



caesura 2020

Om & Ohm

cæsurā 2020
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Om & Ohm, online selections

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Editor's Notes

Call: We put out a call requesting soul, and resistance. The call initially included just the Sanskrit and Greek characters because using the English alphabet's Om and Ohm, revealed the homonym, and took away some of the mystery that symbols and characters wedge into the imagination. Regardless of which characters, of which alphabet, the poets delivered their souls beautifully.

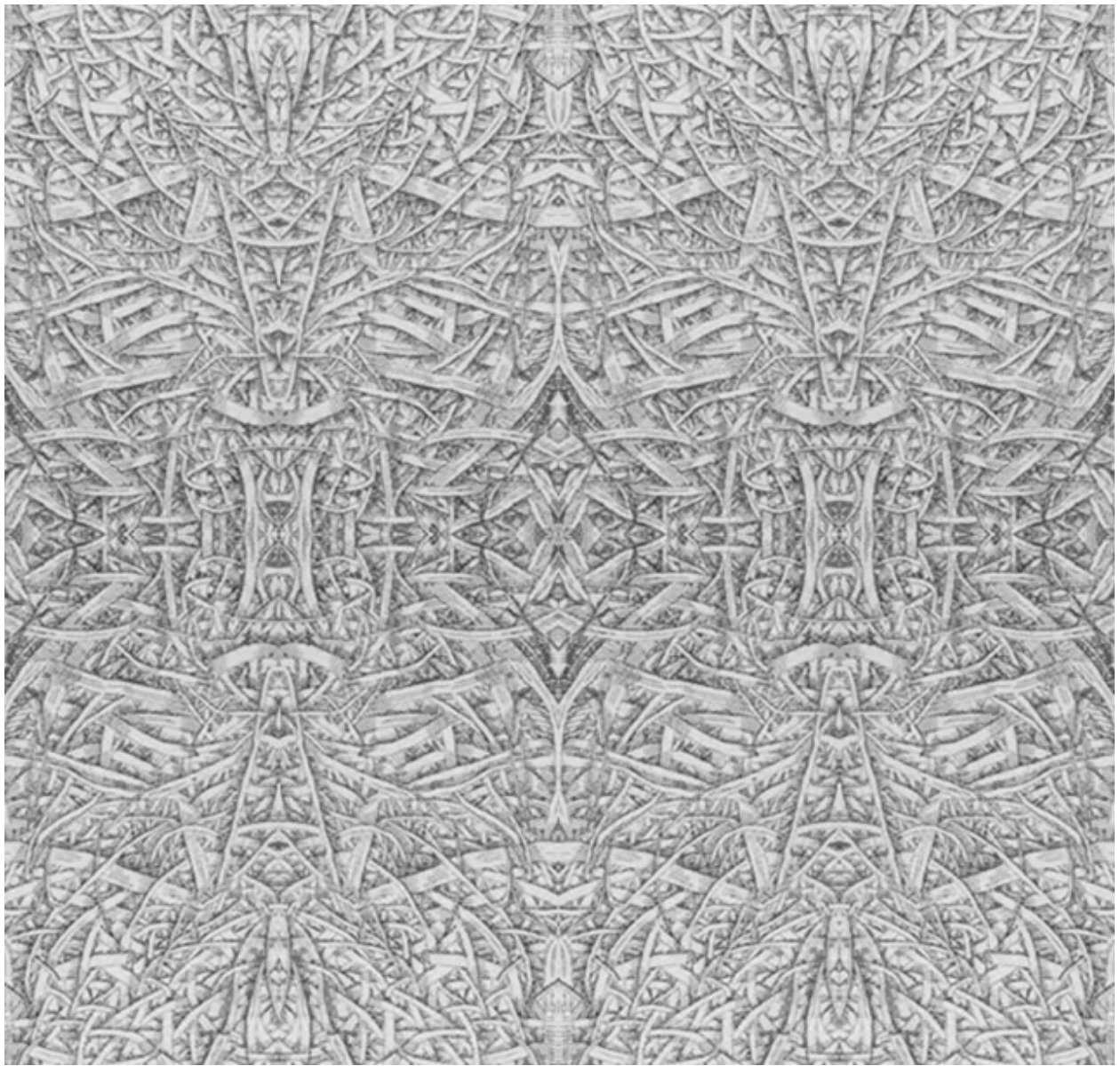
Elmwood: *Four poets from the Elmwood Poetry Society were selected, two for the print volume, and two for the online. Cæsura has much admiration for all involved, and gives a heartfelt thanks to Lita Kurth for all her work. Here is her description:* An already-reforming friend of Lita Kurth's went to jail. An evolving band of inmates, plus 18 months, plus Lita's creative writing prompts, plus feedback and typing from PCSJ members and others, makes up the Elmwood Poetry Society, resulting in these poems and many others. Lita's friend got out July 31st but the work continues. Please visit thegratefulfelon.com to learn more and if you want to volunteer please send an email to lakurthest@gmail.com.

Unpublished: This year's call also requested that unpublished poets/artists declare themselves as "unpublished". We were not looking to judge differently, but we hoped the invitation would offer encouragement to new voices. Though covid altered our physical outreach plans, nineteen unpublished poets/artists submitted and eleven were selected for publication between the print and online volumes. Thank you for participating.

Haiku-ish Call: To encourage community participation during the initial covid lockdown, Nils Peterson asked that PCSJ members create Haiku-ish poetry. His Haiku-ish call had unique rules that inspired new poems and worked to heighten awareness. The classic 17 syllables of haiku were required, and were considered during our judging; though we discovered rhotic and non-rhotic speakers counted differently. There are unique selections of these Haiku-ish poems in the Print and Online editions.

Memorial: This year we are including a memorial section here in the online edition. It includes either a short biography, or a poem written by or for them. Please visit the memorial section to read about our dear friends. Jean Emerson, Jack Taylor, and Judith Peterson are sorely missed and are still dearly loved.

Bill Cozzini
Editor-in-Chief



Bill Wolak, *Fleeting As the Lightning's Embrace*

Lea Aschkenas

Salvation

Once on Wawona Road I found a dead mouse
curled against the gnarled trunk of the old buckeye
where I would flatten myself
during hide and seek,
my narrow belly and sunburned nose scratching
against the corrugated bark,
the buckeye's knuckle-hard fruits clenched
like little fists of victory, dangling
just beyond my reach.

I was a stranger to death then
but felt a sadness so deep it seemed familiar,
a fairy tale belief in
the reversibility of fate
so fervent it propelled me
to pocket the mouse.

Like a mother kangaroo,
I carried her around all day,
hoping the warmth of my body
would revive her.
I kept her wilted form a secret,
not allowing even myself a peek
for fear of jinxing her recovery.

Have you heard of the way a tree
knows when its time has come, of how it alerts its kin
of its impending departure,
releasing a chemical as quietly
as a sigh
before it falls?
It has no illusions of recovery and offers only
this faint farewell to those who will remain
witness to this final act
of consideration.

Perhaps a part of me knew this truth of the tree,
but still I cried
when, at day's end,
I found the mouse smushed against
the soft underside of my overalls,
smothered by my best intentions—
and my ignorance.

Decades later,
I would come to know
how grief can also be a living thing—
the still-breathing wrongs we wish to right,
the lingering last words we never got to say,
the pain we cannot so easily pocket away.



Sally Giroux, *House of the Lord Deliverance*

CJ Giroux

Trying to Pray

Yellow construction tape cordons off
the church's main steps;
warnings of caution, danger
curve like a country road in rural Michigan.
Gravel cracks under foot;
open sky is caught in bottle tops—
mirrored circles of dew surrounded by rusting teeth.

Jailed behind chain link,
like migrants at the Southern border,
the marble mother cradles her child.
His corpse is freckled from city rain.
His open hand hangs,
but hers is a gentle arc, mostly white,
a curved needle, minus thread,
ready for suturing.
Beneath their black plinth,
concrete planters lay on their sides:
white paint peels;
cracking bamboo stakes
are shrinking ribs
succumbing to the weather.

I want to believe
despite what you have become:
 your thinning body, tapering fingers;
 your name shortened to O Lady of t. Car;
 Sunday service shrunk to m ss a :30.

O Lady of t. Car,
teach me to pray
to the silenced god of second chances
in this rustbelt town where broken glass
falls like seeds on sidewalks;
where diesel fumes coat the air;
where wild chicory grows,
angled, misshapen
out of asphalt.



Grace Giroux, *Decay*

Laurence Snyder

Extremities

When I was young I marveled at the hand,
The tapering of fingers and the twist
Of sinews snaking from the gnarled band
Of knuckles to their anchor in the wrist.

I read palms, both the life line and the love,
And mystified, I found what fate had planned
For skeptics, whom I'd had no knowledge of
Before they tendered me their tender hand.

Now I am old and looking further find
Feet a far fitter fetish for my age.
They have hands' stretch and structure, understand
The body as it shuffles off the stage.

Hands raise us high to celebrate our birth.
Feet never fail to bring us back to earth.

Christian Hanz Lozada

The Desert Tortoise is New

but over 50.

