in blue trails
over an ordinance survey body
map of you
leading me to
the beach where we gathered seaweed
to foretell the weather
we were searching for sunny
intervals in the rain
wearing our summer skins
laughing

i had a compass and this map of you
the seaweed indicated a storm
was coming
so we sheltered in a garden sitting
on a bench under a tree
and just like the storm passed
so did you

... curled up with a by-product
of love listening to conversations between
stabbing and open heart surgery pain
watching footsteps fade into
the glare of a sunny interval
the last one

Joan E. Bauer 3 poems

A Consumptive Poet in Italy

*I would jump down Etna for any public good
but I hate a mawkish popularity.*

—John Keats, in a letter, 1818

As a boy, ‘always in extremes,’ noted for indolence
& fighting. His father Thomas, a stable-keeper,

trampled by a horse when Keats was eight,
his mother lost to tuberculosis six years later.

Then brother Tom felled by ‘the family curse.’
Keats trained to be an apothecary, a surgeon,

but traded the Hippocratic Oath for poetry.
No biography from anyone who knew him,

but a trove of letters & poetry.
To his beloved Fanny Brawne—

*I have two luxuries to brood over:
Your loveliness and the hour of my death.*

Doctors urged him to Italy with the frail hope
that a milder climate might restore him.

Keats, attacked as a ‘Cockney’ poet by critics
who claimed only ‘country gentlemen’

could fathom Nature, never learned of the
generous family bequest owed him at 21.

Could that have saved him? Those attending
his last weeks refused him opium.

So he suffered horribly. On waking,
sobbing that he was still alive.

Betrayal

After her son's arrest, Akhmatova muttered absently.
She forgot her own address.
Then she wrote a letter to Stalin & for a time,
her only son, Lev Gumilyov was freed.

For years she suffered from tuberculosis.
Her friends fed her, gave her shelter.
When her son was held in Kretzy prison
in Leningrad,
Akhmatova stood in line, hoping to pass along
a parcel of food. Her feet half-frozen. Her lips blue.

*

She had been in Leningrad the first months the siege,
then evacuated to Moscow & spared starvation.
The next year, she had typhus, a year later, scarlet fever.

In the work camps, his interrogators tormented Gumilyov
claiming his famous mother had abandoned him.

In '44, after he was freed, he served in the Red Army,
then imprisoned again.

*

Gumilyov, released for the last time in '56, burned
with resentment. Couldn't his mother have done more?

Akhmatova hardly knew him, the lines around his eyes, so deep.
They remained estranged.
In her posthumous letters he chose to publish,
she appears angry, hurtful, vain.

Gumilyov became a noted historian & anthropologist,
honored for having survived the Gulag & perhaps
for espousing ultra-nationalist views.
Again & again, he said:

It would have been better if I had died before her.

We All Loved Each Other So Much

(2 h 4 min 1977 USA)

Three *Resistenza* fighters survive the war.
As years pass, what binds & tears them apart,
their love for the beautiful Luciana.

The bourgeois lawyer (Vittorio Gassman)
marries the boss's daughter whom he keeps
distant with a blend of neglect & gallantry.

The intellectual abandons his family to argue
about cinema. He loses a fortune on a TV
game show because he just can't shut up.

The good-hearted hospital orderly
disappointed in love, then *fortunato*,
happy at last.

A comic masterpiece, but my Norwegian
sweetheart can't understand why
everyone is yelling all the time.

I think of old friends. How we barely
hear about birthdays, health scares,
deaths, third marriages.

If only Ettore Scola had filmed a sequel—
Commedia? Or something somber.
Perhaps something bittersweet.

The orderly still working at the hospital.
The lawyer unmoored by his wealth
The cineaste lamenting his lost youth.

Do they meet at Luciana's funeral?

Madilynnne Fischer 1 poem

INSANITY

If insanity runs like water, then I hope my glass overflows.
This two-story, brick building
never felt like home.
I draw back the curtains
as the sun begins to illuminate the ashes in the hallways.
I open the windows and listen
for the secrets in the wind.
I don't open the door, nor do I dare step outside.
In fear that the sun will fade
or the breeze will get laryngitis.
Curiosity begs me to ponder what will happen
if I step outside, if I start to drown.
When my glass begins to flood,
who will save me?
Six feet never felt like much
for a woman woven with anxiety.
But this two-story, brick building
never felt like home.

