



*cæsurā*

*2016: the poetic games, the world vs silicon valley*

*bronze edition*

*cæsura 2016: the poetic games / bronze edition*  
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\*Our apologies to Barbara MacRae. We mistakenly used the wrong surname in the print edition.

***Contents:***

**Editor's Note**

**Poetry:**

**Arjun Rajendran**/The Beaumont Bible

**Kara Arguello**/Imagining this Earth without Beauty

**Mary Ann Cook**/Never Imagined

**Susan Kelley**/Algorithm and Blues

**Judith Terzi**/Trigger

**Ariel Smart**/A Wild Love

**James B. Nicola**/Scientific Mind

**Anshu Johri**/Buhddas of Bamiyan

**MK Punky**/Five-Sided Story

**Barbara Ruth**/Craigslislist: Housing Offered

**Shirley Muir**/White Sea, Black Heart

**Asha Sudra**/Hex

**Robin Lysne**/Flight

**Carolyn Grassi**/There Is In God

**John Nimmo**/Facts

## Editor's Note

Before we chose a theme for Cæsura 2016, we discussed at length the purpose and direction of Cæsura. We wanted to ensure the journal connected with and supported our local poets and readers, while continuing to gain recognition and appreciation beyond our geographical community. The number of regional and global poets getting published has increased so we questioned how that might affect our local audience. Since we wanted more participation, it was suggested that we publish additional poems on line. This would enable more poets and poems to circulate, from all regions, and might expand our definition of community. So, before any poems were submitted, we agreed to select poems from the 2016 Cæsura submissions to post online.

So, in the spirit of competition and global unity, we decided to hold The Poetic Games. Teams were picked, The World, and Silicon Valley. The plan was to have each team's best poem placed next to each other allowing an easy comparison as the poems were read. But to make it resemble a race, the poems needed to at least be similar in form and content.

Ten poetic forms were chosen to represent competitive events. As a further challenge to the competitors, each form was limited to three topics. This was done in part so we could evenly match the poems by their form and topic, making the competition less subjective. Also, we felt that the pre-determined topics would require most participants to write new poems, thus bringing the artists into a shared experience that is the Poetic Games. All of this produced a truly new and unique print collection of poetry and fiction we called ***Cæsura 2016, The Poetic Games: The World vs. Silicon Valley.***

Dear Poets, with the complexity that this year's Call for Submissions presented we were pleased that you accepted the challenge, and were equally impressed with the excellent poetry you created. We were pleased to see that all of the poetic forms listed in our call received multiple submissions. This demonstrates your depth of talent and strength of character. Thank you, your creativity made our reading a pleasure.

Dear Readers, the constraint of the printed book excluded some of our favorites so we are delighted to share more. What you have here are the fifteen poems we thoroughly enjoyed, but which had no true challenger from the "opposing team."

Welcome to ***Cæsura 2016, The Poetic Games: Bronze Edition.***

Bill Cozzini & Mike McGee

Arjan Rajendran  
Silicon Valley, Free Verse / Religion

## **The Beaumont Bible**

I'm no man of faith, so it still bewilders me why  
I had to question the twenty bucks I found

in a Bible. Every other student had a job, legal or illegal-  
only I smoked up my parents' savings. I'd achieved

a lawn of stubs. The courses I'd enrolled in  
had galloped away, covering me in dust. Wheeling

her polio, my aunt in the neighboring state sent  
me blankets, stationary and medicines. She sent me

notebooks- I used only a few pages for homework  
and in the rest, another bildungsroman choked

on its own vomit. Then one evening, this blighting note;  
in a Bible I'd borrowed. It was easy at first

to slip it inside my pocket- the Pakistani store was right  
around the corner. Halfway there, the money

asked, am I a gift? When I reached, it said, I'm a test.  
I stood outside the door, hesitating to buy

cigarettes from my biblical wealth, unconvinced it was  
just a fucking book, the oldest bestseller about hell.

**Arjun Rajendran** has appeared or will be appearing at Strange Horizons, Star\*Line, ZARF, Berfrois, The Bombay Literary Magazine and other publications. His first collection, SNAKE WINE, was published by Les editions du Zaporogue in 2014.

Kara Arguello  
Silicon Valley, Villanelle / Future

## Imagining this Earth without Beauty

If there were nothing wild and free and fleeting  
—blackberry brambles, fresh herbs, dew on a spiderweb—  
why would we keep searching?

Paralysis, crusted heart, listen:  
whole pieces of me would fall into shadow  
if there were nothing wild or free or fleeting.

It is our tendency, or training, to deny everything.  
But when the day is bleak, admissions must be made.  
Why else should we keep searching?

A spirit that withers, shoulders slumping,  
would fade like a vacation tan under artificial light  
if there were nothing wild or free or fleeting.