We name him Manoy Honu,
a mixture of tongues ours but not
Manoy: Cebuano for elder like elder brother
Honu: Hawaiian for turtle like sea turtle
both words willfully wrong,
as if we're joking on ourselves
as if Manoy was named by a three-year old
still learning the language
and these are all the words the child has confidence in

We name him Manoy,
the only Cebuano word I remember,
the only one I was taught
the only one I have forgotten
because my Eastern Brown Brothers used it
hid behind it for authority
because my Western mind refused
refused Brown Authority
refuses honorifics.

The word is from such a distant, never me,
I don't pronounce it correctly never pronounced it correctly.
My White Mom's Southern Drawl slows my speech
and I elongate the first syllable: Mah, like mother.

We name him Manoy
to show him respect
to remember on the journey to now
we've held tight to some things that didn't matter
and let slip the sacred.

Larry T. Hollist

Eating Ice Cream with Jesus

For my niece Emily

The other day Jesus knocked at my door.
He asked if I wanted to go out for ice cream,
He was buying. I said sure.

When we got to Baskin-Robins
He ordered Chocolate and Cherries Jubilee in a cup.
I ordered Wild 'n Reckless Sherbet and Rocky Road in a waffle cone.

He said most people won't even answer the door
Once they see who is there.

I said I never check and I never turn down free ice cream.
I should be the one buying since I feel like I owe you.

Nonsense, spending time with you is all I want.
There was a long comfortable silence
As we both enjoyed our ice cream.

I then asked, is there anyone you ever didn't want to forgive?
Well... a long pause
No,
You were worried I was going to say you.

You know Jesus has a great sense of humor.
He told me a joke,
"Did you hear about the time when
Moses, an old man and I went golfing?"
It was a joke I had told hundreds of times before
But it seemed better coming out of his mouth.

He was in a lighter mood.
So, do you think I should 've told Peter
About the stepping stones on the Sea of Galilee?
Dramatic Pause,
Gottcha, there were no stepping stones.

As he dropped me off he said
We should do this again.

Sure, anytime.

How about now?
He chuckled a little then drove off



Carmen Germain, *Downwinders*

Glenn Jacob-Oviatt

Paradise, USA

An orchestra recites patriotic hymns
in the bandshell for the bronze soldier
who guards the park with an empty

rifle and a vacant gaze. The Stars and Stripes
adorn hats on graying hair, rumple across
children's t-shirts, and line the fences

in half-moon bunting. The flag
is a talisman of liberty adorning a city
lined with gold pages ripped from bibles,

the beatitudes discarded
in collective fits of dissonance,
the pages pulled out by the handful

like our million numbered hairs.
The earth sinks beneath our feet, an abscess,
an inverted mount, swallowing the sermons

that exclude the poor, the hungry, the meek,
the merciful, the mourners, the peacemakers,
the persecuted, and the pure—

they become the bread and wine we devour
to nourish the parasitic god of our bellies.
We are eternally unsatisfied, consecrated

by our consumption, incarnate with
the singing of our holy anthems that extol
the virtues of cruel apathy and call it bravery.

In the distance, a storm boils
above the treeline. The thunder
in our ribs brings us to our knees

because a god who dwells in all things
is incongruent with the prophecy
of our birthright to discriminate and dominate.

Lightning aims at the steeples and we forget
that we packed their empty crosses with gunpowder.
The city burns without eyes to see the flames.

Charles Joseph Albert

Carless Santana

In San Jose, developers
decreed a tony shopping haven.
They raised the bars, the restaurants,
the boutiques for the fashion maven.

The genius of the new design:
avoid the simple big-box mall,
but bring us European style—
a piece of Rome before the fall.

No single-story in the strip,
each building goes up five or six,
with swank apartments perched on top
where urbane folk look down on chicks

parading in the porticos
(a little nod to old Bologna).
Not sprawl—high density mixed-use!
O San Jose, who would have known ya?

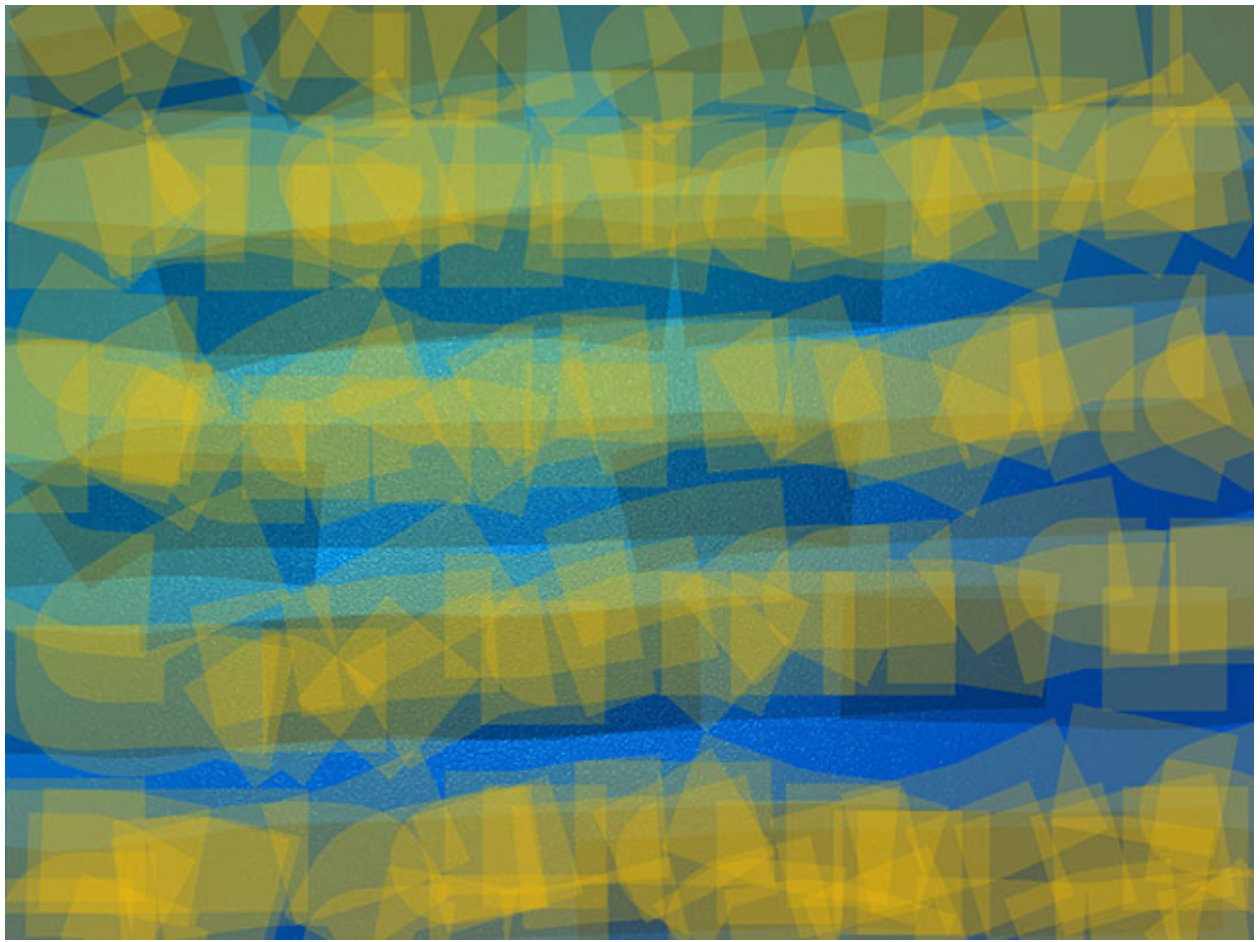
The only flaw in the façade
of this Florence-of-four-blocks
is a means to ferry in
the Gucci-footed tourist flocks.

Which means this little Pisa heaven
ringed by Lexi and Mercedes
is cut off from the rest of town
by a freeway-parking Hades.

Mary Pascual

Startled Heart

You smile as you walk away
and in the glow and quiet
I can hear
the sun turning into honey,
drop by slow heavy drop.



Tim J. Myers, *Vibrant World*

Rashna Wadia

To Break Oneself Open

To break oneself open
Feel what is in front of you
the anger, the grief, the rage, the sadness.
Every emotion that you ignore and wish away
Embrace it like a mother's warmth
A lover's touch
A butterfly's grace on a summer day.
And then release it,
For it was never yours to keep.
Let the sea and sky swallow the pain you hold
as it belongs to them as many things do.
And like the winds carrying away a storm,
Watch in wonder
As streaks of sunlight
filter through
the darkest caverns of your heart.
Shedding light on the open spaces
Waiting to be reborn.

Jade Braden

Here Comes the Bride

The Girl is six. She is playing with her Barbie dolls at the kitchen counter while her mother does the dishes. Her mother does not listen attentively to the dialogue her daughter creates, but smiles at the indistinct chatter. The Girl has different voices for each of the dolls which can be discerned over the clattering of glass wear. The creative type. She's blossoming already which, naturally, is any parent's dream. The mother hears her daughter start to hum the wedding march and turns in respect to watch the procession. The dolls have all been carefully laid out. There are no chairs and not nearly enough dress clothes, which makes for an informal wedding. The guests sit on the floor. One of the Barbie's wears her chef's uniform, and Beach Doll Ken wears a shirt that says Lifeguard in cheap, cracking red letters.

