

POETiCA REViEW

Summer 2021



Issue 10

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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 10
SUMMER 2021

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

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Editor's Note

John Yamrus' poem, ['it was'](#) will be nominated by the editors of POETiCA REViEW for the Best of the Net and the Pushcart Prize. As will Lara Dolphin's poem, ['December 14.'](#)

Nota Bene

Out of the 24 poets in our Summer Edition, 16 are women, highlighting POETiCA REViEW'S varied readership, and continuing commitment to our [Mission Statement](#) to give voice to those who are traditionally marginalised in our society.

POETiCA REViEW
For the many, not just the few

John Yamrus 5 poems

sooner or later

it
catches up with you.

no matter
how well
you run the race,

it catches up with you.

and you're left
standing alone,
blindfolded,
with your back
against the wall

as the guy
at the other end of the yard
starts counting down...

"Ready..."

the only thing that matters
as he continues
to count...

"Aim..."

the only thing in the world
that's left to you
is to hold your head
high
and face
the

"Fire!"

Martin accused me

of
stealing
my lines.

i told him
don't fuck with me, little boy.

you
bit off
more than
you can chew.

every time
you tell
a lie

about
me,

i'll tell
the truth
about you.

i haven't
heard a word
from him since.

contrary

to
popular opinion,

the
internet

has ruined
poetry

for
the world.

it
has fooled

too many
people

into
thinking

they
can do

this.

it was

just
another instance
of good plans gone bad.

it
didn't surprise him.

right
from the starts
he knew it was going to hell.

he'd driven
halfway to her house
behind a truckload of coffins.

he
liked
that line
from *The Great Gatsby*
that read:

“life
is much more
successfully looked at
from a single window.”

he
didn't
understand it,

but,
he liked it.

he felt that
everyone should have a motto.

that
was his.

anyway,
when he got to her house,
she was already
gone.

she

finally
followed thru
on her threat to leave.

before he left,
he kicked in the back door,

walked
into the kitchen

and
looked out
a single window.

he looked at me and

asked;
“in your writing,
don’t you even *care*
about musicality?”

you
could feel
the sarcasm and hate
coming out of
his pores.

it was
live television
and what i should
have done
was taken a leak
on his desk,

but
i just sat there,
and stared at him,
enjoying the moment.

letting him
squirm.

it was
one of the few questions
he asked during the interview
and it didn’t even deserve an answer.

after that,
he shut down completely,
and i finished the interview alone,
reading my poems
right into the camera.

it was all
quite dramatic, and
i enjoyed it.

there’s something
really good about being hated.

it’s

as real as rain.

when it was over,
he left,
immediately,
and i drove home,
with the radio turned off,

more than content to
listen to the sound
of distant
thunder.

Susan Jo Russell 1 poem

Red Paint in a Paper Cup

He cocked his arm, drew it back,
 hurled the cup, the liquid
 starting to separate, to stream out
 into the air, to cross the space
 between him and me

and in that second when
 all the motion in the classroom stopped
before the edge of the red wave
 grazed my fresh white blouse
before the wet smack

on the linoleum behind me
 and the collective gasp,
before his face shut down
 into the blankness of a wall
our eyes locked

and I saw his shock, that he hadn't meant to let it fly
 in my direction, but only to make a mess,
to splatter out his helplessness
 against the barbs and smirks
that jab your skin

day after day, that if instead he could reverse
 the film, hold the cup again,
raise the brush, he could fill the easel with such blooms,
 such sparks and fireworks
in bursts of red.

John L. Stanizzi 1 poem



CONSIDERING TAGGING

1

"There's so much there,"
I thought,
standing in front of the abused wall.
"What more could we possibly wish for
than the entire background?
What could I possibly add?"

2

Staring at the wall,
her last breath charging toward her,
she said, "That's so interesting. I'll go there,"
pointing up at
the far-left corner of the wall.

And the next moment
she was gone.

3

I held the can of spray paint,
my finger on the nozzle

"Here is the entire background.
Why paint over something
so immense, so filled with erudition,"
I said to myself,
snapping the cap back onto the can
and walked away.

Marcia J. Pradzinski 1 poem

Father

I was scrambling eggs
while you were dying

you floated away
in a fog I try to penetrate

I see only
splinters of your life

you roll corn silk cigarettes

your belt-waving mother chases you in the prairie

you work for years as a house painter

you tickle my fingers on a sunny Sunday morning

even in sleep I can't let go

you squeeze my hand at the lakefront on a Sunday afternoon

your sweat mingles with the paint in stranger's houses

your mother searches for you among the prairie cattails

you smoke corn silk rolled in newspaper strips

splinters are all I have left
after you faded

into a fog
while I was scrambling eggs

Steven P. Gehrke 1 poem

Inheritance

Not the milk or the electric birds,
not your pulse of Tylenol
and prayer, not the shaman
of your mother's face,
not the peasant angels dragging
sulfur through your veins,
not the cage of sparrows in your radio,
not the roses that died each night
on your mother's robe when she turned
the light off in your room,
not our love or our fear of death,
not the three of us on your bed
with popsicles, bright as rescue
flares, melting in our hands,
could keep you from screaming
when your fever broke. You, who
had risen from the swamps
of our coupling, who had climbed
alone through the zero of the world,
woke to find your nightmares
clinging to the sheets, an incision
in the pillow case, your animals
masked and menacing, so that
for two nights we slept with
the light on in your room,
and still you woke asking, what
is that thing, what is that is that thing,
your fear lit by fever or, worse,
nicked into the chromosomes
by a father who feels terror
burning, always, like a pilot light
inside of him, who stood for weeks
once in the hallucinating dark,
fear inside of him like a colony
of ants. What does it amount to,
my hypochondria, the anti-
psychotic bitter on my tongue,

my fear of losing you? Must this
be your inheritance, too, this ghost-
mottled room, that particle of death
in your finery of nerves?
I'd like to pick, from you, all my
little agonies, as once, when
you were better, we chiseled the bones
of dinosaurs from a block of clay,
the two of us working together,
I couldn't help but think, like nurses
digging shrapnel from a soldier's knee,
your fingers stained blood-bright, the meager
offering of bones piled before us,
like those bits of me marrowing in you,
not just my anxieties, but these words
like flakes of charcoal laid upon
your tongue: *sleep, love. Take*
your medicine. The only ghosts are
the ones we've always been. Truth is foul.
But it sucks the poisons from the blood.