And six feet begins to ache
like the miles I've walked,
in attempt to pour the cup down the drain.

Antoni Ooto 2 poems

The Mantra of Isolation

-one-

-two-

-three-

-four-

practicing a place of nothing
is harder the older I get

the innocent haunts of memory
green lawns after a rain
the aroma of summer

I'm never alone in my head
even crowded at times, hosting
voices and places of a past
that keeps interrupting

As I try to center,
the mantra resumes

-one-

-two-

Perhaps

I should remember
your grave waits in sun and burr

but if I stand over it
and think of you,

I'm only pretending
to be there

and you, pretending
I came

Michael Lee Johnson 1 poem

Native I Am, Cocopa (V3)

Now once-great events fading
into seamless history,
I am a mother, proud.
My native numbers are few.
In my heart digs many memories
forty-one relatives left in 1937.
Decay is all left of their bones, memories.
I pinch my dark skin.
I dig earthworms
farm dirt from my fingertips
grab native
Baja and Southwestern California,
its soil and sand wedged between my spaced teeth.
I see the dancing prayers of many gods.
I am Cocopa, a remnant of the Yuman family.
I extend my mouth into forest fires
Colorado rivers, trout-filled mountain streams.
I survive on corn, melons, and
pumpkins, mesquite beans.
I still, dance in grass skirts
drink a hint of red Sonora wine.

I am a mother, proud.
I am parchment from animal earth.

Note: This is the story poem of the Cocopah Indian tribe and their journey over the years. The River People descended from the greater Yuman-speaking area, which occupied lands along the Colorado River. The Cocopah Indian tribe had no written language. However, historical records have been passed on orally and by outside visitors. Michael Lee Johnson lived ten years in Canada, Vietnam era.

Christian Garduno 1 poem

Bronze Mustang

First time I saw her, it was the last Friday in April
She looked like Rachel from Slowdive circa 1991
She pulled into the Country Mart and smoked a cigarette
as she pumped her gasoline like it was the end of time
Undaunted, she went inside and paid all in change
She moved around brutally, just like Nureyev
Behind her shades, her eyes are copper-colored
I suspect she may be a Capulet, she gets freckles in the summer

Decimate me-
take me back to the sub-atomic level
pulverize me-
Nobody notices the imperfections unless they're perfect
save me-
bury me in wax
preserve me-
encase me in amber

Ken Hada 1 poem

Dimensions

When morning sky is a frosty gray
so thick and opaque
you cannot discern dimensions,
you feel reduced to the clear truth,
diminished as you are.

You realize the undeniable fact
of your place in a gray overcast cosmos.
Anything else is temporary,
is but a pose – only the outlined forms
of birds or leafless branches
are knowable, no color is possible.

In the distance, you hear a faint call,
wonder how you appear,
what form you make to those
on the other side looking your way,
hard across eternal horizon.

Geoff Callard 2 poems

A Moment of Respite

Last night, after a few pints at the Railway,
we were lying in bed.
The wind was knocking around the village,
and you said you thought a shingle was loose.

So, this morning I lean the ladder up against the house,
the drizzle steady in my face as I climb.
I balance myself on our slippery
Llanegryn roof, slate ripper in hand.

Being close to the weather
makes me contemplative
and I begin to wonder if God
has considered this roof,
the lichened slate,
the quarries long closed,
the craftsmen who shaped the shingle,
the roofer who nailed it in,
his brother below
loading the sling with his one arm.

I look across the roofs,
to the stream cascading down the hill,
flooding under the hump of the stone bridge
that leads to the Church.

I know nothing stands still
- miners, builders and brothers, all dead.
I know how a moment of respite can bring a man
to his knees.

I pull the slate out,
nail the new one in its place.

Later in the afternoon,
with the Aga warming the kitchen,
my wife and I have tea and watch a nature program
about Yosemite National Park.

We should go there before we die, she says.
We both laugh, she leans back into my chest
and I can smell woodsmoke in her hair.