One Barbie wears the coveted wedding dress while another wears a leotard and tutu. They stand together in front of the other dolls. The Girl begins a pantomime of vows, conceivably reconstructed from what she remembers of romantic movies. Her mother chuckles and dries her hands on the dish towel before approaching the wedding scene. She reaches for Ken.

"Can't forget the groom," she says.

The Girl redoes the vows with Beach Doll Ken. Ballerina Barbie lays stiffly near the altar.

Scott Knies, Carlos Uribe, Lacey Bryant

Waves of Tendency



Isaak Wright-Hollist

Untitled

Weeks of quarantine
I've been inside so much
I've started reading books

Hilary King

Flowers in a Vase

Cut just as they bud
Stood upright in tall cold glass
Blossoming inside.

Diane Lee Moomey

Untitled

Blackbirds patrol the grass
beneath empty picnic tables, temporarily
out of work.

Dion O'Reilly

As we died, the world
opened, just for a minute
but I saw it.

Pushpa MacFarlane

Fleabag

how unfortunate for a flea that it lacks wings—
no wonder it sucks

John Price

At Threshold

Crowds of summer wheat
gathered to applaud the sun:
Listen! On the wind!

Marvin R. Hiemstra

Lockdown Unlocked

Beauty, a jade handle hairbrush:
what is she doing
in the window?

Dennis Noren

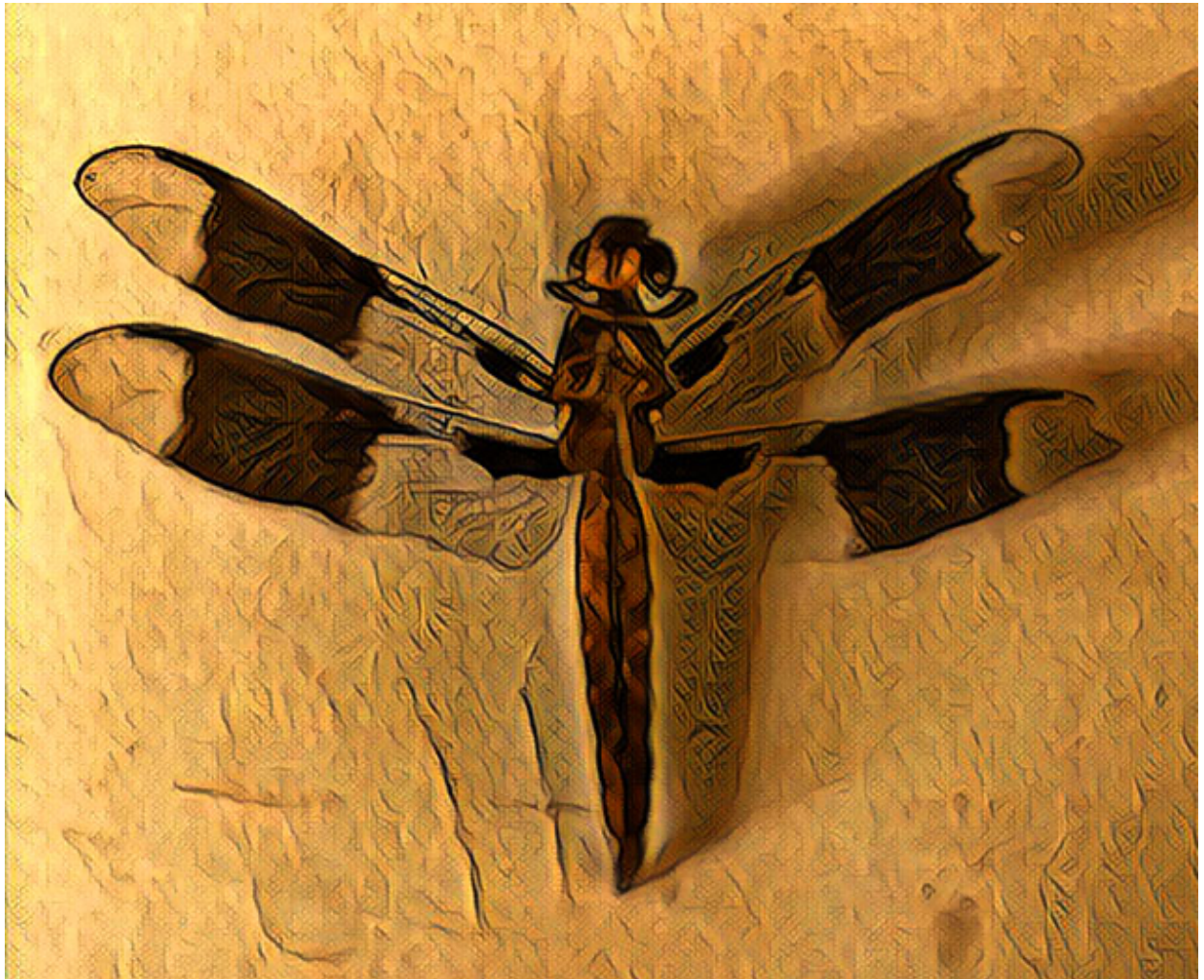
Untitled

Clean air, but spring untasted.
Hugs forbidden
when we need them the most.

Vicki L. Harvey

Lace Leaf Maple

Lace leaf bloom
Copper colors speak to me
When will I see you again



Christopher Woods, *Dragonfly*

Peter Hamer

Emily Dickinson in Space

No sun shines through the window
in my cabin, only stars like fields
of daisies and the darkness between.

Cunning machines prepare our food,
without natural sugar or spice.
The taste is acceptable,

but not quite what I like.
I couldn't bear to go without
baking, so I'm assigned a shift

in the galley at 4 AM
New England time, the same as father
granted me. For my ginger bread,

the molasses is a distant cousin
to that obtained in Amherst,
but the ginger I grow myself

in my conservatory
in the garden area of the ship.
I have figs, persimmons and pears

for sweets, lettuce and cabbage for greens,
orchids, roses and forget-me-nots
for friends. No room for acres of cane

so false molasses must do.
A glass of sherry for the guest
is missed, as is the hoard of children

who played in the yard and called
for pirate's booty of cakes
and cookies outside my window.

Vinnie and Sue are near, and Austin
too. Carlo, my dog, could not make
the journey. Father is out here

somewhere, I'm sure. We may see him
along the way to far Orion,
serious as an oak. Mystery awaits.

Rickey Goins

Forest's Veneer

Violent, charcoal clouds band against the sky
Ravens' murder cock heads at the sirenous
Choo choo of the train, a resounding whistle.
Through the curtain of hunter pines peeks
A stag, staring in contempt as to
Mark a territory tethered at the hooves.
Vapor steam puffs plume into jet stream,
lining the boringly, bruised air
with whipped white missiles.
Nikon tipped, a click here to capture
This prodigious panorama, Nature's hello
the haunting neigh swallowed into tree bark
and cones, while nervous clattering fours
Trot off as if to cede its ground
Vanishing through the forest's veneer of charm.
I'm at our autumn haven,
Use the map, use your "x," mark the spot.



Christopher Woods, *Buzzards, July Evening*

James Fowler

Eighteners

"I can't marry you, Constance."
"But why, John?" she sobbed.
"I . . . I already have three wives."
"Well, drat."

This was the land that time forgot, or vaguely remembered, like that kid in second grade who lisped.

"Yeah, I did it. The poisonings, the dynamited dam, the curse of Amun Ra. Me, me, and me."

Nothing compared with childhood's magical adventures, except perhaps the Battle of Augsburg,
and the financial collapse of 1878.

"Damn this avalanche," Cyril exclaimed to his companions in the buried cabin. "Out of bananas too. Now what?"

Right on, she was that tambourine chick in Wednesday's Incense, the sharp note in an otherwise flat life.

Seething with resentment, Paul sat beside his father wishing the man's beloved Buccaneers the most humiliating of losses.

Refuse to help his moronic brother-in-law corral the rabbits in his attic, and hello couch exile.

If ZYKK hadn't killed Reynolds, and the package was still in play, why was Natalia ordering in Bulgarian?

Fool, after all his infiltrating, he'd just flashed the Council of Chaos sign to the Fourth Street Nasties.

Seine bookstall she art prints he philosophy Descartes from de cart he
punned cinched it a
lifelong binding.

A concerto famous for three centuries. Somehow, impossibly, his own. Their way of revealing:
you are his clone.

Harrow House, formerly a notorious private asylum, Baphometric cult site, and murderous wax museum, now featured bouncy castles.

Particularly tough to exorcise was the demon Herb, a self-described slacker "comfy" in this carb-laden host.

Jake won the extra helping of baked beans with his I'm lonelier than blue corn in pig shit.

Though terror of seven seas, Redbeard couldn't get his dog Matey to show where he'd buried the ship.

Hearing Richard tell his myopic proctologist joke, followed by "bottoms up," Susan knew she had to divorce him.

And that's how Katie, the milkman's plucky daughter, won the Kentucky Derby riding the three-legged pony Peppermint.

Bryan Stanley

Wolf's Eyes

Through the wolf's eyes, I
see the forest on fire
for war is near. I can hear
it in the cosmic choir.