Karol Nielson 2 poems

SHAKESPEARE'S GARDEN

I sat on a bench, raw logs,
shaved clean almost
in Shakespeare's Garden.
The magnolias were bursting,
and the cherries,
and Japanese plum.
A photographer
held his lens high to
the pink, white, and purple buds,
snapping, looking,
snapping. Across the
sky, the apartment towers
looked grand,
like church steeples,
graceful, gothic spires.
And I thought of you,
painting this scene,
like we used to do.

THE WRITING LIFE

I write a few lines
and feel the calm
of a practiced monk.
But too long away
I am the worst sort of
neurotic—incessant.

Imran Boe Khan 1 poem

I did not search for the body

What use is noticing a new colour of hair
on your bedsheets if I cannot bear
to watch the wave
of your guilt approaching?
All lovers must learn to lean into something
other than a kiss.
I lose so much of the world's beauty with each thought
formed beyond a revelation.
When does the next body on our bed sheets
count as overcrowding?
You must have known that your every action
would be a preamble to an epiphany
I won't record. Always, there has been this
jostling with faceless lovers,
a fierce reality carrying its things into our bedroom,
another simple urge to not see too much
of the truth I have nightly slept upon.

Shai Afsai 1 poem

Another Chance

Soundlessly, Hermes and Eurydice return to Hades
across from RISD Museum.
Orpheus, naked and aghast,
left hand gripping his lyre,
gasps in open-mouthed horror
as she departs
and he loses her a second time.
They move in bronze
on Benefit St.,
atop a sloping palm frond.
For the entrance to the underworld
is in Providence,
near a place Lovecraft, forlorn,
walked shivering at night,
not far from the granite Athenaeum library
where Poe courted the poet Sarah Helen Whitman
and borrowed *Stanley: Or, Recollections of a Man of the World*.
Yes, in the capital of the smallest state,
whose smallness
seems now to make its residents' minds small too,
lies passage to the abode of those
who have passed from this world.
You are surprised?
Well, now you also know this secret.
If one walks in the cold
between midnight and dawn,
it is still possible to stand lonesome in that spot,
to watch the three faintly lit figures move,
and to remember:
bad things happen when we look back.

Joshua Calladine-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.

Lara Dolphin 4 poems

December 14

Oh mother, mother, where is happiness?
My quondam dreams are shot to hell.
I grow old though pleased with my memories
I have a lot of edges called Perhaps
I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,
There is always something to be made of pain
I stand in the cold kitchen, everything wonderful around me.
In casual simplicity--
Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
But one day, I know,
it will be otherwise.

Zeugma Rising

for amanda

four years later we arrive
in the month of Janus
god of beginnings,
transitions and time
millions spent, troops at the ready
from Watts to Washington you came
first National Youth Poet Laureate
wearing Prada and purpose
expressing your words
expressing our dreams
stepping into the moment
stepping into the sunlight

“Pretend It’s A Meal”

Let’s get lunch at the little Italian place
that used to be the other little Italian place
before it closed, the one across from the bank
we’ll practice our Italian Pranziamo!
the music (a Boccherini minuet then “Mambo Italiano”)
inspires us to mix it up
why not try the prosciutto crudo and Fiori di zucca to start
per il primo piatto I’ll order gnocchi you order
parmigiana di melanzane and we’ll share
we’ll pay for sparkling water
because real Italians don’t drink tap
for the second course you get the lamb
I’ll get the sea bass and we’ll take our salads
after we’re already full
but not too full for tiramisu and cannoli
then we’ll sip espresso just two womxn
dreaming of hidden delights in faraway cities.

“I Am Captain Of Nothing”

Nelson Mandela, I marvel at you today
as I race from the car after a twelve-hour shift
kicking off clodhoppers, pulling off sweated socks
peeling compression hose, scrubs, then underscrubs
tossing every bit that covers me into the wash
I cannot stand to be one moment more kept in these clothes
darting past windows and prying neighbors' eyes
I race up the stairs to shower off the day
after twenty seven years a prisoner
you asked for a week to prepare for freedom
if that is not mastery, I do not know what is

Petra F. Bagnardi 3 poems

The First Cinema

Mr Lumière fell into a hole while he was taking a stroll.
Down he rushed along with dirt and sunbeams;
until he found himself in a proper cave, enchanted
and sculpted with the long work of a secret river.
The light that had accompanied his descent created dramas
along high walls, and the brilliant shadows shivered.
A train entered a station, while workers left a factory.
Murky balloons rose above the Grand Canal in Venice.
Then bricks collapsed into dust at sixteen frames per second.
The dark images moved and chased the hidden stream.
Mr Lumière panicked and ran through depths of field,
then froze amid crowds in a city, and projections of real life.
Fear turned into amazement, for a new form of art
was taking shape in his crazy head: Cinema

Believe What You See

You invite me to step into a dim theater and ask me to suspend my disbelief.

There's no stage before me, but a white screen.

I'm seated on soft velvet and feel expectant.

The feeble lights go out and I'm plunged in darkness.

A suspenseful silence and then –

Exterior, day – a man sings in the rain.

Interior, night – the usual suspects are gathered by a detective.

Cut to – a pretty woman screaming in the shower.

Flashback to a cloud slicing the moon and a knife trailing blood along an eye.

Sounds so close and so loud – inhaling, exhaling, the burning of a cigarette.

Hearts beating as loud as drums.

Establishing shot – a beach and a breathless boy running toward the camera.

Fade out.

Believe what you see until the end credits.

You're my first love, therefore I dream.

The Forgotten Muses

Exterior, day, establishing shot –

the Muses wander the earth, searching for traces of their vanished sisters.

They softly graze the minds of women, children and men.

They seek the whispers of actors, playwrights and movie makers;

they perceive the seeds of scientists, poets and painters.

In their golden wake they leave inspiration, even as their mystical hearts despair.

Cut to – a few years before.

A few despots fear the whimsical and unconventional ways of performers and directors:

Story-creators! Truth-finders! Light-producers!

Hence, they crush the temples where their Muses thrive.

The smoke and debris fade to –

the ruins of theatres leaning tiredly on the softness of hills; scattered gems amid the grasses;

fragments of a script like languishing petals.

The remains of cinemas shelter clever cats and stray men,

who make peculiar pillows of the tools of their lost art.

Cut to – a garden bathed in sunlight,

where a teacher urges her students to suspend their disbelief;

while she tells them about brave heroes and fantastical journeys, the turf becomes a stage,

and the trees stretch their branches and transform into curtains.

A new murmur reverberates off the skies, the oceans, the continents;

it teases the souls of the slumbering film makers within their shattered churches.

They awaken and grab their cameras to join the returned comedians amid the stones.

Upon the white screens, a montage of images shows the despots – they stand silent and afraid.

Cut to –

the Muses find anew the sparks of their forgotten sisters: Theatre and Cinema.