A repeat encounter with a star in the woods  
behind the house, to plunge into a cold lake of beauty—  
that's why we keep searching.

To be astonished, to learn it all over like a child,  
old crows and caterpillars, mountaintop songs and muffled fog,  
to find all that is wild and free and fleeting—  
we know we must keep searching.

**Kara Arguello** was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and now lives, works, and writes in San Jose, California. Her work has appeared in *Cream City Review*, *DNA (Dragonfly Press)*, *The Fourth River*, *Sugar House Review*, *Aperçus Quarterly*, and *Snail Mail Review*, among others.



Mary Ann Cook  
Silicon Valley, Villanelle / Future

## NEVER IMAGINED

AT 16 I never imagined I would outlive a child.  
AIDS attacks gays, druggies, not Cindy.  
Who can imagine the unimaginable?

I never imagined I would be thrice married  
and counting —two divorces, one widowhood.  
Never imagined I would outlive a child.

Never imagined I would have the best death  
in a survival camp horror movie.  
Movies can imagine the unimaginable.

Buried in a pit up to my neck, I lost two limbs.  
But couldn't imagine outliving my youngest,  
her light still shimmering on those remaining.

Couldn't imagine two grandsons half Chinese,  
Chock-a- block with improv and empathy.  
Go ahead: imagine those unimaginables

Homesick for spoken English while in Paris,  
I never imagined outliving my youngest  
to a plague now controllable, but doctors did.  
Faced the unimaginable and licked it.

**Mary Ann Cook** was a journalist—reporter/editor/columnist—for 40 years until retirement. In addition, she writes plays and poetry. Her 10-minute plays have been performed at Edinburgh, Scotland Fringe Festival, Santa Cruz Actor's Theatre, Foothill College, City Lights in San Jose and Melodrama Theater, Campbell. Her full length play, *Rocking the Good Ship Gooseberry*, was performed at Foothill College. Mary served as interim director of San Jose Center for Poetry & Literature and *Caesura* editor for a year when the center was between directors.

Susan Kelley  
Silicon Valley, Villanelle / Mundanity

## Algorithm and Blues

As you descend the endlessly branching caverns  
Lined with nested loops of tangled spaghetti code  
Some mornings you feel your inner canary swoon.

You endure your cube-mate's gray stalactite drip  
About her steady stream of most unsteady men  
Dragging you into her endlessly branching caverns

In this cauldron of digital drama starring code jocks  
Who'll wag themselves prone for a concatenated title,  
Who never have felt their inner canary swoon

Despite this ergonomically hostile furniture  
On which routine serves as proxy for purpose  
And descends into endlessly branching caverns

Where you troubleshoot dust bunnies under the bed  
On the hamster wheel of your life -- and  
This morning you felt your inner canary swoon

While making insincere comments in the Luncheon  
Adventure line about the Sandwich of the Day  
Which descended into endlessly branching caverns --  
This is the morning your inner canary swooned.

**Susan Kelley** is a retired information systems manager who lives in California's Santa Cruz Mountains. She has studied poetry at Foothill College and in Stanford's Continuing Studies Program. Her work has appeared in the journals *Fresh Hot Bread*, *Caesura*, *Lowestoft Chronicle*, *5-2 Poetry*, *Roguezine*, *Touch: The Journal of Healing* and the anthologies *The Walt Whitman 150*, *Life is a Roller Coaster*, and soon *Shattered*.

Judith Terzi  
World, Sonnet / Death

## Trigger

Again they choose to turn amendments down.  
When reason bombs, a Lobby logs a win.  
One Sunday there were forty-nine, fourteen  
plus more last year. Intransigence astounds.  
Some chant our country doesn't need new bills:  
The Second is their Holy Grail although  
they've seen the magazines & salvers grow  
like Uzis. Remembering the child who killed,  
the gun too awkward in her tender palms:  
stray bullet to her range instructor's head.  
Arrhythmia is eased by will and meds  
to slow adrenaline, restore the calm.  
The nation needs a heart to heal the Pulse,  
to curb the risk of murder some place else.

**Judith Terzi's** poetry has appeared in journals such as Atlanta Review (International Publication Prize, 2015), Spillway, Trivia: Voices of Feminism, and in anthologies such as Malala: Poems for Malala Yousafzai and Wide Awake: The Poets of Los Angeles and Beyond. *If You Spot Your Brother Floating By* is her most recent chapbook (Kattywompus Press). She taught high school French for many years as well as English at California State University, Los Angeles, and in Algiers, Algeria.