Watching Fireworks

You and I float in the motel pool
behind white railings,
blue lights from below,
autumn leaves rock gently on the surface

I am on a faded Lilo
you, on the Flamingo Pool Beach Floating Island™
passing a joint between us

Almost everyone
is down at the harbour
watching the fireworks –
I wanted to bring you here
to my vantage point, my small moonlit window
of starbursts

I slip into the water so I can kiss you
my arms around
the pink flamingo neck

Soft chlorine kisses.
How flowers survive in the desert.
How a bird takes to the air.

Our town is full of marvels
if you look hard enough.

Mark A. Murphy 1 poem

Multitudes

One should start with your eyes
when describing you.

Jewelled pools for our looking
and seeing.

Moon and stars
for our journeys with and without you.

Lock and lever arm opening
leaf gate
and waterway.

*

Now your eyes are our children
we never knew

(because love is never easy)

laughing and crying
in summer rain

Swimming naked in our canals
and in our rivers.

Doerthe Huth 1 poem

Metamorphosis

Suddenly there is this
queasy feeling in the stomach area
when you stand in front of an audience
make a speech or perform a show.
You want to give everything
to do these things well
in order to gain recognition
-just don't fail.
A moment of tenderness
like an opening pupa
which releases a hatching dragonfly
Millimetre by millimetre
which frees itself from its larval skin upside down
and it has to let the body harden
Before it slowly turns colours
and its wings can unfold
a legitimate alarm status
of visibility and vulnerability.
The danger of annihilation
at the moment of the rebirth.
When you are afraid of your own courage
self-doubt gnaws at you
or fear, criticism and arrogance
pushing you back into your larval skin
Think back to the metamorphosis of the dragonfly
how it gathers for a moment
and rises into the air
what it is like to grow beyond yourself
and if it is worth the risk.

Aneek Chatterjee 4 poems

Empty Triangle

Two plus two makes four
in simple arithmetic.
But here is a unique geometry, of a triangle
& a square which lives within the triangle ...
Four souls in four distant, but joined
points of the empty square.

Two plus two always makes four.
But it may also lead to four hundred;
four thousand; four million; -- our smiles, our joy,
our afternoons, rains & spring, venom & nectar.
An empty square lives within an empty triangle ...
You, me, he. Rains, spring & winter; ---
joined, but alienated.

The Woman

Personal is political;
political is personal ...
I don't know
I only heard in a classroom
thousand years ago

The person was shipped
to a different planet
Here the soil is black
Here windows are big
Air passes through
narrow passage.
Here promises reach the ceiling
I crawl and watch from the floor
Here sky is covered with
green, violet and orange arrogance

Here personal is impersonal
Here personal is only proverbial

Mirror

Through my glass window
I look at the uprooted tree,
a victim of the last storm
now lying stoic on the road,
lazily watching bicycles, motorbikes
& pedestrians passing by.
This tree was home to several birds,
electric & cable wires; political posters.
Now uprooted & lying peacefully

I withdrew from the window
& came inside
Suddenly in the mirror saw
a banyan tree in front of a
village house & children playing
beneath

I withdrew again &
stopped looking
at the mirror, because
it was looking through me

Pain

If you looked inward,
you could see
a small pool
inside the iron veil.
& blood dripping slowly
from an ancient tree,
by the side of the pool.
In that red puddle, a lonely
fish swims from dawn to dusk;
from dusk to dawn.
The iron veil allows
no visitor here

If you peeped inward
you could feel
someone trying to catch
the lonely fish, all day and night;
in vain.

Melody Wang 1 poem

"Words Refined in the Fire"

Sunlight interrupts shadows
interspersed on the campus lawn,
calmly filters through foliage
and these cold stone corners

No open spaces are found here now;
a carefully calculated attempt
to prevent student protests
blood and smoke
mere wisps of the past —
from pervading the calm atmosphere

Walk a little ways
down through the dense concrete forest
its peaks marked with faceless mirrors
still unable to process the horror

Decades ago it happened
one trembling voice
pleading its last anguished cause
In the name of God, end the war! —
collapsing into silence
a magician's loveless trick
forever etched into the pavement.