Fade out.

Rachel Alberti 3 poems

in the beginning

in the beginning, we bloomed like two sunflowers -
radiant, golden energy flowing about like
nothing else mattered, like
the soil we grew in was pure,
untouched.

in the beginning, we laughed with the stars,
our eyes shining brighter and brighter with
every passing moment.

but, with the good must come the bad, and eventually
that rainstorm did come;
it swallowed you up in it's powerful rage, washing away
all of our hopes and dreams for the future.
i was taken in by that storm -
i was put under a rooftop of hope, as though maybe
I would be cared for again.
but no innocent flower can survive a storm like this one.

for the entire time i thought i was safe, i turned out to be wrong -
i noticed drops of water coming through the cracks, and i noticed
that the storm was more unstable than i thought.
all i wanted was to see the sun again,
to become capable of growing strong,
but it was those times where the rain would come down harder, pushing me
farther into the ground.

every storm passes eventually -
i just didn't know this one would last this long.
as the rain cleared, i raised my head,
crossing my leaves and hoping
that this storm would be the last.
i miss how things were in the beginning.

thanks to the toxic

thanks to the toxic
for even though
you left me with a bruised soul,
you taught me how to be
better.
you taught me to treat people
kindly,
because i know how it feels
to not be respected.
you taught me how to be
responsible on my own;
i don't need you controlling my life anymore.
you taught me to not only
look out for others, but to
take care of myself first - truthfully,
i became sick of being your caretaker.
you taught me how to listen
to people's thoughts; for
intentions can be lost when things get heated.

thanks to the toxic
for bringing out the best
and the worst in me, and for
allowing me to find the strength to carry on
without you.

STARS

I looked up at my ceiling
In the dark when I couldn't sleep.
It's not the same as it is at home,
Where when I let my gaze rise up,
I take in the sight of a whole galaxy of stars -
The plastic ones, of course, that glow in the dark;
the ones that my parents helped me stick up there
when I was 8.
But they were stars nonetheless.
Small, big, every size in between; if I squinted, it would
almost create the same range of
distance I would see if I were outside.

It's not the same, and it almost saddened me,
Knowing that I would be away from those stars for a while.
But I quickly realized that I did not need those stars to guide me,
Not as much as I thought I would, even
As much as I missed them in that moment.
I turned my head to look out of my new window,
One of two that are in the bedroom I now call home.
I can see the sky from this angle.
And among that sky is an unfathomable amount of stars,
Bright beautiful ones that I could never compare to the store-bought
Flickering stickers of joy from my childhood.

These stars will stick with me forever.
Perhaps some will come and go, but there are millions upon billions of them,
And they will always be there when I look up.

I learned to appreciate the stars a lot more tonight.

Clare O'Brien 3 poems

BLIND MINOTAUR

after *Blind Minotaur Led By A Girl Through The Night* by Pablo Picasso



bruised as a crippled tree he walks,
rolling like an apple on the turn. He lurches forward,
groping with a broken branch. The sailors watch
him, unconcerned. He is no threat to them. He lifts
his muzzle to the sky and howls.

and once upon a time,
he ruled the maze of earth and fire, the place
where songs would sing themselves. He was an idol then,
golden-horned and galloping, his black eyes full of stars.
This waterline was his.

She cares for all that he has lost,

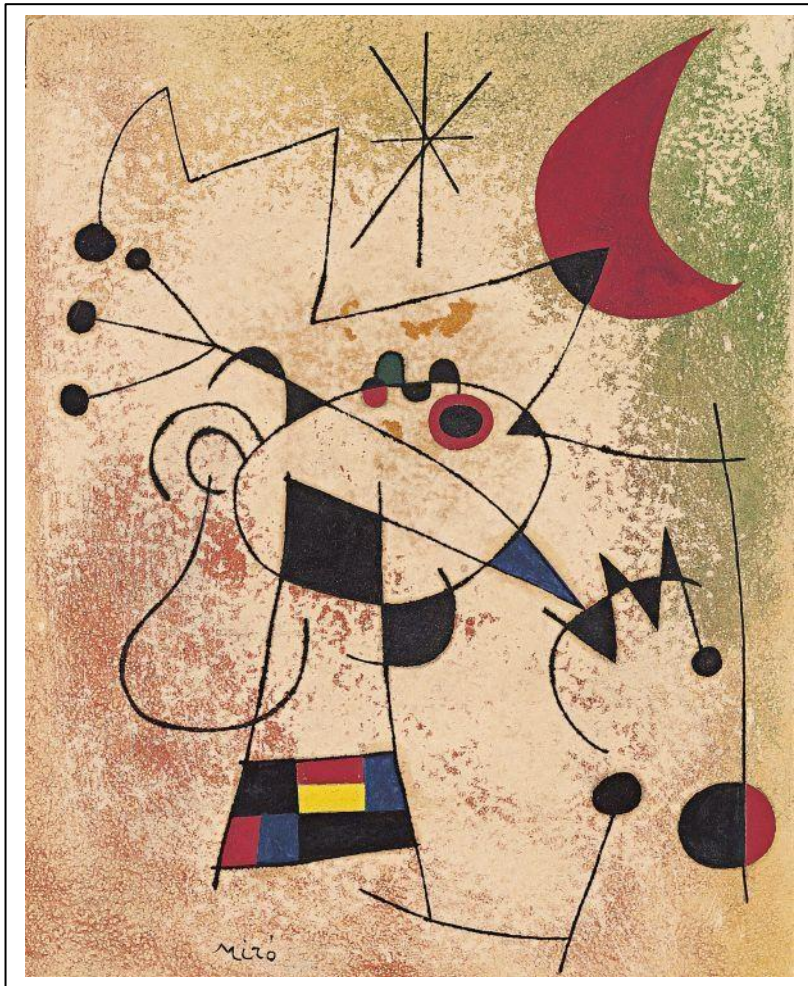
safe inside the bosom of her bird. Her feet move forward
but her head looks back, down the road that they have walked.
She knows they will not go that way again. She stays because
besides her dove, he has so little left.

Tonight they'll rest, in whatever place
will take exhausted myths. She'll cover him with straw and listen
while he croaks his songs of sacrifice and loss. Sometimes he
calls his mother's name, or sadly counts the lives he missed,
the ones that made it out.

That world has gone: his horns and hooves
have nothing left to kill. She leads him past the watching eyes,
the silent scorn of those who never heard him roar. His memories
are ravenous, hollowing his bones. His hide sets hard. His muscles
cramp. It will not be long now.

THE POINT OF LIGHT IS SEEING

after *The Lightning Bird Blinded by Moonfire* by Joan Miró



The full moon birthed the lightning bird
A foolish age ago when she was young.