Through the wolf's eyes, I
see my soul through the smoke
for fear that darkness is all
my soul will soak

Through the wolf's eyes, I
build a callous cathedral of power
with only one means of victory
of its kind

Through the wolf's eyes, I fight
this epic war among the constellations
and cosmos of time

Through the wolf's eyes, I see
my life as it is, a life of courage
and honor like light through the darkness

Through the wolf's eyes, I
will live in the glory of Valhalla.

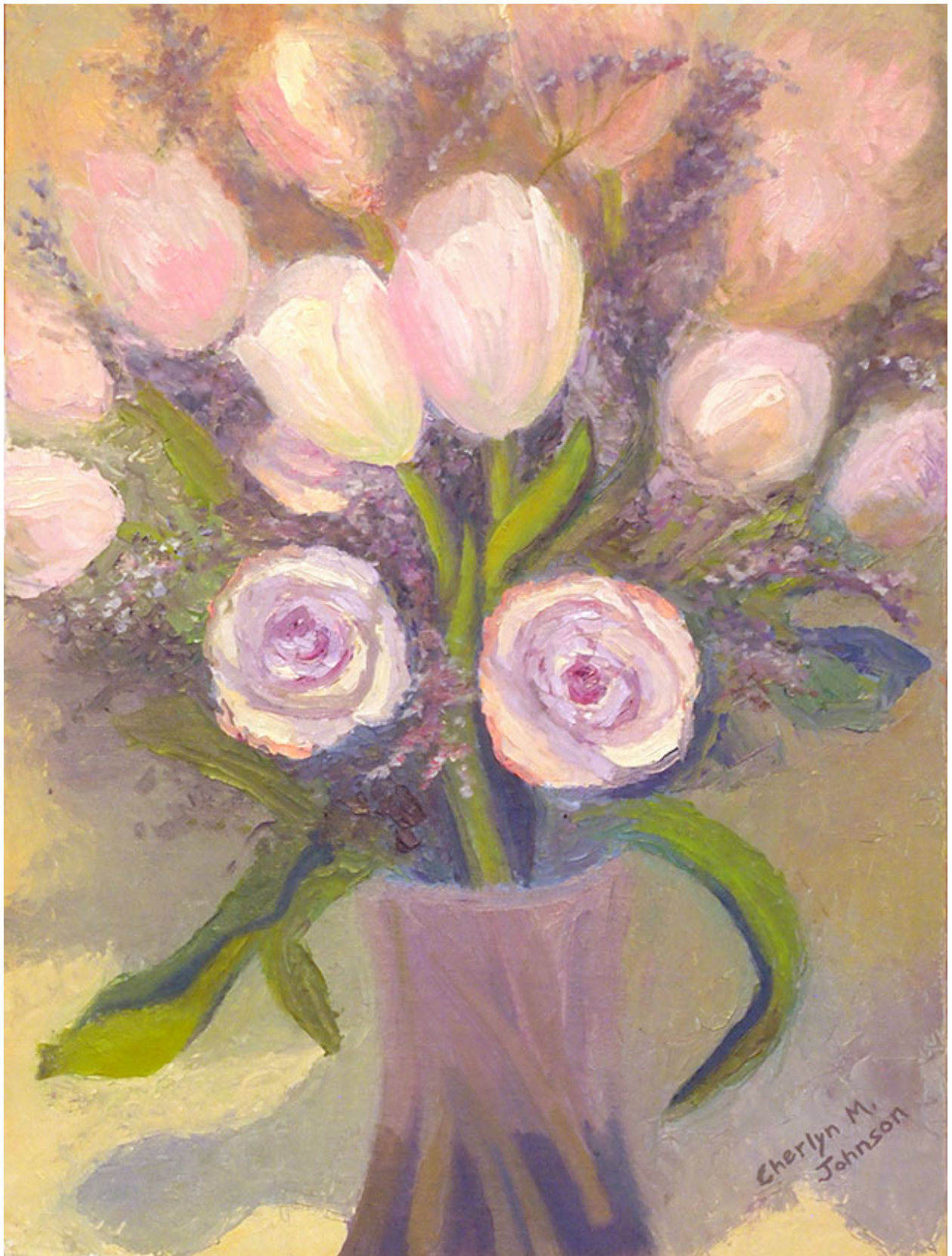
Deborah LeFalle

We Smiled

Heavy rains and unusually fierce winds kept us indoors for most of March. The ground was saturated – perfect conditions for our rarely used knee-high rubber boots. Tree companies and utility providers were kept busy 24/7 responding to calls for downed trees and power lines. Meteorologists had warned intense storms were coming – "El Niño winter," they said. We had grocery-shopped in bulk so we would have plenty of food on hand... and every other day we had something slow-cooking on the stove: turkey chili, lamb stew, and our favorite – chicken tortilla soup. Comfort food to warm the body and satisfy the soul. Apples were in season, so we made apple pie, apple tarts, applesauce, baked apples... anything apple!

Dark clouds hung low, but our spirits remained high. One Saturday evening it was storming like crazy. Trying to make the best of the situation, we put on some Old School R&B and commenced to clean house. Aretha, Stevie, and Chaka Khan had us dancing as we dusted and singing as we swept. Then suddenly, the power shut off. We lit candles, and there we sat in semi-darkness listening to tree branches thrash one another as if fighting for a prize. We waited, and wondered how long it might be before we would have electricity again.

Power was restored by morning and the first day of spring did not disappoint. Not saying a word we stepped outside to the sound of chirping birds and lifted our faces to soak up the sun's gentle rays. Then settling our gaze back down we inhaled the fresh, clean air. That's when we spotted the pink-tinged tulips sprouting up, and smiled.



Cherlyn Johnson, *Tulips and Roses*

Bill Tremblay

The Discovery of the Wheel

The Quinebaug's east bank narrows to
a sand-spit with an orphan trash barrel filled with
smoke and soup cans, a smashed baby crib,
blackened bars still alight,
a pillow case of melted plastic toys,
carbon flakes of rising junk mail bats,
a hair-blower with a cord that ends in fangs.

My sister's is pink.
Through the kitchen window
an October surprise falls through clotheslines,
an unnoticed omen in the background radiation.
Why else do I see a trash barrel as orphan?
Ma in her rocking chair.
Her jaw quivers like she's giving birth to a lead ingot
she's been growing inside her
 made of ice cream and sticky pecan buns.
She hoists herself up, throws her knitting to the floor,
steps quick to her bedroom,
comes back with an armload of underwear,
her turtle shell brush, comb and mirror, two flowered dresses
her suitcase.

My sister and I turn to each other,
hunch our shoulders in the same question mark.
What happens after enough is enough?
The hub our family wheels around is packing.
We see now she's been under-weaving a silence

with her needles to hide her secret in
row by row in wool the color of yucca bells
in a red Arizona arroyo that grows in us
until we don't know how to stop seeing
the nothing-but-the-ghost-of what she used to say
that will be there when she isn't.

She is packing and what does it matter
if she leaves after her husband steals her dignity
and her paycheck? She has found something
she can't live without, an unmoving axel,
a heart like a wheel to steer by.

Gregg Shapiro

The Plate Spinner Falters

In the beginning, he thought it was the sticks and poles conspiring against him. Tired of what they considered to be the thankless task of pulling more weight than he. It was a theory he was unprepared, unwilling to

test. Examining them with an eagle eye for splits and curves, a hollowing out. All those revolutions, he never saw vertigo waiting in the wings like an anxious understudy. Now, if he even looks at a ladder he must

find the lowest, flattest surface on which to sprawl while the ceiling twirls in the opposite direction. When all he really wants to do is curl up in a fetal position so round and tight he would be mistaken for a cat's eye marble.

Jenny Hykes Jiang

Trade War

Shanghai to Jinhua, riding across from us,
they ask me something

about *nali/where* and when I answer
meiguo/America—

they laugh: *This train doesn't go that far.*
They've just finished the corn harvest

from their one acre, (stacks of bright
gold against lath and plaster walls)

left their six-year-old all ready
for his new school year.

They ride back south to gray smokestack
cities, gray factories, gray factory dorms.

Numbers of times, ways the terms change, pay shortened.
They tell my husband: *xian / cheated*.

Sunflower seeds crack and burst between cracked
teeth. Dry, peeling lips purse steaming glass

bottles of green tea.
Leaves unfurling, adrift.

I could recognize their beefy, swollen fingers as frostbite because
my husband has the same hands.

But to do this would mean to do something
I don't want to do yet.

I take their photograph because
I have a nice camera I want

to use,
and the privilege to consider them

novel, collectible.
She wears a frilled

crimson blouse, black polyester blazer,
matching slacks, a short strand of tiny yellowed pearls.

Chapped cherry-red cheeks, coarse hair tied back, black
as the night train's cold window panes.

She gazes as I focus, flash. Smiles after.
It's months, maybe years later, when I hear the candidate's wife

grumble in an interview about how tired she is
on the campaign trail:

*Now I have to go back and shop for Christmas presents and try
to find any toys that aren't made in China.* The last word almost spat.