Ariel Smart  
Silicon Valley, Sonnet / Love

### **A Wild Love in Spring**

The pop of white blossoms,  
plum, apricot, fuzzy peach,  
white again the cherry—  
Unsettled in a pool of water,  
wild mallards, two drakes in combat,  
rive for a hen pinned down by her nape.  
Ack, she sounds in distress.  
Squack, she cries in dismay, her yellow beak agape.  
In purple sheen, her two swains ravage her  
with complacent swagger.  
From a fence springs a flash of white and gray;  
a feral cat flushes out his prey.  
White blossoms, plumage, harried feathers,  
blast every which way.

**Ariel Smart** was born in 1941 at the Green Lantern Motel, owned by her father and grandfather in El Centro, Ca. At five she moved from one town to another in Southern California because her father became an itinerant carpenter. She received her B.A. at San Jose State University, M. A. from Santa Clara University and graduate studies at the University of California at Berkeley. She teaches at the college level. She is the author of *The Green Lantern*, Fithian Press; *Stolen Moments*, Fithian Press.

James B. Nicola  
World, Sonnet / Love

## Scientific Mind

A scientific mind is one designed  
to learn from trials precisely monitored.

Statistics make scientists less inclined  
than I to persevere in the absurd,

for I have not as yet been swayed by sense  
but only rare affection, which is blind  
to irrefutable experience—

and rash. . . .

Imagine it a kind  
of Pavlov's system, then:

I see your cheek,  
I hear a bell, I hunger.

I can't tell  
the reason, for I'm never fed, but find  
I wag, and seem to bark instead of speak.

And the pangs grow worse the less you ring!

O hell.

I haven't got a scientific mind.

**James B. Nicola's** poems have appeared twice previously in *Caesura* and recently in the *Antioch*, *Southwest* and *Atlanta Reviews*, *Rattle*, and *Poetry East*. His nonfiction book *Playing the Audience* won a *Choice* award. His two poetry collections (Word Poetry) are *Manhattan Plaza* (2014) and *Stage to Page: Poems from the Theater* (2016). A Yale graduate, James has been giving both theater and poetry workshops at libraries, literary festivals, schools, and community centers all over the country. [sites.google.com/site/jamesbnicola](http://sites.google.com/site/jamesbnicola).

Anshu Johri  
Silicon Valley, Lament / Peace

## **Buddhas of Bamiyan**

*(Buddhas of Bamiyan from 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century were dynamited and destroyed in March 2001 by the Taliban, in Afganistan)*

If I could re-shape the moon,  
possibly,  
add strings to stars,  
gently, pull them one by one  
giving sky a perfect dark look  
one it deserved that night.

Oddly enough,  
they blinked like  
chicken pox adorning  
sky's face.  
I slept under it, dreaming  
about gorgeous trees,  
swings on them,  
you and me,  
aloft the wind,  
ready to jump  
without getting hurt  
peace descending  
under the humming galaxy  
while  
on some other side of the world  
'Buddhas of Bamiyan' stood tall and meek  
engraved on a mountain  
with disfigured eyes,  
broken fingers  
getting knocked down;  
a gargantuan stone mass  
turning into desert sand  
feeding the grand appetite of time,  
so inconsequential  
loudness of a whisper

becoming a voice,  
turning into screams...

'Peace' stays quiet  
always  
even when  
muffled, gruesome holes  
quickly drill  
with beating hearts  
in soft bodies.  
Seeks no revenge  
when destroyed in stealth dark  
or savagely  
in broad daylight,  
for if it does,  
it'd be yet another shade of violent fury  
indistinguishable  
bloody red from an antique white...

Ah! in an attempt to live, it shall die  
in its death, it shall live  
like  
whirling, stirring sandstorm's left of  
"Buddhas of Bamiyan"  
in some indifferent part of you,  
worn out me,  
on a day when  
wind's warm, bird's chirp  
we've ropes of the swing  
abuzz with love  
a thousandth of sapling  
for an intangible dream  
refusing to be dead  
amidst massacred trees...

**Anshu Johri** authors poems, short stories, and plays in English and Hindi. A mother of 12 year old twins, she has a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering from San Jose State University, California. Her work in English has appeared in *Dukool*, *Vine leaves Literary Journal*, *Calliope*, *Creation and Criticism*, and an anthology *Desi Girls* published by Hope Road Publishing U.K. Her published works in Hindi include

two poetry collections, *Khule Prishtha (Bare Pages)*, and *Boond ka Dwandwa (Dilemma of a Raindrop)*, two short story collections, *Shesh Phir (More Later...)*, and *Adrishya Kinara (Invisible Shores)*, and publications in reputed Hindi Literary Journals of India, Canada and U.S.A.



## Five-Sided Story

This is merely a minor reminder mainly meant to catapult adults into jolts of obvious offense or obstreperous discontent. At least that's the expected result!

This is *not* a jabbing joking jibe. This is not a fleet-footed treatise about bad vibes.