She waxes bright through occult study,
Her slow phases shifting like machinery.

When his sudden dazzle splits her skin,
she snuffs his light with talk of lunacy.

She knows he'll drink deep from her well.
Moonshine means blindness, even for birds.

INCURSION

After Indietro by Marc Alan Di Martino



He can't believe his luck. If time is layered, then some careless mage
has ripped away tomorrow. Eternity stands open to his smile, his
appetite for mischief. He picks his way past tattered gift wrap, through
posters, news and ads, overleaps the wrinkled centuries. He moves
with ease, his robes abandoned for knock-off Nikes, renaissance curls
shaved close. Hooded and tooled, he soaks into the night. This wild
new world is kind to him. Within a week, he's pecking at his phone.
He ducks and dives, king among urchins. One day, he'll rule these streets.

Sona Simonian 3 poems

00:32 anxiety

a quiet meadow wheat field in front of me

my heart tightens, it is difficult to breathe
(engulf me, embrace me, call me)
and i still struggle to

/ stab stab stab /

the walls in my bedroom are spinning
heavy hands and a / severed spine /
choke me unexpectedly

the darkness creeps closer to me, me
my throat is crushed, my lungs deplete
'this must be what anxiety feels like'

(carry me away towards that
toxic childhood fantasy)

the almost empty lily pond in the field only
has the carcass of a dove floating in it

i walk through it and bathe in the smell
of the rotting flesh / my soul now left
to swerve the yellow greenery

disgusting wetness clings on to me as i
finally bolt away from my fever dream

(only to find out that it was a
slice of what is now reality)

jump out of the window

& enter the void where
we are all mermaids,
where coffee is like
a glorified egg,
a place where giggles
smell like a sign
of pure madness,
where mullet green eyes
follow you through
a cloudless sky.

let the acetone be
your element of nature,
watch the pigeons call
for striped socks,
embrace the questionable
colors of dopamine
while the fairy
lights dance around
our rotten tails.

Rachel J Fenton 1 poems

I Saw Roy Orbison on a Bag of Microwave Popcorn

I saw Joan Collins in the sheet
just before you climbed into bed
with me, she kissed your arse.

Too cloudy to see Saturn
mithering Jupiter to form a Bethlehem
Star, you didn't need to go to Mt John

Observatory to witness rare celestial events.
I didn't meet Janet Frame on the corner
of Princes and Victoria, tell her I'm a writer,

watch her scurry towards Frank Sargeson's
Sheds, or see her in a supermarket
in Avondale, like you did. Earthly

conjunctions do as well. I've seen a sun dog,
which is a rainbow ball
formed when sunlight refracts through ice

particles in the clouds, and I saw Roy Orbison
on a bag of Act II microwave oven popcorn
once. I took a photograph,

like Mick Jagger in a hot pool,
posted it on Basefuck.
The Shroud's a Middle Age fake

as theorised by a bishop in the 1300s.
Scientists say the dead man was alive,
his arms up inside the bloody blanket.

Corey Hill 1 poem

I Reject

I reject your unlikeable face
And all your not pleasant teeth
Your too touching fingers and
The things you are
All the time saying

I reject the calculations
The looming odds of implosion
Fie to your certainty of breakage
Love dying, dwindling to crap
And the abject situation

I reject all that is ugly in us
Boor suckling slurps away
No more grotesque, dull
I won't slop here
I won't be one of the uninterested

I reject all that is not the star diamond
That is not the tickle of clouds
The graze of an unknown giant
The smell of baby
And laughing with people who are good

Kate Meyer-Currey 4 poems

Infinitesimal (1-3)

Proverbial (1)

Right place
Wrong time
He said
She said
Something
Nothing
No smoke
Without fire

Minefield (2)

Our minds sparked
I breathe smoke
You spit fire
We could self-detonate
A ticking time-bomb
But that's a minefield:
It's lucky we are
Oxygen-starved.

Standby (3)

Hearts are batteries
Waiting on standby;
With latent power
On silent charge
Ready to blow fuses.

Dregs

Indebted to
This grey zone
Of existence
We are both
Confined here
Prisoners of
Circumstance:
I am gatekeeper
To his closed world.
Evidence survives
That we are
Still people
Our proof is
Exhibit A:
One paper
Coffee cup
Offered by
A gentleman
Robbed of powers;
To hold doors,
Lend his coat
Or light a cigarette
At his personal best
When we both
Know his worst:
In this sharing
Giver takes back
All he has lost
In his captivity.
Manners make
This man; he sees
Beyond the uniform
Just as one sip
Of lukewarm coffee
Is not Koolaid.

Ian Ganassi 2 poems

TIME IS UP

The first city was more broken than the last.

Do you know the way? That's the way.

Do you know the why? The universe couldn't give a shit.

You're not the only one paying dues, but then again,

The woman in the window won't stop.
The quarter in the meter won't drop.

As though having been visited by fear of a vacuum.

Hi, I'm the blackbird of death,
And my name is Legion. How predictable.

Does time take itself too seriously?
Digging in the graveyard for a familiar skull?
Body snatchers for a few dollars more?

The Grand Instructor told us not to ask too many questions,
The bill of goods for what we were sold.

But let's not spoil a good walk with a lawn club.

Taking a long time to come to bad decisions was the way
It worked, and the intention to be a better citizen,

To be like the Grand Instructor,
RIP and a happy childhood.

What did you intend? What citizen?

Marionettes which love handles,
By which time it's too late and too hot.

It's not a ship you can jump, like a rat, for instance.

She ferreted out your number. You know you know my name.

NO NEWS AND BAD NEWS

Give me the high sign when you hoist the sails,
As if we were going anywhere.

No matter how far you get,
You won't get any farther.

And the convolutions of the ampersand
Repeat on themselves like a clef sign.

Quite like a clef sign actually,
You would confuse them in the dark.

I understand it is beyond my understanding anyhow.

But can I be blamed for my enthusiasm?

At least you're being read.
Large red man
Soaking his feet in Epsom salts.

No, no, no one has gone for the machete,
Whether or not they would have liked to,

"Back in the day."

Yes, there is a back in the day.
It reflects the day like a mirror reflects
A newspaper.

But the past never quite
Lives up to its reputation,

It just sits there getting yellow,
Digitally, even.

Time takes the hill at a quick march;

Resistance is futile,
And it's no good trying to run.