Also, how many years go by before I think
to question whether she is joking when she says

*Finally I've made something of my life,
since my picture will go to America.*



Cherlyn Johnson, *Blue Sky*

Jeanne Gillespie

I.

Then,

you, my Artisan, tossed off the winter hat I crocheted, changed your snow boots for wooden clogs, rumbled your marble-y laugh and yanked the book press a half turn tighter to flatten and wring the old pages dry. You bound them to spines of mesh and buttery leather after I patched each tear with tea- dyed rice paper, paginating as I went with a No. 2, you, chuckling over my shoulders at my European 7s.

You restored and retouched me, deftly scoring indelible schemas with your bone folder, ever handy in a pocket. My willingness thrilled us both, and I hoped you'd stay close. You did, in fact, for a dozen years, till we vanished into our own lives as if we dreamt each other up.

It felt that way sometimes, but for the photographs I developed in trays of swirling, liquid memory.

Years afterward, tall capitals splashed in neon across the walls of a high suite in that hotel near Market, the bed backed up to the afternoon sun and the blinding reflected ocean. Passion careened around your room, The City, our bodies, our last time. How 'over us', I felt! How preposterously 'adult'!

We marveled in the bath at the 34 floors beneath us like sweetly layered plies of baklava.

We spoke by phone a few times of our marriages, your widower-hood and remarriage, but we haven't laid eyes or hands on one another since that afternoon, etched by the sun into our memories (Or perhaps only into mine?), while my Knight, unfazed and gallant, abided me at home.

Jeanne Gillespie

II.

Later,

Neither my Knight nor I had ever seen so many spiraling hawks or ornaments of mistletoe nestled in the live oaks. The choppy brown water of Humboldt Bay frothed beside acres of redwood planking. Elk grazed in the raking light and flicked their tails at the wild ocean. Along the Long Tom River, buds struggled through drapes of sopping, velvety moss.

We let go of all the ways we were careless with ourselves and crammed every possibility into a staggering 1,500 miles of driving, a catalog of situations. Weepy downpours dangled from sodden clouds, making a bog of Shoshone's Duck Valley in the early spring.

We risked a Mad Max encounter in a bar that had a fraying pool table and the only bathroom for miles.

Coteries of prairie dogs warmed themselves on the macadam, rose up, turned on a dime and scampered to the roadside along Owyhee Creek where the drab high desert colors deepened to mustard-gold and every shade of red and brown and ocher.

As soon as we whizzed past, the critters showed again in the rearview, luxuriating on the sun-hot road. Standing in a snow globe squall at Wild Horse Reservoir, we were muffled in absolute silence, too delighted to remember ever being cold, afraid, alone. My Knight and I whooped to each other and to the sky, around every bend for days!

Jeanne Gillespie

III.

Now,

I recall that whenever I passed, I touched the masterpiece that hung like a sacred icon in your hallway. Why did you leave my letters where she'd find them, my Artisan?
She fled to a university town where you followed eventually, and I moved beyond you as far as I could go without tumbling into the sea.

You were the most alive of anyone I knew in our orphaned bygones until we bumbled apart, unable to ignore what seemed to matter most. "Always one more time, girl. Always one more time...",
you told me then, neither a lie nor a promise.

If our paths crossed, would you see me as the stranger I'd be to those around you now, you and your masterpiece?
It's not as if my heart would break again if your memory of an 'us' has faltered, but hey, happy birthday.

I age, too, loving my Knight, my lionhearted husband, here in scorched California, our seasons reduced forever to Rain, Fire and Pestilence, catching our collective breath, carrying on.
A mutual friend rarely speaks of you but has your address. Blame him, if you must blame someone, if this out-of-the blue epistle ever reaches you. It reads better as a poem, so I never sent it.



Cherlyn Johnson, *Sunflowers*

Rick Kempa

When I Listen

I hear the most amazing things:
wavelets dropping their freight of water
one by one by one upon the sand,
geese barking on the far shore of the lake,
the roar of mayflies overhead.

Silence too touches the eardrum,
an audible vibration—or is it
the rippling of my own energy
moving out to claim its small share
of this vast space that I hear?

And when I still myself and turn
towards you, I am wonderstruck
yet again, old fool that I am,
how much there is to hear, to learn.
You could be anyone.

Jade Bradbury

Water Signs: Fish Story

Then one moon-fraught
night, it rained
silvery fish, thousands
arcing and pulsing
like stars or fireworks
streaming slowly
downward
in a foamy, twinkling mire
of mist as if nothing
unusual had taken place.

Some people keened
at the sight, their first pained
howls a grim sign
something had changed,
they didn't know what
and feared the worst,
the face of the earth a boggy
plain, the fish not sure
where to be when their world's
a shifting, dying sea.

Elizabeth Jiménez Montelongo

Entwined Roots

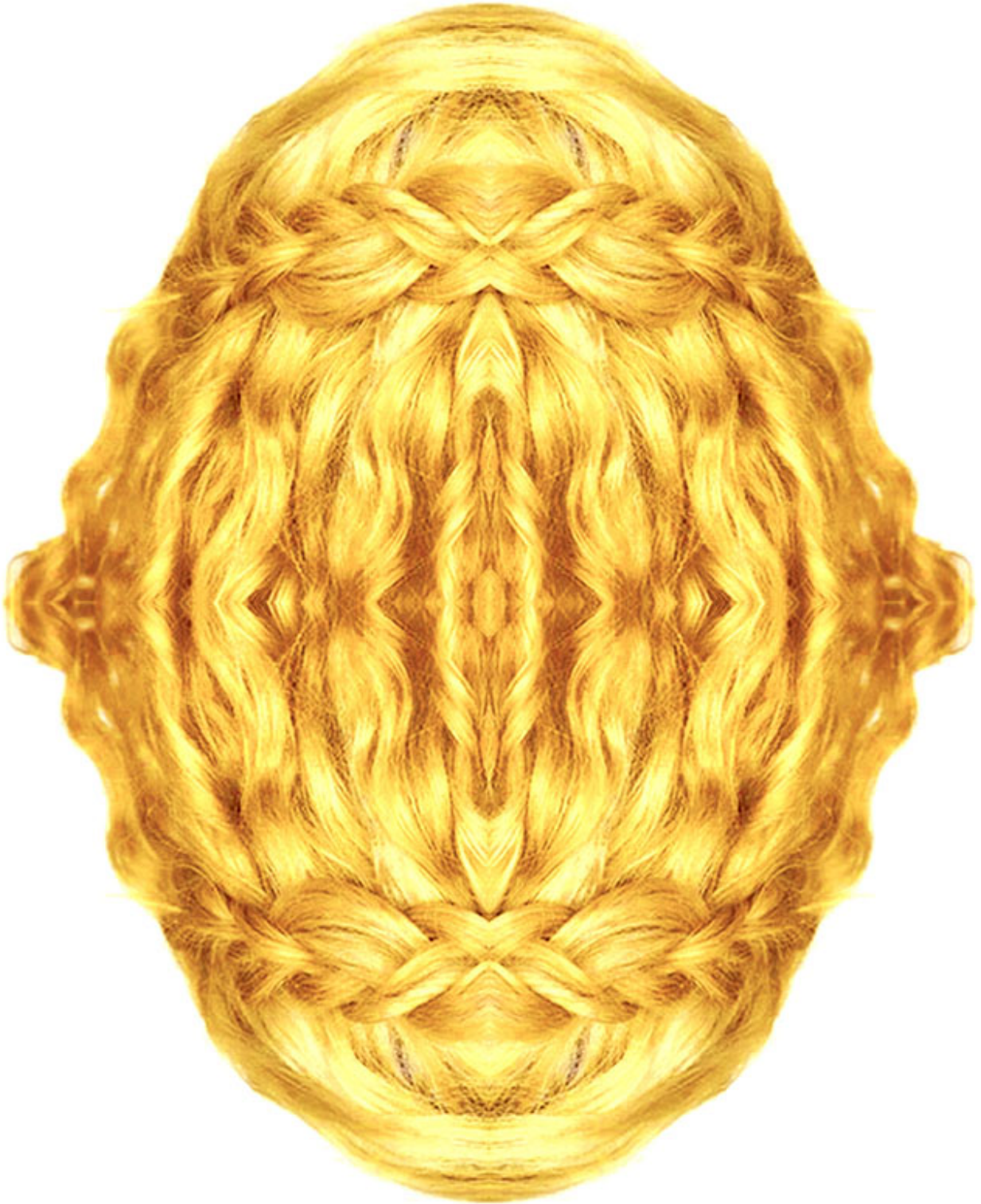
We nap in the moonlight,
Bathe in the rain,
Tell each other secrets,
Holding hands underground.

We dance
With our arms in the wind,
We drink the sun,
We eat the earth.

We pull down the fire.
Pull up the water.
From one spot in the Earth
We exhale magic into the wind.

Without warning,
You cut our bodies.
Chop them, burn them,
Slice them, crush them into pulp.
You leave pieces of us clinging to the ground,
No regret.

And still:
We built the walls of your homes,
You breathe the magic we exhaled,
You eat up what we have to offer,
And your roots are entwined with our roots.



Bill Wolak, *A Glance That Clings Like Flame*

Jean Emerson passed away in March of 2020.