My proudly patriotic friends gathered before us, this is not an insolent insult. Put plainly, for the most unenlightened dolt: There's no dictionary you could consult,

no thesaurus or magic lexicon

that defines the Pentagon as a paragon of peace.

More like a patron of paramilitary police.

More like a massive factory churning out passive-aggressive offensives inevitably ending in disastrous catastrophes at distant addresses.

More like Hollywood and Silicon Valley's most important ally in comprehensively convincing the populous that what's best for us is constant war and murderous mayhem on foreign shores.

Excuse my jargon, but they try to make a trillion dollars seem like a bargain. Here's a harbinger of what's to come:

We will not kneel and we will feel lethal and there will be no cost too high, because all would be lost without the KY tube of lubricating grease on the gangrene gears of our economy, stuck and stymied without an enemy to offend or a homeland to defend from [fill in the blank], pajama-clad jihadis, seductive Chinese hotties

or imperialistic Russian oligarchs owning all the best Bugattis – or Bentleys or whatever wondrous wheels are suitable

for those whose feudal evil is horribly immutable and deplorably inscrutable -- yet

reliably refutable by heavyweight wrestling champions of the world who specialize in sealing deals by euthanizing enthusiastic heels.

It wasn't always war-around-the-clock.

Before Afghanistan and Iraq, in the halcyon days before Iran and Vietnam,

a quiet calm fell between the bombs.

Back then, we buffoons assumed the United States was safe, immune from the impending arms race.

After receiving the vaccine, we ought not to have got autism or measles,  
or a feeble eating disorder in which the citizenry is feeding on fear,  
a diet of insecurity and pure hostility toward those who don't fully grok  
the power of a grenade or Glock  
versus our stock F-16, locked and loaded  
with a payload designed for *mujahidin*.

You know who I mean: uncivilized civilians  
with frivolous pavilions built from oil millions,  
scary men who don't comprehensively comprehend  
America's transparently inherent right to bully  
anyone with insufficient humility or ironic mirth.

You know: the towel-heads and Commies who refuse to bow or *kow-tow*  
when confronted by the greatest country on earth.

Here's a useful fact if you want to keep track of the attack on truth  
maliciously instigated before you were born but 'til this day  
still quite the norm.

Up until 1949 – World War II ended just before -- what we now call the  
Department of Defense  
answered to its proper name: The Department of War.

Hence, the Orwellian locution. War becomes defense.

The most reliable solution to a public relations debacle  
is to block all calls for truth-seeking, heat-leaking leaders.

Just neatly repeat the Big Lie *ad infinitum*.

Here's one: You can't negotiate with "terrorists," you can only fight 'em.

Most of us intuitively understand in our glands, down to our pituitary, that  
we can't really "defend" America by making war  
on faraway "enemies" behind every muddy door.

We know we have a predilection for aggression and an addiction to violence  
(and pain pills and porn and muscle relaxers). Yet what we do with our  
knowledge  
doesn't compute: Stay mute and polite and keep nodding your head.

Nobody likes to be called "unpatriotic," a detractor  
from the grand larceny that we call American Democracy.

But if you need a reason to declare my reasoning treasonous,  
I'll save you the time: Every nuclear device is a war crime  
waiting to happen, and every soldier in our military is a poorly paid mercenary  
exploited by the corporate salesmen whose quarterly profits will cost him his  
life.

Or sight. Or, if he's lucky, PTSD, because, sure, it's a drag,  
but at least he can see and he didn't come home in a body bag, with a toe tag,  
wrapped up in an American flag.

If you want to mend a wound, sometimes you can't "stay tuned."  
You've got to filter out the noxious noise of popular culture  
and dial in the simple joys of poplars and maples and firs,  
the piquantly pleasurable treasures of mulch (or compost),  
of toasting the host of the universe, flirting with the chirping birds  
while moist dirt spurts from a formerly inert  
pile of detritus and flotsam that got some sun and some love and now  
nurtures the future with nutrients  
derived from decimated peanuts and desiccated daffodils  
resuscitating human ills.  
On this fecund fertile growing ground, there's no Army or Marines,  
no drones or Humvees, no battle-ready death machines.

They say there's two sides to every story.  
When we talk about killing other humans so our precious  
Precocious, intermittently atrocious Republic can thrive,  
the story sides are always five.

But we can't give up. No abdication.  
Let's add another wing to the dreary Pentagon, we'll  
make it the Hexagon.  
And we'll all sing a fairy hymn when We the People declare a new  
*Department of Peace*  
for our forlorn, weary, war-torn nation.

**MK Punky** is the author of many books and a winner of the 2016 Stratford-upon-Avon  
Literary Festival's creative writing competition, MK Punky serves as poet laureate of  
Vista Street Community Library in Los Angeles.