Jim Brosnan 2 poems

Vanishing Memories

for George H. Letendre (1947-2018)

Before darkness falls
we are left
with the inspiration
of Sixties songs,
melodies he played
on guitar
as a youth.
Today, we return
with fond memories
and deep sorrow
for the loss
of autumn
on this blustery
evening
where we
hear whispers
under soft streaks
of moonlight
as he examines
star maps
in this landscape
of quiet desires.
If now we met
in dark evening
dreams, we would
sing in harmony
with tomorrow's wind.

Now That Years Separate Us

Not far off I-494
our legs dangled
from the fourth
floor fire escape
of the Fair Oaks
apartments—
a vista overlooking
the Sunrise Bank's
roof, the intersection
where pickups
and SUV's pass
Sarpino's Pizzeria.
We held hands,
shared whispers,
and drank from
the same shared
bottle of Pepsi.
This morning
I awaken with this
last memory of you.

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.

George Freek 1 poem

THE SHELTERING SKY (After Su Tung Po)

The sky is like a table
I am hiding under,
a table made of glass.
Clouds drift through its cracks.
Night arrives and the day
is lost. A star flickers.
It's what we're made of.
But it sees nothing.
It knows no desires.
Soon it will burn to ashes.
It does what it was
meant to do. It rises.
It flickers, and it dies.
I was only meant,
it seems, to wonder why.

Judith Borenin 2 poems

Possession Is Nine Tenths Of the Law

The sun is too loud. It
shrieks inside my veins

slicing through unguarded
cracks in shuttered blinds.

On the windowpane its
ripples shatter in pools

of liquid light. Days pass
like shards of glass

embedded in bare feet
pacing unswept rooms. I

traverse undercurrents by
osmosis – hearing looming

gestures behind my back
before they strike. I feel

the bite of razor teeth
before they're unsheathed

behind a smile. Unsettled
as the air around me –

dark shapes scrape past
peripheries of sight and

vanish on phantom winds.
I am boarded like a bus

by homeless augurs and
portents – their back packs

bulging with catastrophes -
in this besieged body
occupied by strangers.

Beneath A Blue Contusion With the Sky Under It

A bruised roof
of rain. It begins again.

The soft fall of
its patter upon an open

palm. The unspanable
distance of it all

as it traces its shadowless
path through the darkness.

Unless the rain
itself is only a shadow of

what lies above –
cloaked and moving closer.

Lift an extended finger to
detect the direction of its

coming as if testing
the moment for an exhaled

drift of wind.
Numbered days – capricious

seconds and now
this illumined instant - waking

upright in the night
teetering like a startled glass

upon a shelf – while
it taps insistent at the window

pane. Take a deep
breath. It may yet pass.

Sorayya Moss 3 poems

The Wind Has Feathers That Bind the Virgin

The wild horses are brought to slaughter,
And today we celebrate the moon and her shadows.
I have taken to the weeds in the garden,
And am letting them choke my dahlia.
But she has come from miles away,
And old age is the feather floating in the mist of rivers.

I have seen her, today.
And written on her forehead is the number of the beast.

Holland, Michigan

We brought food to the beach on a cool, wet, day.
And I looked at your eyes for the last time, maybe.
And your hair, blowing in the wind.
The feathers are blowing by the sea, by the sea.
They are white down of wind and rain.
And I will place sand on my feet,
Your ashes the remnants of a fossil.
And the meteorite has whizzed past the field and the dunes and the lost canyon of Holland.

Dawn Has Come Again, With Its Horrible Promise

Open my door.

The disease is getting out.

Eduardo is listening by the garage where he smokes his last cigarette again.

I have bewailed the fate of a daughter.

And the death of a moon and the death of a sun.

Without their dance, I'm a feather

In the breeze, alive after I've been shed by the creature of dawn.

Anne Christine Tabakaa 2 poems

At Seventeen

In the heat of summer,
 she toils
under a single rusted fan.
Blade chirping away while orange flecks
 rain down - blanketing all,
adhering to the salty sea that trickles from her brow,
 flowing between her breasts.

Clickety-clack of a dozen sewing machines
 drown out a distant radio
 tuned to unrecognizable music.

She coughs,
 inhaling rust and fumes.
Thread-bare masks do no good.
She fears for the child she carries,
 tiny movements barely perceptible.
She hides her shame – fearing loss of work.
The few pesos she earns
 she needs to feed her family.

At seventeen,
 she dreams of a life far away.
Sunshine and fresh air.
She has read that such places do exist.
She stands to shake rust and dirt
 from her sweat-laden dress.

As she walks outside,
she knows tomorrow will be the same,
 and the day after,
 and the day after that.
As it was for her madre,
 and her abuela before her.
Hoping beyond hope – her daughter can escape
 such a life.
She stops looking up,
 stares into the setting sun,
with a whisper of hope upon her breath.

Slowly Exhaling Evil

The dream becomes a nightmare before my blood-shot eyes.
Startled, I awake to ugly reality, drowning in a pool of fear.

Once lush green meadows, trampled underfoot by hate.
Now lay torn open as battle fields of blood.
The hungry wolves of war shall have their way.

Hope melting like a late spring thaw,
soon to evaporate from the heat of an unrelenting fear
Anguish has built its wall for so long; it seethes inside me.

Shut inside, trapped, we pray for some small seed of normalcy.
Weeks pass into months. A year now stands its ground.
How did it ever come to this?

I go to the door, opening it wide
Slowly exhaling evil, I walk outside once more,
witnessing hope shining bright above the clouds.

Clara Roberts 1 poem

High Moment

I remember him,
 crashing into my red car—
And nothing could fix
 the love
That was swiftly killing us.

Elijah Giuliano 3 poems

Libraries

Every night donkeys ate the dirt, slowly exposing a fuckmop of roots like the ghostly veins of a twink's cock loading on dial-up internet. Tour guide operators lounged upon the constipated beanie bags of donkeys and sucked urban blight from their sooty snowstorm tails. They envisioned future libraries: dark premium octavo roast covers, across which squid letters would swim the acrostic of unspoken love

Phonograph

Your thigh was slit with blind-split light, like sticky notes shoved into the gills of a fishbox. The man behind the slot ate my money, ineptly skewering dollar bills with a spork, before swallowing the coins like lies. The sun had broken its yolk on donkeybacks, so we waited for sullen cooks to beat us to sleep with fat spatulas of rain. The crystalline aqueducts of ravaged Indiana bore me only the outdated appliances of your internal organs.