Jean Emerson did not want a memorial service of any kind. Her daughter Sandy and son-in-law William, with whom Jean lived in her final years, respected her wishes of not making a "show" of her passing. We will simply mention that she was a great mentor to many poets, and share a poem that she wrote.

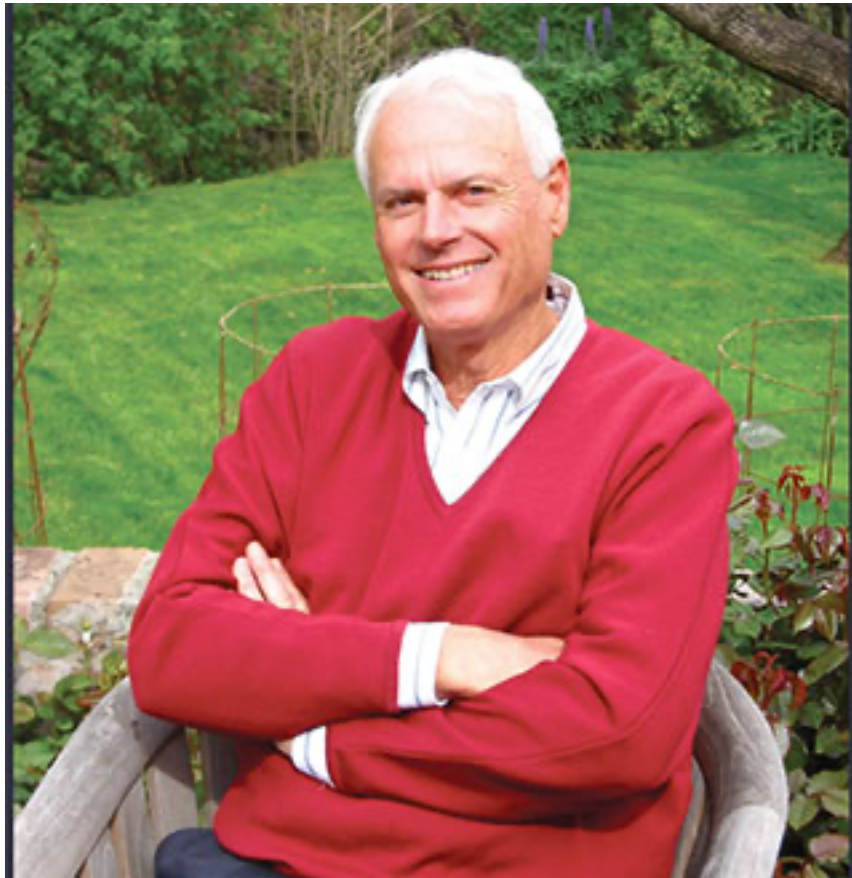
Jean Emerson's poem "Birth Sign" first appeared in the Willow Glen Poetry Project, March 23, 2011.

Birth Sign

God help me
I'm beginning to think my computer
Understands me.

For no reason at all
It told me my Korean Astrological sign
Is the Metal Ram

So much more like me
Than the Lion I'd always
Believed I was.



Jack Richard Taylor April 25, 1930 – January 31, 2020

Jack attended UCLA where he met the amazing Mary Lou Robeson, and they married in 1952. Jack was loved so much by his family – his wife of 68 years, Mary Lou, his two children, Linda (Chuck), Matt (David), Grandson Chris (Catherine), Granddaughter Allison (Tim) and two great-grandchildren, William Drew and Emily Slevin, and his niece and nephew Nancy Stewart & Lindsay Taylor.

Mary Lou Taylor selected the following poem that she wrote, because it was one of Jack's favorites.

Jack at Church

During the sermon at Midnight Mass I watch the fine hairs on the back of his hand catch the light, see his fingers twitch a little like a dog dreaming of a romp in golden fields. "Are you awake?" I whisper. His body jerks. He smiles a sleepy smile. "Every word," he says.



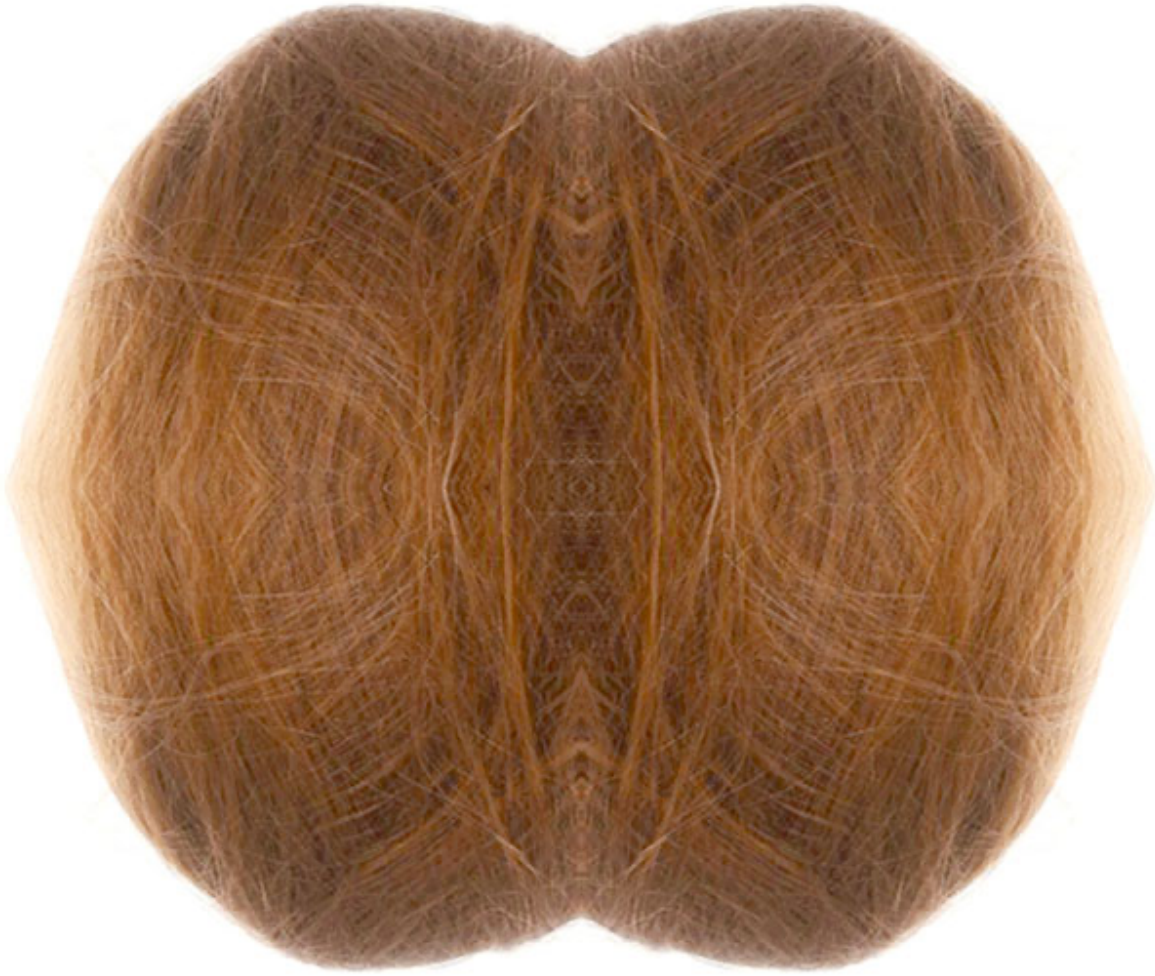
Judith Peterson passed away in April of 2020

Judith met Nils Peterson in 1961 and they married in 1963, just one week after Judith graduated. During their journey together Judith and Nils created two wonderful daughters Erika and Cecily. Judith's specialty as an artist was portraiture, and she worked as a psychotherapist in private practice going back to the 70s.

Nils selected his poem "Bedtime, for Judith," and a photo of Judith with their dear friend Greystoke.

Bedtime, for Judith

If we have quarreled our bodies wait
patient as horses. At last their owners
huffy and proud set off leaving
the sweet beasts to each other.
They turn, nuzzle, and flank to flank speak
the eloquent touching language of the dumb.



Bill Wolak, *The Astonishment of a Pearl Touched by Fire*

About the Poets:

Charles Joseph Albert works as a metallurgist in San Jose and does most of his writing on the light rail. "It's the most efficient way to commute--I get about one stanza per mile." His poetry has recently appeared in *Spectrum*, *In Parentheses*, *Wax*, and the *California Poetry Quarterly*.

Lea Aschkenas is the author of the memoir, *Es Cuba: Life and Love on an Illegal Island* (Seal Press/Hachette). She works at a bilingual public library and teaches with the California Poets in the Schools program. Her prose has been published in *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, salon.com, and *The Washington Post*; her fiction in the book, *Havana Noir*; and her poetry in *The Atlanta Review*, *Poets Reading the News*, and *The California Quarterly*.

Jade Bradbury is a published poet/writer who generally shares her observations and concerns in the context and spirit of, "So, let's work with it". The Covid-19 pandemic social constraints have sharpened her reflections, as has the concurrent 'Black Lives Matter' movement, reigniting awareness and action worldwide. She lives with her husband in the South Bay, and occasionally reads at Flash Fiction Forum. Her poetry chapbook *In the Willing Dirt* was published by Purple Passion Press in 2019.