Despite these confined spaces
some stains will remain

And one voice will be heard

Jack Galmitz 3 poems

I.

Like a prop a foreboding cloud
took aim at the bar on the outskirts of town.
It hung above it as if there was something personal going
on. The town folk who had gathered
noticed squiggly lightning
flashes inside the cloud. It was eerie
enough for them to whisper the one word that brings
fear into the hearts of men and woman everywhere:
judgement. That's right, judgement. The men inside
didn't care. They were regulars. Took their stools early
and left late. Red eyed and scraggly, the only sunlight
they saw came when the bar doors swung open.
Had the cloud been sent to take them back to their true home?
That's what some said. And it just might have been possible.
What other explanation could there be?
There was a drought in those parts going on for years.
No one could remember the last time they saw a thundercloud.
Yup, it just might be a sign the huddled crowd agreed.
Then they dispersed and made their several ways home,
each thankful that the cloud didn't hang over their head.

II.

It's time my sweet friend
to say goodbye. Go now
to the world without depth
where memory and wind time
took. A young girl looking
in your old face kisses
your lips and says you're
handsome still. You who are
lost in the city of
hills. Go back to work
after you've retired though you
don't know how you arrived.
You haven't won the Nobel
Prize. It's on the mantel
of desire and past wiles.
And you're among the revised.
Your old friends are there
and still lack the standards
to which you aspire. Assassins
all. Not one to be trusted.
Is this it Gertrude Stein?

III.

was looking for a trail
through dark woods after I
lost my way. The path
was not a straight settee
of ease on. no way.
Brambles tripped me. Branches whipped
me. It was a disgrace.
I got me an excavator
and made hay with trees
rocks and diverted the streams.
It was easy that way.
Got me a tractor, too,
and flattened the earth. Concrete
contractor made a new road.
We put up signal lights.
We were on our way
to making a new city
we decided to name The
New Eden. And why not?
There was no stopping us.
We have gone away not
to be found. Far out.

Sheleen McElhinney 1 poem

EVERYTHING IS TEMPORARY

It's December 21st. The world
outside my door is a frozen lake, snow tight
enough to walk on without sinking.

In the womb of the tinted
light fixture above
my bathroom sink

is the shadow of a bee.
It's striped bulb body
pinging against the thin glass.

Ping. P i n g. Ping.

I signed the rental papers
for this place a week ago
and every day there is a new bee.

Crawling out from the
floor vent, stitched to
the arm of my sweater.

I'm sluggish with change.
The neighbors ask where I came
from. I came from here and I'm

still here. Just on a

different street.
A new key on the ring.
I'm just older now.
My misery another
spider vein on the thigh.
I don't care about
the amenities. I won't go
to the pool in summer.
Won't rent a grill for any
birthday parties.
Everything is temporary.
I won't even question
the bees.

Alden Wallace Mackay 1 poem

At One Point I Was Lucky

At one point I was lucky to find work in a mill, sending sheets through a planer for six bucks an hour. Me and Emily in the moonlight would share a hammock near the water. Long nights and endless talk of nothing at all. She had a mole on her eye, right there beside a supernova iris. Somewhere in my heart a window began to open. Years later now I'm living in the west working graveyards at this diner. 50% staff discounts on midnight lunches. I know spring's come back around once the city starts sneezing. Out in the streets people are gathered where they'll likely spend the night. And for some reason I'm thinking of Emily again, the tune she played from a stringless harp. Nobody can do everything, she said, but we can all do something. It's still a comfort just knowing we share that selfsame icy moon.

Mish Murphy 2 poems

Tarot

I don't hate
science.

I've
studied

the rotation of the sun
the square root of π ,
the evolution of the monkey,

the treachery of flowers.

But the right brain
longs to sift
in its arthritic hands
the silk tablecloth

where the spread-out cards
gaze back
like little
glazed windows.

Green

I was afraid to be green,
but glad to be reborn.

I sewed my torn self together
& waited for the cravings
to go away—
the urge to shop, eat, fuck—

I sewed myself inside a bucket & you,
my favorite candy,
my voluptuous freckle,

I sewed you inside my bucket, too.