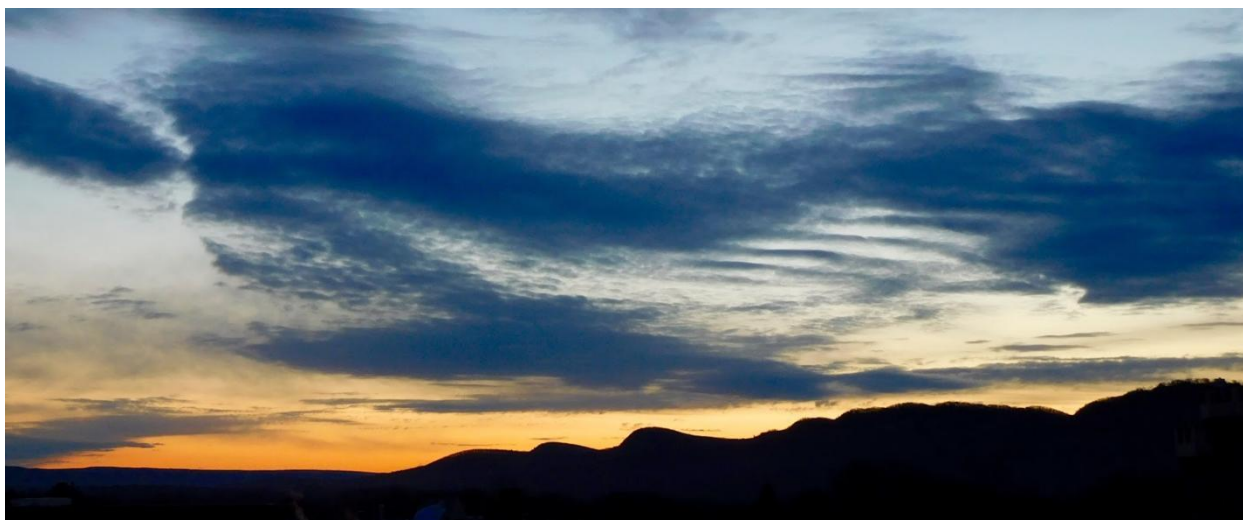
Schwesterlein

A vagina cleft her chest, its lips falling and folding upon one another like the playful waves of the pillow-fighting sea. From her heart thrust a garish tongue-- a snapchat dog filter's inverted heartfruit.

Sara Eddy 3 poems

In a Valley

people know their skies
with an intimacy nearly lewd:
safety-pinned to the mountains
they settle down over us
like a blanket fort--
they reach down to us,
caress us, go along with us.
Clouds descend daily
to stroke our cheeks,
settling like a mantle
on our shoulders.
More than a subtle flirtation,
this is love, the love of the lid
for the jar, of the vault
for the money, of the skin
for the bones. Does it
change us? On the Great Plains
the sky performs the arc
of parallelism, extending
endlessly in line with the earth
but infinitely never touching--
an austere and loveless bond.
But here in my valley
I lie down with cumulus,
I let it consume me,
I keep it company.



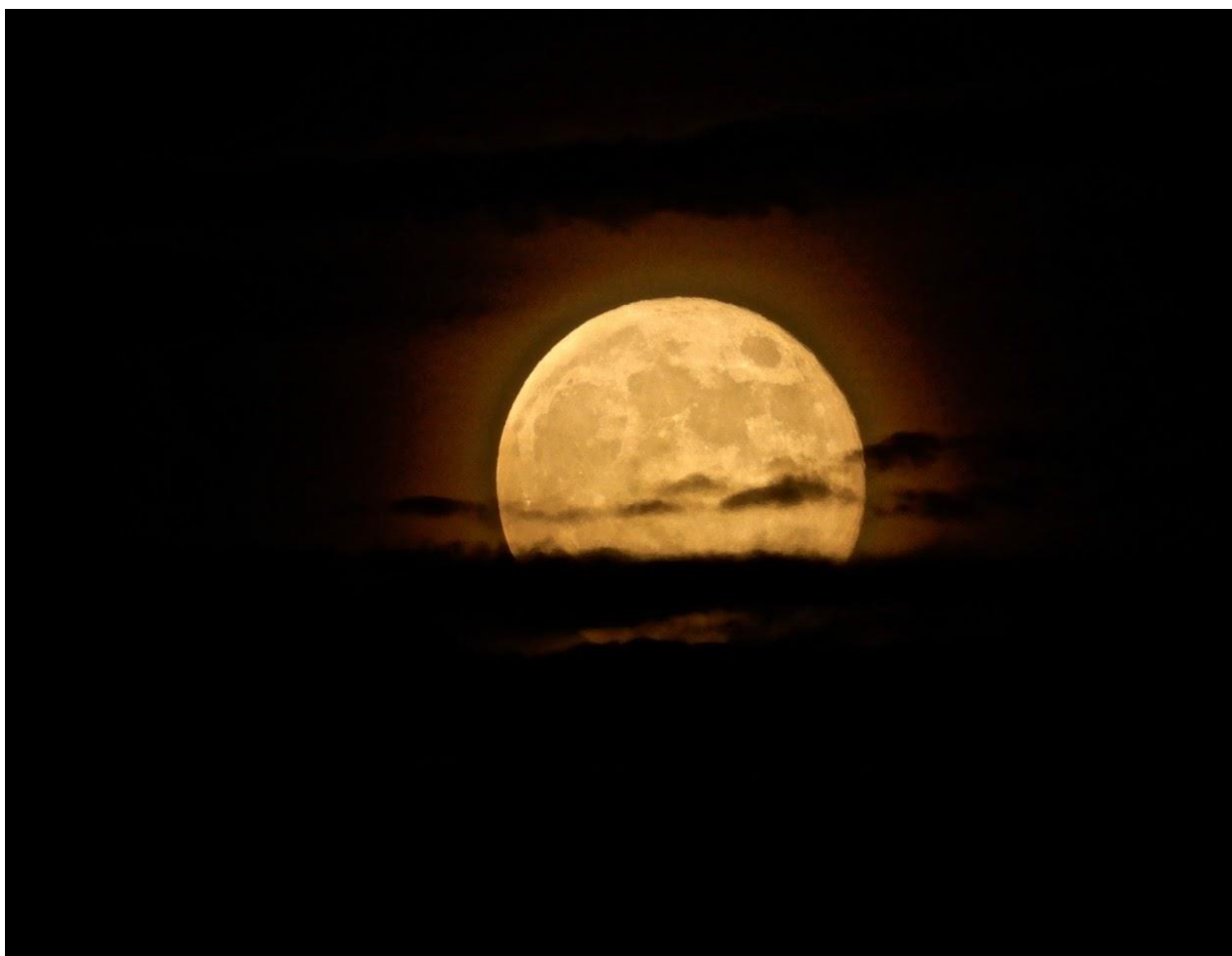
Skinnydipping

Slippery Dip,
that subtle spring,
it froze my toes,
while the sun put
its fingers to my scalp.
My friend took me there
and stripped to her cool white skin;
I tried not to look, but
she glowed in the summer sun.
People swam and picked
along the bank, some beautiful,
some pimpled, full-chested,
broad-hipped, all the kinds
of bodies, frightened and new.
And finally inevitably
a perfect young man fearless
on a rock across the stream.
My eye pulled down
the dark path of his body
to his toes, curled like a child's
on the lip of the rock.
Life is unending glory.
I turned my sight inward,
I thought only of the sun,
the water, that frightening rush,
and I stepped out of my skirt.