Barbara Ruth  
Silicon Valley, List Poem / Home

## **Craigslist: Housing Offered**

If I move to Domain Apartments in San Jo  
blue lightning will chevron the fitness center in anticipation of my arrival.

If If I move to Alderwood Apts  
I will learn how to Live the Good Life.

If I live at Reed Square in Sunnyvale  
I will be Vibrant! Bold! Distinct! while I fight MediCaid for my oxygen.

At the Parc they care about me. I'll live large  
down to my last bowl of miso.

I'll be revitalized at Woodland Meadow  
you'll see my brain light up when anyone says "leaping lesbians."

At my sweet suite at the Giovanni  
I'll fling gnocchi into the redwoods.

At Mosaic in downtown SJ I'll cast off  
the relics of Then because it will always be Now.

At the Commons of Campbell they'll bestow upon me  
the key to the Passageway of Extravagant Kisses.

Apartment 4103 has great views and fun angles  
(and I'm always on the lookout for an angle with fun.)

If I live at the Carlyle in Santa Clara  
I'll say goodbye forever to rigged elections.

There's a pricey two bedroom coming in June.  
These offers will not last long.  
Conditions are subject to change,  
Submit now.

**Barbara Ruth** is a weird sister, a spiritual grandmother and a daughter of Yemaya. Her fiction, memoirs, essays, poems and photographs have appeared in Slink Chunk, Barking Sycamores Review, Thank You For Swallowing, Eyedrum Periodically, and Silver Birch Review and have been widely anthologized. She is among the thousands without their own home in the Valley of the Silicon.

Shirley Muir  
World, Flash Fiction / Family

## **White Sea, Black Heart**

Ten of them huddled at random meeting points were rounded up and escorted by balaclava-clad men to the filthy, unreliable-sounding bus. It carried them across the dust-clouded Turkish border into Syria. To fight the kuffar. He couldn't wait to stroke the metal of an AK47. To finger the trigger and then pull it, blow off the head of an unworthy kuffar. Then fifty more kuffar heads.

With these same hands that saved the little girl's life when she fell on the railings and her blood was seeping away into the Manchester street. The same fingers that had stitched the breast implant in place instead of her breast with its widespread malignancy. He had been proud to work in the big Manchester hospital.

His ambition to violence was now more important.

In horror he remembered his mum and dad.

'My son the doctor,' his father had said slowly, at Adam's graduation. He kept patting Adam's head, unable to believe the truth of it. Adam couldn't fathom how it had come about himself.

When had he been introduced to the word kuffar? Why had it ignited this burning desire in his heart for killing and human desecration?

Once in the camp in Syria and operating under Sharia law with his own sex slaves he had all the AK47s he could wish for. But now the concept of murdering kuffars felled him with panic. Hatred swelled in his heart for what he had become. Mahmut, who had travelled with him and regaled him with tales of beheadings and throat-slittings and how to find live videos of them and view them in colour on YouTube, was in paradise. Mahmut had found his vocation.

Adam found hell on earth. He worried that Mahmut suspected Adam's fading commitment to the daily bloodbath in Syria. The slaughter of innocent pregnant women and slitting of the bodies of little children into pieces made him vomit.

Tonight Adam was going to creep away in the darkness. He would hide in the back of the medical truck that delivered the weekly supplies from Turkey. He would jump out at Manjib and slip across the unprotected border into Turkey before dawn.

Adam had texted his father using a mobile phone stolen from a decapitated Syrian victim of Mahmut. His father believed Adam was in Syria saving lives.

‘You always had the medical vocation, my son,’ he said when Adam confessed where he was.

‘You wouldn’t crush a spider if it ran across the floor, you saved it from harm. And remember when you kept that bird with a broken wing in the cardboard box. You fed it with milk and talked to it even in the darkness. I knew you would be a saviour of men,’ his father said. Adam wept.

Adam would not have the courage to tell his father about the monster he had become.

‘You are brave, my son. So considerate not to tell your mother of the risks you are taking. To protect me from the worry of knowing you are saving lives in a war zone.’

His father had emailed that he would meet Adam in Antalya.

‘I will be at the bus station in Antalya,’ he said. ‘If you get caught by the Turkish authorities come clean and tell them you have been administering to the sick and wounded in Syria,’ he said. ‘They will let you come home with me. I will vouch for you.’

Adam felt bullets whistling past his head as he crawled on hands and knees, bleeding and grazed in the blackness. They were on his trail with their AK47s. His throat would be slit his throat like the others last week. Or they would slice his abdomen and pull out his entrails like they did to those girls from Birmingham who didn’t like being sex slaves to the ISIS men. He ran like he had never run before, almost coughing up blood when he collapsed in the dirty sand under prickly bushes on the Turkish side of the border.