Jade Braden is an author and artist, based in Ohio. She has been published in both *FANGLE* and *Scribendi Magazine* and is currently working on her undergraduate creative writing thesis at Ohio University. Jade often explores gothic, religious, feminist, and queer themes in her writing.

James Fowler teaches literature at the University of Central Arkansas. He is author of the poetry collection *The Pain Trader* (Golden Antelope Press, 2020). His poems have recently appeared in such journals as *Futures Trading Magazine*, *Cave Region Review*, *Elder Mountain*, *Lullwater Review*, *Aji Magazine*, *Westview*, *The Gyroscope Review*, *Cantos*, *Seems*, *Angry Old Man Magazine*, and *Dash*. He has pieces forthcoming in *Evening Street Review*, *U.S. 1 Worksheets*, and *The Helix Literary Magazine*.

Jeanne Gillespie: I maintain my clinical license after a long career. During lock down, I spend my time with my husband, write fiction and poetry, research stigma, Zoom/Skype and savor all opportunities for (safe) fun. The drawing and poems are autobiographical. The form of the poems is patterned after the letter poems of Richard Hugo, whose work I encountered decades ago and to which I return regularly for inspiration and momentum.

A lifelong resident of Michigan, **CJ Giroux** teaches at Saginaw Valley State University, where he also serves as co-director for the Center for Community Writing. He is one of the founding editors of the community arts journal *Still Life*.

A Florida native with a degree in English Literature, **Rickey Goins** has also lived and worked in Texas. Photography and tutoring are his primary interests.

Peter Hamer lives in Estacada, Oregon. He sits on the Estacada Area Arts Commission and serves on the board of the Performing Arts Group of Estacada. He is the founder of the Estacada Poetry Project. His work appeared in *Take a Leap, Spank the Carp* and the 2020 *Clackamas County Poets and Artist Calendar*. He is the author of the chapbook *It's Just You and Me, Mr. Moon* is due out May 2020 from Portland's First Matter Press.

Vicki L. Harvey. Vicki was published in *Collected Whispers* by the International Library of Poetry in 2008. Her poems and artwork were published in the *Willow Glen Poetry Project* series, Volumes One, Two and Three. Her poems were also published in *My Kitchen Table* (2013), a literary magazine, and in the anthology, *Song of Los Gatos: Poems of the Gem City* (2014).

Marvin R. Hiemstra received Honors from the Iowa Writers Workshop, publishes and performs around the world: *North American Review*, *The Satirist*, *Amsterdam Quarterly*, *Caveat Lector* and elsewhere. Dana Gioia called Hiemstra's performance DVD, *French Kiss Destiny*, "superb work." *The Tower Journal* defined *Poet Wrangler*: Marvin R. Hiemstra, profound humor and double-entendre, offers sheer joy. What more could you want?" Leslie Hills at *The Scotsman* noted, "Hiemstra's *Turquoise Coyote* conjures up true moments and personalities: intense, refreshing theatre."

Larry T. Hollist was raised in Oneonta, NY a small, picturesque Upstate New York college town. After graduating college from Clarkson University as an Electrical Engineer, Larry moved to Japan for work where he started writing poetry. For over 20 years Larry has lived in San Jose, California, and is inspired and supported in his creative endeavors by his wife, and two sons. He has been published in the online magazine *The Literary Nest* and anthologies *What is Love* and *spring mother tongue*.

Glenn Jacob-Oviatt is a social worker residing in San Jose, California. Originally from the Chicago area, he graduated from Marquette University in Milwaukee with a degree in journalism and completed his MSW at San Jose State University in 2017. Glenn is passionate about social justice, mental health, storytelling, painting, hiking, and urban gardening.

Jenny Hykes Jiang's work has appeared in *Arts & Letters*, *Tule Review*, *Convergence* and *Poetry Now*, and in the Sacramento based anthology, *Late Peaches*. She has taught English as a second language across the United States and in Asia. Currently she is raising her three school-age children, and sidelights tending guinea pigs, chickens and the snails in her garden at her home near the American River in Rancho Cordova, California.

Poet and essayist **Rick Kempa** lives in Grand Junction Colorado. Recently retired after thirty years of teaching at Western Wyoming College, he has embarked on a path of full-time writing and walking. *Too Vast for Sleep*, his third poetry collection, was published in 2020 by Littoral Press. He is the founding editor of *Deep Wild Journal*. www.rickkempa.com

Hilary King's poems have appeared in *Fourth River*, *Belletrist*, *SWIMM*, *PANK*, *The Cortland Review*, *Blue Fifth Review*, *Sky Island Journal*, and other publications. She is

the author of the book of poems, *The Maid's Car*. Originally from Virginia, she now lives in the San Francisco Bay Area and is founder of #WritetheTown and the Los Altos Literary Association.

Scott Knies is the Executive Director of San Jose Downtown Association that keeps him in touch with many unexpected experiences. His poems have been published in *Boatman's Quarterly Review*, *Caesura*, and *Santa Clara Review*.

Deborah LeFalle is a former college educator who started writing in her retirement. Besides writing she enjoys engaging in the arts and humanities, digging into her family history, and spending time outdoors walking, gardening, and birding. Poetry is the genre of writing she is drawn to most, with inspiration for her poems often stemming from personal experiences. Her work has appeared in various journals and magazines, and she has authored two chapbooks, *Worthy* (2017) and *Little Suites* (2019).

Christian Hanz Lozada. I am the product of an immigrant Filipino and Daughter of the American Revolution and have co-written the poetry book *Leave with More Than You Came With*. My poetry has been anthologized in *Gutters and Alleyways: Poems on Poverty* and writing has appeared in *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Dryland: A Literary Journal*, *A&U Magazine* and various other journals. I have been invited to read or speak at the Autry Museum, the Twin Towers Correctional Facility, and other Southern California venues.

Pushpa MacFarlane. Love in the Age of Corona has been my theme in the year 2020—poems about souls lost to me, and my own fear of the end of my days. Poems buried in my journal came to life. Thoughts of my childhood and people in my life who passed came to my mind as I watched innocent lives swallowed up by COVID-19. Fear of dying, and fear of losing loved ones has stayed with me these last five months.

Elizabeth Jiménez Montelongo is a visual artist, poet, and teacher based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her writing is influenced by her indigenous Mesoamerican ancestry, Mexika (Aztec) philosophy, Mexican culture, Chicano history, and her experiences as a woman in the United States. Her poetry is included, and forthcoming, in literary magazines and anthologies. Elizabeth's visual artwork has been included in over fifty exhibitions in galleries and museums across the United States.

Diane Lee Moomey lives in Half Moon Bay, where she co-hosts a monthly poetry series. Her work has appeared in *Poetry Magazine*, *Mezzo Cammin*, *The Sand Hill Review*, *California Poetry Quarterly* and *Red Wheelbarrow*, and been nominated for a Pushcart prize. Recently she has won prizes and awards in the Soul Making Keats Literary Contest and at the Ina Coolbrith Circle. Her most recent book of poetry, *Nothing But Itself*, was published by Day's Eye Press and Studios.

Dennis Noren is an enthusiastic participant in the poetry community of the South Bay. He is a member of the Poetry Center San José Advisory Board, and organizes the Center's activity at the Edwin Markham House at History Park. Dennis was one of five winners of the 2012 Poetry on the Move contest and first prize winner of the 2010 Tokutomi Haiku Contest.

Dion O'Reilly has lived most of her life on a small farm in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Her first book, *Ghost Dogs*, was published in February 2020. Her work appears in *Verse Daily*, *Poetry Daily*, *Narrative*, *The New Ohio Review*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *New Letters*, *Rattle*, *The Sun*, and other literary journals and anthologies. Her poetry has been nominated for Pushcarts and been shortlisted for a variety of prizes. She is a member of The Hive Poetry Collective, which produces podcasts and events, and she teaches ongoing workshops in a farmhouse full of wild art.

Mary Pascual. I am a member of PCSJ and SCBWI. I have a BA in Literature from SJSU, and I've been a recipient of the James Phelan Literary Award in the poetry and short story categories. I live in San Jose, CA with my husband, son, and our rascally cats. When I'm not writing I take art classes and build impractical things for fun.

John Price is a member of Poetry Center San Jose.

Gregg Shapiro is the author of seven books including the 2019 chapbooks, *Sunshine State* (NightBallet Press) and *More Poems About Buildings and Food* (Souvenir Spoon Books). An entertainment journalist, whose interviews and reviews run in a variety of regional LGBTQ+ and mainstream publications and websites, Shapiro lives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida with his husband Rick and their dog Coco.

Laurence Snyder is a poet, musician and retired teacher. He has published more than a hundred poems in magazines such as *Caperock*, *Spillway*, *Columbia* and *Steam Ticket*. His work has also appeared in many anthologies including *Visiting Frost*, *The Poets Grimm* and *The Years Best Fantasy and Horror*. Some of his poems have been performed in Baltimore and NYC. He lives in San Jose, CA, with his wife Susan.