We were changing,
evolving,
becoming
half-plant & half human.

We drank sunlight
through our hands

& sipped seawater
through our feet,

& then
we released
our thoughts

into

the

day.

Contributors

H.E. Fisher's poetry is forthcoming or has appeared in PB Daily, Dream Pop Journal, Yes Poetry, Anti-Heroine Chic, and Pithead Chapel, among other publications. She is pursuing her MFA at City College of New York, where she was awarded the The Stark Poetry Prize in Memory of Raymond Patterson. H.E. is the editor of (Re) An Ideas Journal. She currently lives in New York's Hudson Valley.

Josey Bryant, is a student at the University of Kentucky. He has been writing for most of his life, and is eager to share his work with the world. He uses poetry to understand himself, the world, mental health and sexuality.

Nate Hoil is a millionaire playboy. You can find more of his work at natehoil.com

Therese Pokorney is a poet and writer from Chicago, Illinois. Her works have been published by Not Very Quiet and the Wingless Dreamer. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and is a painter, yogi, and tap water drinker.

Maria Ostrowski's creative nonfiction has appeared in 34th Parallel Magazine, The Book Smuggler's Den, *Letting Go: An Anthology of Attempts*, and was recently accepted for publication in Regal House Publishing's forthcoming anthology — *(HER)OICS: Women's lived experiences during the coronavirus pandemic*. In 2019, my unpublished novel, *Yet From Those Flames No Light*, received honorable mention for the Daphne du Maurier award for excellence in suspense and mystery.

RC deWinter's poetry is widely anthologized, notably in *New York City Haiku* (Universe/NY Times/Rizzoli, 2/2017), *Nature In The Now* (Tiny Seed Press, 8/2019), *Coffin Bell Two* (Coffin Bell, 2/2020), *2020 Summer Anthology: a Headrest for Your Soul* (Other Worldly Women Press, 6/2020), in print: *2River*, *Adelaide*, *Event*, *Genre Urban Arts*, *Gravitas*, *Kansas City Voices*, *Meat For Tea*, *the minnesota review*, *Night Picnic Journal*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Southword* among others and appears in numerous online literary journals.

Kelli Allen's work has appeared in numerous journals/anthologies in the US and

internationally. Allen is the founding editor of Book of Matches Literary Journal. Allen's new collection, *Banjo's Inside Coyote*, arrived from C&R Press March, 2019.

Bill Cotter's poems have appeared in journals in Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and India. Ginninderra Press Has published a number of collections, a novel, a collection of short stories and a short play. He has won a number of awards, including the Melbourne Shakespeare Society's sonnet competition. He has a particular interest in the Australian environment and history.

Joshua Calladine-Jones is a writer based in the Czech Republic, where he is the literary critic in residence for Prague Writers' Festival. His work has appeared in English and in translation to Czech in a number of journals, including *Marble*, *Literární*, and *Snitch*. He is currently working on a first collection.

Kali Norris is a writer and poet from New York. Previous credits include *Construction* and *JMWW*.

P.A. Levy is a gutter kid born in London's East End but now in his wrinkly years lives in rural isolation in Suffolk. He has been published many times, both on line and in print and is a founding member of the Clueless Collective.

Joan E. Bauer is the author of *The Almost Sound of Drowning* (Main Street Rag, 2008) and *The Camera Artist* (Turning Point, 2021). For some years, she was a teacher and counselor and now divides her time between Venice, CA and Pittsburgh, PA. where she co-hosts and curates the Hemingway's Summer Poetry Series. Her new poetry project is "In Fair Verona," focusing on Italian Americana.

Madilynne Fischer is a senior at Lindenwood University striving for a major in English Studies with a minor in professional communications. In her free time, Madilynne likes to lay out on the hammock and read a good book. Currently, her favorite genre is fiction mystery. She has always loved to write and gives all the credit to her departed grandfather who was a published poet. When she isn't writing, you can find her spending the sunny days outdoors on a hike with her Great Dane, Chase.

Antoni Ooto is an internationally published poet and flash fiction writer. Well-known for his abstract expressionist art, Antoni now adds his voice to poetry. Reading and studying the works of many poets has opened another means of self-expression.