With a British passport he headed to Antalya.

‘I will wait for you for three days at Antalya bus station,’ his father had promised. ‘Don’t worry if it takes you a while to escape. You are a saint. God will protect you.’

He sluiced his dirty aching body in the Mediterranean, the AkDeniz, the white sea. It cleansed his skin but not his blackened heart. He would fall on his knees and kiss his father’s feet. Tears coursed down his face. He would beg his father’s forgiveness for throwing away the decency his parents had taught him.

Next day, juddering along in the rickety old bus, clutching his passport they were held up by a mob of yelling Turkish militia. It was fifteen miles short of Antalya.

The twenty bus passengers were hustled and forced onto the dusty roadside. The mob demanded identity papers. A couple of Syrians, a man and his wife, apologised that they had no papers and begged for asylum. The soldiers beat them in the head with their rifle butts. The man fell to the ground, blood streamed onto the sand at the side of the road. Adam found himself leaning over to tie up a wound on the wife’s forehead. He received the bloodied end of a rifle butt in the side of his own face as a deterrent.

‘British! You stay here. Do not move. You cannot go to Antalya.’

‘But I must,’ he said, trembling now because salvation and forgiveness was so near.

‘The ISIS have blown up the bus station. All the people are dead and Antalya is not safe. You stay here. We take you to Istanbul.’

**Shirley Muir** was trained as a scientist and worked as a writer in the engineering, pharmaceutical and oil industries. She travels regularly to Turkey and writes short fiction and flash fiction. She admires the work of Pippa Goldschmidt, Carol Shields and Ray Bradbury. A number of her pieces have been published or placed in writing competitions. In 2015 she won short story competition with *Trapped* and her first story was published in an anthology, *Time to Flee*. Shirley lives near Edinburgh, Scotland.



## HEX

I tried to put a hex on you.  
Vex to convince you of what I thought was  
right  
Developing wings forcing you to take flight and  
away from me  
Cast a voodoo Spell  
But your soul was illiterate,  
Unable to comprehend  
The vast vernacular of love and acceptance  
Except this dying desire to somehow be  
validated.

Verified in perplexity and insecurity.  
Secretly striving for a way out of a self  
contained box that  
only you hold the key.  
Contents of dirty baggage  
Closeted in fear of shame and disapproval,  
Dresser drawers padded with interior lining as  
to not reveal  
the hidden compartments of your heart  
that only I know.

I tried to fantasize and dramatize our story.  
Hyperbolized in award winning literary fiction  
To get me to hate you.

The lyin  
The bitch  
And the disrobe.  
Medications of the chronic  
Calms disharmony.  
A Rotting inside my soul  
Like a compost heap of trust turned sour.  
Wars drove between my heart and yours  
Yet my plot lines

Like rivers in a delta  
All lead back to loving you.  
No change in the ending feeling of frustration  
and confusion,  
Hearing battles cries  
That could break divide between contrary  
advisories.  
Peace treaties drawn and debated  
In eye contact conversations.  
Contemplations of letting you go  
Like I should  
But,  
feeling alive  
Has made me feel like I can't not have you in  
my life.

But the truth remains  
And quite honestly,  
I don't think anything is ever going to change,  
You will never love me the way I love you.  
As much as I tell myself  
Your mind might change,  
Might replace  
Mistakes made  
Mystified in decisions and stresses of choices  
and risks to take  
But,  
You will never love me the way I love you.

I was a break from reality  
Proof that there were things missing in your life  
That you needed to work through.  
I was a looking glass into  
Magnifying fissures  
Set in foundations  
Erupting constant bleeding from the core.

I was a bandaid.  
I mean  
The best fucking band aid there ever was,  
Like a band aid that actually matched your  
color skin,

Or stuck to even your palm or the bottom of  
your foot  
I mean,  
Talk about the most gentle and sensitive  
support there could ever be.

And like a bandaid  
With a deep breath and some courage,  
Removed in one fell swoop  
To allow for independent healing,  
The 'right thing'  
Whatever you call it.  
I personally think it was a lil pre-mature  
And you coulda handled another week but,  
I'm kidding.

Like I said  
As much as I spin it,  
The bottle ends on you and me.  
Literary devices  
Devise idealistic fantasies  
See but,  
I'm beginning to think  
My survival depends on realistic happenings  
And the fact still remains,  
You will never love me the way I loved you.

**Asha Sudra** is an artist, educator, and revolutionary originally from Los Angeles. She has worked for the non-profit Playworks in East-Oakland, was a community organizer for workers/tenant rights, antipolice brutality, and anti-domestic violence. Her passion for social justice focuses on educating youth. She is currently a 7th grade teacher and is actively training teachers around California about how to teach within a social justice lens in order to create authentic change. She has toured London showcasing her poetry including at the famous Troy Bar.