My name is **Bryan Stanley**. I am 33 years old and have a passion for expressing myself through poetry and tattoo art. I have tattoos and love creating them. I have one stepdaughter, Hazel Grace, with my beautiful girlfriend, Jessica. I have had a lot of serious trauma in my life from the time I was born until now. I believe becoming a published poet and tattoo artist is my road to redemption. I am very grateful for this honor.

Bill Tremblay's poems have appeared in nine full-length books. His most recent is *Walks Along the Ditch* (Lynx House Press, 2016). His tenth book, *The Quinebaug at Twelve*, is looking for a publisher. Poems from that book have been published in *Resonance: A Journal of Franco-American Writing*, *Worcester Review*, *Re-Dactions*, *Cimarron Review*, *Lummox*.

Rashna Wadia teaches creative writing and drama to K-8 students. Earlier in her career while teaching middle school English, she recognized there weren't many opportunities for students to express themselves creatively in the classroom. In response to this deficit, she started her own business *The Writer's Garden*, workshops for children that focus on writing, art, music, movement, and mindfulness. Through these workshops, Rashna creates a safe space for creative exploration, and empowers students to share their voices.

Isaak Wright-Hollist is a typical 7th grader who likes playing video games. He loves his dog, his parents and his older brother. He also likes to make up his own words to songs on the fly.

About the Artists:

Lacey Bryant was born in Louisville, KY and raised in the SF Bay Area. She works primarily as a scenic artist creating large props and sets for theatre, theme parks and parades. Lacey operates in the fuzzy logic of dreams and memories. She works from a combination of plein air, still life, photo references and wistful characters pulled from the ether of her imagination. See her work at laceybryant.com.

Carmen Germain is the author of *These Things I Will Take with Me* (Cherry Grove), and *The Old Refusals* (MoonPath Press). She divides her time between painting, drawing, and writing, and lives on the Olympic peninsula of Washington State. Her poetry has been published in *Poet Lore*, *The Madison Review*, and *Verse Daily*, among other journals and anthologies.

Grace Giroux is 18 years old and is a graduating senior in the Class of 2020. Grace lives in Michigan with her two parents and her two cats. In her free time, Grace loves taking photos, reading, listening to music, and spending time with her friends and family. Grace is excited to be a freshman in college next fall and pursue her passions in the arts and humanities.

Sally Giroux is a 3-D Art teacher who lives in Michigan with her husband, her daughter, and her two cats. Sally loves to read, journal, sketch, take photos, and just be creative. Sally likes to take photos that are meaningful to her and to those who admire her work. More than anything, Sally hopes her work will inspire others to change, and to create an inclusive world for everyone.

Cherlyn Johnson: Middle child of seven. Mother was an artist, father was a scientist-ecologist so I've always loved art, science and nature. After receiving a BFA from University of Denver, I was the creative director for the second largest US fitness corporation. Later I became a painter and digital storyteller, and have created many short films and co-taught storytelling workshops. Most recently, I've studied writing at the Lighthouse Writers Workshop in Denver, where I am developing children's poetry books. Website: CherlynArt.com.

Deborah Kennedy: I am an author and artist who lectures at regional literary events combining the poetry and illustrations from my book, *Nature Speaks: Art and Poetry for the Earth*. My book was recognized with six book awards including two national book awards—a Silver Nautilus and the 2016 Poetry Book Award from Eric Hoffer. My writing has appeared in *Leaping Clear*, great weather for MEDIA, *First Literary Review-East*, and *Canary - A Literary Journal of the Environmental Crisis*, as well as numerous other online venues.

Tim J. Myers is a writer, storyteller, songwriter, and senior lecturer at Santa Clara University. He's published five books of poetry, over 140 poems, has 16 children's books out with more on the way, and made the *New York Times* bestseller list for children's books. His *Basho and the Fox* was read aloud on NPR, and he's been nominated for two Pushcarts. Find him at www.TimMyersStorySong.com or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TimJMyers1.

Carlos Uribe is a silkscreen artist and textile printer currently living in Hawaii. Please go to carlosuribe.art to see my work and learn more about my art and life. Originally from NYC, Carlos has worked with many arts and community programs in New York, California, New Mexico and Mississippi. His own works have been exhibited in many venues worldwide. The spectrum of his career includes: art education, theatre production, book illustration, fencing (SJSU) and textile design.

Bill Wolak has just published his eighteenth book of poetry entitled *All the Wind's Unfinished Kisses* with Ekstasis Editions. His collages have appeared as cover art for such magazines as *Phoebe*, *Harbinger Asylum*, *Baldhip Magazine*, *Barfly Poetry Magazine*, *Ragazine*, *Cardinal Sins*, *Pithead Chapel*, *The Wire's Dream*, *Thirteen Ways Magazine*, *Phantom Kangaroo*, *Rathalla Review*, *Free Lit Magazine*, *Typehouse Magazine*, and *Flare Magazine*.

Christopher Woods is a writer and photographer who lives in Chappell Hill, Texas. He has published a novel, *The Dream Patch*, a prose collection, *Under a Riverbed Sky*, and a book of stage monologues for actors, *Heart Speak*. His photographs can be seen in his gallery christopherwoods.zenfolio.com. His photography prompt book for writers, *From Vision to Text*, is forthcoming from Propertius Press. His novella, *Hearts in the Dark*, is forthcoming from Running Wild Press.

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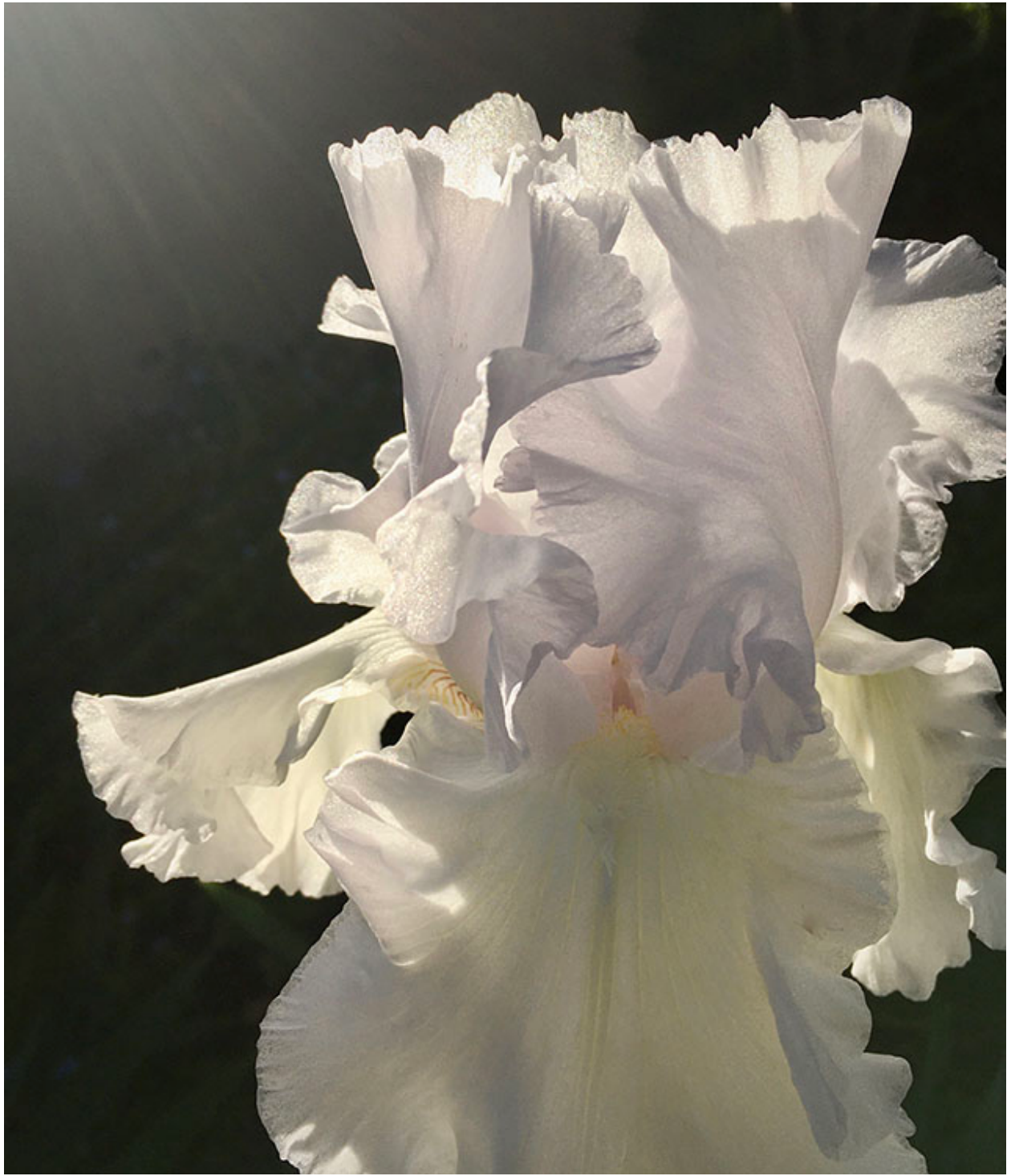
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Deborah Kennedy, *Edge of Hope*