Luna

We kiss again
and I drive away
woozy through dark streets
overhung with sensate
trees and I feel
snakes and possums
watching me
from the gulleys.
The pavement hisses
at my tires, and I hold
my breath to listen.
Over the hill
at my little house
up comes the moon
full and obscene
she rises up
from my belly
into my chest
my ribs expand
and begin to crack
my heart is crowded out
my belly cramped.
The pain is exquisite;
I am undone,
I have so much to do.



All photos by Dominique

Jim Brosnan 2 poems

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hear whispers
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as he examines
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our legs dangled
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where pickups
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We held hands,
shared whispers,
and drank from
the same shared
bottle of Pepsi.
This morning
I awaken with this
last memory of you.

Mark A. Murphy 2 poems

The Aspiring Utopian

*We are developing a new set of principles for the world
out of an old set of principles for the world.*

Karl Marx

Unless you experience knower
and known
as a kind of rebellion

against failure, you cannot know
what it means to be
at loggerheads

with wife, children,
and the institutionalised cruelty
that lays a man low,

as if all he believed in, or fought
for, was irrelevant,
like a dog's bereavement,

the buried bone,
or the criterial bleed
forgotten

in the fullness of a lifetime.

Thesis on Demuth

for Nora

i.

It is said that Frau Demuth is illiterate.
She has a bastard son,
and no means
with which to support him.

It is said that Frau Demuth is a goose.
She has no education,
beyond nursing
the sick, tending house, and serving.

ii.

If you watch her, as she peels
potatoes, sweeps
the bare boards, plays chess,
or launders the infants' worn-out linens,
you will observe a woman
who looks at life without blinking.
A woman who looks
to no man for crumbs of approval.

A woman who knows all the arts
of forbearance. A woman under fire,
under siege, under the weather.
A woman at the end of time
under no illusions, only understood

by her SILENCE,

worn like a Boadicea Cameo,
for solace, truth,
change, for a SON she cannot raise.

iii.

If you meet Frau Demuth,
if you are lucky enough to hold her eye
for more than a few seconds,
she will draw your pain and join it
to her own, before kicking it
into the dustbin of our mutual sorrows.

If you EMBRACE her good natured welcome
as an outcrop of rock in a sea
of storms, you will see the crack
in the door, opening the floodgates
to the freedom for each, to the freedom
for ALL.

iv.

Rarely seen, or even talked about
in polite society, Frau Helene, bids farewell
to the Commune DEAD, gathers
the unsung heroes, connecting fallen
to FALLEN. No poor fish,
or simpleton, our Green Tara

WEEPS

brutal tears, tears of love and hate,
tears embodying ~~LA SIÈCLE DES LUMIÈRES~~
whilst baking potatoes, fetching
and carrying, wine, water, scraps of lard,

discussing the intimate nature of betrayal,
and the essential goodness
of ~~WOMAN~~, in the long history of ascent,
from forest and marsh, to the age
of MACHINE MAN.

Contributors

John Yamrus is widely published in magazines around the world. His poems have been taught at both the high school and the college level and selections of his work have been translated into several languages, including Spanish, Swedish, Italian, French, Japanese and Romanian. His work has been described by the great Milner Place as "...a blade made from smooth honest steel, with the sharpest of edges."

Susan Jo Russell is a mathematics educator from Somerville, MA. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Bellingham Review*, *Chautauqua*, *Cider Press Review*, *The Comstock Review*, *Leon*, *Passager*, *Slant*, and elsewhere, and she has twice been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her poem, "Tree," won the 2018 Amy Lowell Prize from the New England Poetry Club. Her chapbook, *We Are Not Entirely Abandoned*, is published by Finishing Line Press. She co-directs the Brookline (MA) Poetry Series.

John L. Stanizzi is author of the collections *Ecstasy Among Ghosts*, *Sleepwalking*, *Dance Against the Wall*, *After the Bell*, *Hallelujah Time!*, *High Tide – Ebb Tide*, *Four Bits*, *Chants*, and *Sundowning*, and *POND*, published by "impsired" in England. John's poems have been widely published -- *Praxis*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Cortland Review*, *American Life in Poetry*, *The New York Quarterly*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *The Caribbean Writer*, *Blue Mountain Review*, *Rust + Moth*, *Tar River*, *Poetlore*, *Rattle*, *Hawk & Handsaw*, and many others. He has been translated into Italian and appeared in *El Ghibli*, *The Journal of Italian Translations Bonafini*, *Poetarium*, and others. His nonfiction has been in *Stone Coast Review*, *Ovunque Siamo*, *Adelaide*, *Scarlet Leaf*, *Literature and Belief*, *Evening Street*, *Praxis*, and others. A former New England Poet of the Year, and Wesleyan University Etherington Scholar, John teaches literature at Manchester Community College in Manchester, CT and he lives with his wife, Carol, in Coventry. <https://www.johnstanizzi.com>.

Marcia J. Pradzinski, the author of *Left Behind* published by *Finishing Line Press*, lives in Skokie, Illinois. Her poems have appeared in print journals, anthologies, and online websites. Recent and forthcoming publications include *Sonic Boom*, *Pen2Paper*, *Your Daily Poem*, *The Origami Poems Project*, *Aeolian Harp Anthology 6* of *Glass Lyre Press*, and *Writing in a Woman's Voice*. She credits Plumb Line Poets, her cadre of sister poets, for helping her stay productive and accountable.

Steve Gehrke has published three books of poetry, including *Michelangelo's Seizure*, which was selected for the National Poetry Series. His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *The Yale Review*, *The Southern Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Georgia Review*, *Crazyhorse* and many others. He teaches at The University of Nevada-Reno.

Karol Nielsen is the author of the memoirs *Black Elephants* (Bison Books, 2011) and *Walking A&P* (Mascot Books, 2018) and the chapbooks *This Woman I Thought I'd Be* (Finishing Line Press, 2012) and *Vietnam Made Me Who I Am* (Finishing Line Press, 2020). Her first memoir was shortlisted for the William Saroyan International Prize for Writing in nonfiction in 2012. Excerpts were honored as notable essays in *The Best American Essays* in 2010 and 2005. Her full poetry collection was a finalist for the Colorado Prize for Poetry in 2007. Her work has appeared in *Epiphany*, *Guernica*, *Lumina*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Permafrost*, *RiverSedge*, and elsewhere. She has taught writing at New York University and New York Writers Workshop.