His recent poems have been published in *Amethyst Review*, *The BeZine*, *North of Oxford*, *The Poet Magazine*, *The Front Porch Review*, *Poetica Review*, and many journals and anthologies. He lives and works in upstate New York with his wife poet/storyteller, Judy DeCroce.

Michael Lee Johnson lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era and is a dual citizen of the United States and Canada. Today he is a poet, freelance writer, amateur photographer, and small business owner in Itasca, DuPage County, Illinois. Mr. Johnson published in more than 2,013 new publications. His poems have appeared in 40 countries; he edits and publishes ten poetry sites. Michael Lee Johnson has been nominated for 2 Pushcart Prize awards poetry 2015/1 Best of the Net 2016/2 Best of the Net 2017, 2 Best of the Net 2018. Two hundred twenty-nine poetry videos are now on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/poetrymanusa/videos>. Editor-in-chief poetry anthology, Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1530456762>; editor-in-chief poetry anthology, Dandelion in a Vase of Roses available here <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1545352089>. Editor-in-chief Warriors with Wings: The Best in Contemporary Poetry, <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1722130717>. https://www.amazon.com/Michael-Lee-Johnson/e/B0055HTMBQ%3Fref=dbs_a_mng_rwt_scns_share <https://www.lulu.com/shop/search.ep?keyWords=Michael+Lee+Johnson&type=>. Member Illinois State Poetry Society: <http://www.illinoispoets.org/>. Do not forget to consider me for Best of the Net or Pushcart nomination!

Christian Garduno's work can be read in over 60 literary magazines. He is the recipient of the 2019 national Willie Morris Award for Southern Poetry. Garduno is a Finalist in the 2020-2021 Tennessee Williams & New Orleans Writing Contest. He lives and writes along the South Texas coast with his wonderful wife Nahemie and young son Dylan.

Ken Hada is the author of eight collections of poetry, including his latest: *Sunlight & Cedar* (VACPoetry, 2020). Ken's work has been recognized by SCMLA, The Western Writers of America, The National Western Heritage Museum, The Writer's Almanac and The Oklahoma Center for the Book. Information available at kenhada.org.

Geoff Callard is a New Zealand-born, Melbourne-based writer. He has had poetry published in numerous journals including; *Golden Walkman*, *Live Encounters Poetry and Writing*, the *Blue Nib*, *Red Eft Review*, *Abridged Poetry Journal*, *The Racket*, *PausePressPause* and in a number of anthologies including *Planet in Peril* (Fly on the Wall Poetry, 2019) and the Australian bushfires anthology - *Messages from the Embers*. He won the *Gideon Poetry Prize Winter 2020* and has a chapbook planned for publication in 2021 with Kelsay Books.

Doerthe Huth is a writer and non-medical practitioner from Germany, holding an M.A. degree in German, Psychology and Computational Linguistics. In addition to several book publications about joy of life she is also represented with her poems in anthologies, literary magazines and cultural

blogs, most recently in OTOLITHS and Writing In A Woman's Voice. See her English website: <https://doerthe-huth.jimdosite.com/>

Aneek Chatterjee is from Kolkata, India. He has been published in reputed literary magazines and poetry anthologies across the globe. His third poetry collection titled "of Ashes and Persiflage" (New Delhi and Kolkata, Hawakal) came out in November, 2020. Chatterjee has a Ph.d. in International Relations; and has been teaching in leading Indian and foreign universities. He was a Fulbright Visiting faculty at the University of Virginia, USA and a recipient of the prestigious ICCR Chair to teach abroad. His poetry has been archived at Yale University.

Melody Wang is a poet residing in sunny Southern California with her dear husband. She holds an MSW from the University of Southern California and currently works at the Beckman Research Institute of the City of Hope. She dabbles in music composition on the piano and enjoys hiking, baking, and playing with dogs.

Jack Galmitz born in NYC in 1951. Educated in the public schools from which he graduated. Has published in numerous journals, online and in print, including, *And/Or*, *otata*, *Otoliths*, *Alien Buddha*, *Synchronized Chaos*, is/let to name but a few. He earned a Ph.D in English under the mentoring of Leslie Fielder, Ray Federman, and Marcus Klein.