## Flight

...and the golden bees  
are making white combs  
of sweet honey from  
my old failures.  
Antonio Machado

Honey Bees gather nectar in radiant circles  
vibrating humm Bumble bees covered with pollen chaps  
lift heavy with  
black negligee wings  
Feeders of sweetness-all flowers  
of vegetables and fruit,  
all flowers in their lace skirts bees fertilize all green  
trees and shrubs simply depend on  
you, on your transparent flow  
your lazy lift flower to flower  
yellow jackets in black and yellow  
stripes, inadvertently bring  
pollen to stamen  
buzz  
circles sex to sex as butterflies color air, fluttering flowers  
sunning  
wings open and close  
monarchs drift orange windows, stains of scales so tiny they  
leave powder  
on fingertips  
reflected, refracted color as Blue Damsels, or Blue Morphos, Painted Ladies  
or Swallow tails  
Yellow or White Sulfurs  
dragonflies light over lily pads  
in all colors and sizes , red or green, black  
lift over ponds  
an iridescent dazzle  
as Luna Moths with dusty green wings  
stare with eyes as brown oak colored moths swirl

furry antennae      radar streaming flutter lover of flames  
   in darkened room or sunlit day  
rising blossoms to blossom.

Then bats their skin for wings flap at dusk and hang upside-down in caves in daylight

   squeaking blind screeches  
bounding into sonar  
   ears      from rocks, trees or other night flyers scooping bugs  
   dodging paddles held up high  
to test their radar swooping low over ripples or  
Vampire Bats who land on cattle to collect blood before dawn as they fly back to  
caves or cliffs where  
they wrap their furry bodies in skin and hammock bones to sleep. Bats flutter rather than glide as Great Blue Heron's "z" folded neck rests over seven foot air foils feathered in reflected blue

from sun on clear day, grey on cloudy ones. Cranes fly with necks stretched out as Swans honk and lift wings draped over air as arms around shoulders of loved ones. Feathers on all birds in three layers, one stabilize, one set covers

another extend the lift, tails are air rudders  
for navigation into unknown spaces. How varied the flight of Swan from Raven who careens, wheels and turns diving through red canyons, a black lens  
   along rim of snow and fir trees clinging to cliffs. How Raven drops

   away returns to nest  
   and disappears into shadows, gateways, between boughs.  
Twittering sparrows or jays or bluebirds, or

Falcons, fastest bird in the world, who have been clocked at 80 m.p.h. across fields or over hills.

   Take the helicopter aeronautics of hummingbirds  
   tiny inspiration for pure joy,  
how their ball and socket shoulders only appear in Swifts allowing  
   movement in 360 degrees and are the only birds to fly  
backwards, Hummers drum their wings 45 beats a second  
   and their light inspired helicopters. How all  
bugs and butterflies and bats and birds have from the beginning

of human flight inspired kites and balloons, bi-planes  
and tri-planes, all paper or canvas stretched over wooden frames with  
stretchers or

cockpits beneath airfoil wings as

the Wright's designed

as their Kitty Hawk launch launched all of us into  
skies of uncertainty-a wingless creature – that broke through into air, into  
the twentieth century from paper and wood to metal propellers, then jet  
engines to rockets

to engines roaring

breaking barriers of sound, a funnel of noise, over fields and mountains,  
Sierras and Rockies, over trees and streams, forests and eagles

all by wing, yet how odd that the most

adept at flight are covered not in steel nor wood nor paper nor sinew,  
nor  
muscles nor socket joints nor feathers, nor flees nor flies, they do not have feet  
nor claws

nor wheels on which to land- their weight is nothing, their height immense,  
their presence  
is

everything when you are sad, their compassion

endless. They fly even so from place to place to place and  
do it without

so much as a thought. They fly  
with light with the  
slightest request and will never interfere unless you  
ask. They watch over every small thing, all pla  
nts

forests animals birds and beasts alike  
all humans, alive or dead  
all kinds no matter

what color no matter the design They fly

with intention, theirs and  
with humankind in colors divine

gold                    white                    pink                    green                    and  
yellow  
blue                    and purple                    some                    red                    some  
midnight with                    shoal of stars  
Bringing                    with                    their colors                    peace                    wonder  
faith                    a lightness of touch                    strength,                    and                    an  
endless                    pouring over                    all, believer or non-believer  
eternally                    moment by ecstatic                    moment.