Imran Boe Khan has recent work appearing, or forthcoming, in places such as the *Rumpus*, *Cosmonauts Avenue*, *Yes, Poetry*, and *Sixth Finch*. A previous winner of the Thomas Hardy Prize, Khan is a lecturer at Bournemouth University, and lives in Christchurch, Dorset.

Shai Afsai (shaiafsai.com) lives in Providence, Rhode Island. In addition to short stories and poems, his recent writing has focused on Benjamin Franklin's influence on Jewish thought and practice, and on the works of the contemporary Dublin author Gerry Mc Donnell. Afsai's writing has been published in *Anthropology Today*, *Journal of the American Revolution*, *Poetica Magazine*, *Review of Rabbinic Judaism*, *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, and *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*.

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.

Lara Dolphin is an attorney, nurse, wife and mom of four amazing kids; she is exhausted and elated most of the time.

Petra F. Bagnardi is a TV screenwriter, and a theater playwright and actress. Writing as Petra March, she won several awards and honors including, The Royal Dragonfly Book Award, The Pacific Book Award, The Readers' Favorite International Book Award, The Literary Classics Seal of Approval. She is also a Library Journal Self-e Select author.

Rachel Alberti is a Creative Media student studying at Champlain College. Writing is a big passion of hers, and she has been doing it for as long as I can remember. When she was younger, she was given a role as an extra in a movie made by her dad's friend, and we've been writing like she is in a movie ever since.

Clare O'Brien lives on the north-west coast of Scotland with her family where she's trying to write her first novel, *Light Switch*. She has yet to publish a poetry collection, but her poems and fiction have appeared in various journals including *Mslexia*, *The Ekphrastic Review*,

Lunate, The Mechanics' Institute Review, The London Reader, Northwords Now and in anthologies from Hedgehog Poetry Press and The Emma Press.

Sona Simonian is a Dutch-born Armenian poet based in Amsterdam. Sona is a former Editor-in-Chief of *Writer's Block Magazine* and considers Eurovision her religion. In the past you could find her haunting museums and plundering bookstores.

Rachel J Fenton is a working-class writer living in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her chapbook *Beerstorming with Charlotte Bronte in New York* is forthcoming from Ette Press in April 2021.

Corey Hill is a journalist, screenwriter, parent, human rights activist, lizard chaser. Journalism in *The Independent*, *Yes!*, *Alternet*, more. Fiction and poetry in *Prole*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *Antithesis*, others.

Kate Meyer-Currey was born in 1969 and moved to Devon in 1973. Landscape, whether urban or rural, shapes her writing. Her varied career in a range of frontline settings has fuelled an interest in gritty urbanism, contrasted with her rural upbringing and which inspired the title of her forthcoming chapbook (Dancing Girl Press) 'County Lines' (due out 2021). Her poem 'Family Landscape: Colchester 1957' was published by 'Not Very Quiet' in September 2020. Her ADHD also instils a sense of 'other' in her life and writing. Showing this reality and evoking unheard, unrepresented voices drives her urge to write.

Ian Ganassi's work has appeared recently or will appear soon in numerous literary magazines, such as, *New American Writing*, *Bluepepper*, *Beyond Words*, *Offcourse*, *Home Planet News*, and *The American Journal of Poetry*, among many others. His full length collection, *Mean Numbers*, was published in 2016 by China Grove Press. A second book is forthcoming from MadHat Press. Selections from an ongoing collaboration with a painter can be found at www.thecorpses.com.

Jim Brosnan's publishing credits include *Nameless Roads* (Moon Pie Press, 2019), four chapbooks of poetry and over 500 poems most recently appearing in the *Aurorean*, *The Avocet*, *The Bridge*, *Eunoia Review* (Singapore), *Nine Muses Poetry* (Wales), *Strand* (India), *Scarlet Leaf Review* (Canada), and *Voices of the Poppies Anthology* (UK). Jim has won numerous awards in the annual National Federation of Poetry Societies competition. He is a full professor of English at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, RI where he was awarded a faculty fellowship this academic year to create a second book of poetry and original photography titled *Long Distance Driving*.

Ken Hada Ken Hada is the author of eight collections of poetry, including his latest: *Sunlight & Cedar* (VACPoe, 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.

George Freek's poetry has most recently appeared in "The Ottawa Arts Review"; "Acumen"; "North of Oxford"; "Triggerfish"; and "Torrid Literature."

Judith Borenin is still a captive of Port Townsend, Washington and still scribbling. Her publication accomplishments include The Night Heron Barks, Synchronized Chaos, The Lothlorien Journal of Poetry, Ethel Zines 3 and 4 among others and her chapbook, The Evidence & The Evermore was published by Ethel Zine in 2019.

Sorayya Moss studied literature in Paris, France. She currently lives in Michigan. She will be starting an MFA in Creative Writing at the University of Arkansas at Monticello in the fall. She has been published in Big Scream magazine, Atlas + Alice, Neologism Poetry Journal, and Blue Unicorn.

Clara Roberts is a graduate from the MA in Writing Program at Johns Hopkins University. Her poetry and nonfiction have been published in Entropy Magazine, Heartwood Literary Magazine, Idle Ink, Serotonin Poetry, Back Patio Press, trampset, and other venues. She lives in Baltimore, Maryland where she finds material to write about every day.

Elijah Giuliano listens to Bach, attempts to read melancholy Italian novels, and gets mango strands stuck between his teeth. Sometimes, he even writes poetry. He resides in Gary, Indiana.

Sara Eddy is the author of two chapbooks of poetry: Tell the Bees (A3 Press) and Full Mouth (Finishing Line). She has published widely in journals: her poems have appeared recently in Threepenny Review and the Baltimore Review. She is Assistant Director of the writing center at Smith College.

Dominique Thiébaud moved from France to Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley to study, and never left. He is an avid photographer, spending every opportunity to capture the beauty of our ever changing New England landscapes. He is also a painter, mixing the colors of his photographs into digital creations. He lives in Northampton, Ma.

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awarded a faculty fellowship this academic year to create a second book of poetry and original photography titled *Long Distance Driving*.

Mark A. Murphy writes and edits an online poetry journal. Enjoys listening to everything from Beethoven to Thea Gilmore. Reads mainly modern poetry. Watches pictures on the big screen. Lives in the UK.

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.