Sheleen McElhinney is a poet, baker, robot maker living in Bucks County, Pa with her family. Her work has appeared in Whiskey Island, Dogzplot, and is forthcoming in Poetry Is Currency and Sledgehammer Lit. Her debut book, *Every Little Vanishing*, was the winner of the Write Bloody Publishing book prize and will be released this October.

Alden Wallace Mackay has previously been published in The Capilano Courier and The Liar Collective. When he was nine he won the Young Writers of Canada competition hosted by Cloud Carnival. Before COVID he actively read at poetry readings across Vancouver BC, and was a regular columnist for the Capilano Courier. Most recently, he has written and self-published a collection of poems entitled *Endless Nights*, which will be available on Amazon soon. He is currently a student at the University of Victoria double-majoring in English and Philosophy.

Mish (Eileen) Murphy is Associate Poetry Editor for *Cultural Daily* magazine and teaches English and Literature at Polk State College, Florida. She just published her third book of poetry (fourth book overall), the collection *Sex & Ketchup* (Concrete Mist Press Feb. 2021). *Fortune Written on Wet Grass* (Wapshott Press April 2020) was her first full length collection. Her second book *Evil Me* was published August 2020 (Blood Pudding Press). She's had more than 100 individual poems published in journals such as *Tinderbox*, *Writing in a Woman's Voice*, *Thirteen Myna Birds*, and many others. In the UK, her poetry has been published in *Paper & Ink*, *The Open Mouse*, and

Quarterday Review. Mish also is a prolific book reviewer and visual artist; she illustrated the children's book *Phoebe and Ito are dogs* written by John Yamrus (2019).

Mission Statement/Editor's Note

“What the mass media offer is not popular art, but entertainment which is intended to be consumed like food, forgotten and replaced by a new dish. This is bad for everyone; the majority lose all genuine taste of their own, and the minority become cultural snobs.” W.H. Auden

There is only one standard for artistry of any kind, and that is excellence. This is not to exclude anyone from practising art. On the contrary, we wish to encourage the production of art from everyone, regardless of class, race, ethnicity, faith, disability, sexuality or gender. Many myths about art and literature have been propagated by various professors and academics in the West over the centuries (mainly by white, middle and upper class men, in the modern epoch) that would exclude most of the members of our society from doing art.

POETiCA REViEW stands in contradistinction to those values that promote the ‘good’ as esoteric, whilst excluding the vast majority from participation. We hope to give voice to the myriad of disparate voices within the artistic community, locally, and internationally, regardless of notoriety or who is currently favoured by this or that magazine. Our mission is to inject new blood into the poetry scene. We will not shy away from political poetry or indeed any poetry with an ‘edge’ (poetry at the margins).

The ‘great’ and the ‘good’ are not untouchable. Our ability to discern and define what is ‘good’ and ‘bad’ is what defines us as human beings. It is fundamental to our intellectual and emotional make up. One might say, it has become part of our human nature. But human nature is not immutable, nor are our ideas. Notions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ change over time. However, what is clearly unacceptable to us at ***POETiCA REViEW***, is the exclusion from doing art of any writer or artist on the grounds of any social or institutional barriers.

‘High art’, W.H. Auden lamented, only continues to exist in our society because its audience is too small to interest the mass media. Our mission is to make ‘high art’ accessible to all. Finally, we have no hidden agendas, our house is open. We exist to promote diversity. The only agenda for ***POETiCA REViEW*** is the search for excellence. Read, enjoy and feel free to submit!

Submissions and Guidelines

Before we go any further with our submission guidelines please note: we only publish work that excites us and we have confidence in (tickles our aesthetic taste buds) which means what we publish comes down to personal tastes. If we don't publish your work, it's not so much a judgment on the quality of your writing, as a reflection on our own personal preferences.

POETiCA REViEW exists to promote the work of new and older poets alike, the less fortunate, the dispossessed, those without a voice, but encourage the artistic talents of all, not just a privileged minority.

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

Response to submissions, from 1 week to 3 months.