**Robin Lysne**, M.A., M.F.A., Ph.D. is an author of 5 books, artist and energy healer. Recent books are *Handbook to Heart Path*, *An Energy Medicine Guide*, and *Poems for the Lost Deer*, (BlueBoneBooks, Santa Cruz, CA, 2014). Publications: *Rattle*, *Phren-z online Magazine*, *Samizdat*, *Awakening Consciousness Magazine*, *The Weekly Avocet*, *North American Review*, *Porcupine Literary Arts Magazine*, etc. Member: Poetry San Jose, Poetry Santa Cruz, Emerald Street Poets in Santa Cruz. She is a psychic/medium and energy healer with 25 years experience around the Bay Area and across the country by phone.

## THERE IS IN GOD

“There is in God  
A deep, but dazzling darkness . . .  
. . . O for that night! Where I in him  
Might live . . .”

*The Night* by Henry Vaughan

If God is in “a deep dazzling darkness,”  
why not swimming in the sea of our DNA,  
or hanging on to  
words a friend confides  
while we’re called on to discern the messages  
of the One who created us both from scratch . . .

Why not consider a blank slate, while beginning  
a new life, also links to past generation, though  
scientific discoveries may  
seemingly debunk what was  
believed, or still may be felt by remnants today of  
what were magical mysteries, though caught

between deniers of evolution and those who reject  
anything thought to be unprovable, so tossed  
aside, unable to categorize  
things not seen under  
a microscope or dissected in a lab, ignoring awesome  
wonder accessed once upon a time widely in rituals,

festivals, honoring the harvest, animals, deities, stars,  
the big bang, lilies in the field, the fox nesting in a log,  
love’s miraculous dawn  
leaping over obstacles . . .  
happens to each of us and all, remembering when I fell  
for the man I’d come to marry . . . he appeared out  
of the blue, walking through  
a snowy Westchester  
apple orchard, on his way to offer Mass, while I was



meditating on the gospels, thus our attraction grew  
in leaps and bounds, overcoming convent obstacles  
through what in those days we called grace,  
    while the God “I knew”  
withdrew or merged into  
our lives, what some call transference, we simply felt  
it was part of the plan, a distillation of the divine  
  
in ordinary stuff, like us, and sunrises, sunsets, elixirs  
    brewed by naturopaths, potions designed by Chinese  
    medicine acupuncturists,  
    Love leaving an encouraging  
signs, even after death’s departure, since passing to a new  
    stage of be-ing, the power to recall abounding as it is  
  
the divine takes on the tiniest form, subatomic particles,  
    child in a manger, animals calling in the forest,  
birds migrating,  
pets purring, barking,  
hear their breathing, up close and personal, incarnational  
    disguises guiding us home to Love’s haven perhaps  
  
once lost, now found, leaning to listen, seek for signs, even  
    if ridiculed, warmly welcomed, who cares if clichés abound,  
care for the outsiders,  
comfort the oppressed,  
taste forgiveness’s infinity, drops of dew on morning grass,  
    the child Buddha knew, I feel your heart beating in mine . . .

**Carolyn Grassi** is a native of Brooklyn, NY, Carolyn Grassi graduated from Brooklyn College, CUNY, holds two Master’s degrees (Political Science) from San Jose State University. Her poetry has appeared in many journals; three books of her poems are published: *Journey To Chartres* (Black Swan Press), *Transparencies* (Patmos Press) and *Heart and Soul* (Patmos Press). With her late husband Joseph Grassi, they published *Mary Magdalene and the Women* (Sheed & Ward). Carolyn studied with Robert Hass, Robert Bly and the late Galway Kinnell. Her poetry has been praised by John Ashbery, Ron Hansen and the late Naomi Clark, co-founder of the San Jose Poetry Center.

**Facts**

The highest point in California  
is Point Conception.

I was conceived in a repurposed  
pie kitchen.

The tipping point  
is always twenty-two years away.

My sister has a picture of it  
hanging in her house.

The earth is a cube.

Cold  
is a temporary concept.

The shortest distance between two points  
is through the Arc de Triomphe.

No picture.

The coldest place on earth  
is the far side of the moon.

Solar power will become nonfunctional  
due to chipmunks that gnaw the cables.

Acid dissolves coral.

On July 16, 2186  
the Galapagos Islands  
will see a total solar eclipse.

Extinction is a growth industry.

Picnics and electronics  
will never be bugless.

Other islands will not.

Ick.

War in the Middle East will cease  
when camels spit on their guns.

Futurologists retire early.

**John Nimmo's** poems have appeared in many journals including *Rattle*, *Stirring*, *Caesura*, *The Sand Hill Review*, *Pirene's Fountain*, and *DMQ Review*. His chapbook, *Out of Mud*, is published by Finishing Line Press. Besides poetry, he finds excitement pursuing his career as an environmental physicist specializing in groundwater resources. From southern California, he went to Wisconsin for six years of graduate school, and now lives with his wife Elsa in Menlo Park. His poetry website is at <http://www.rubydoor.org/jnpoet/index.html>.