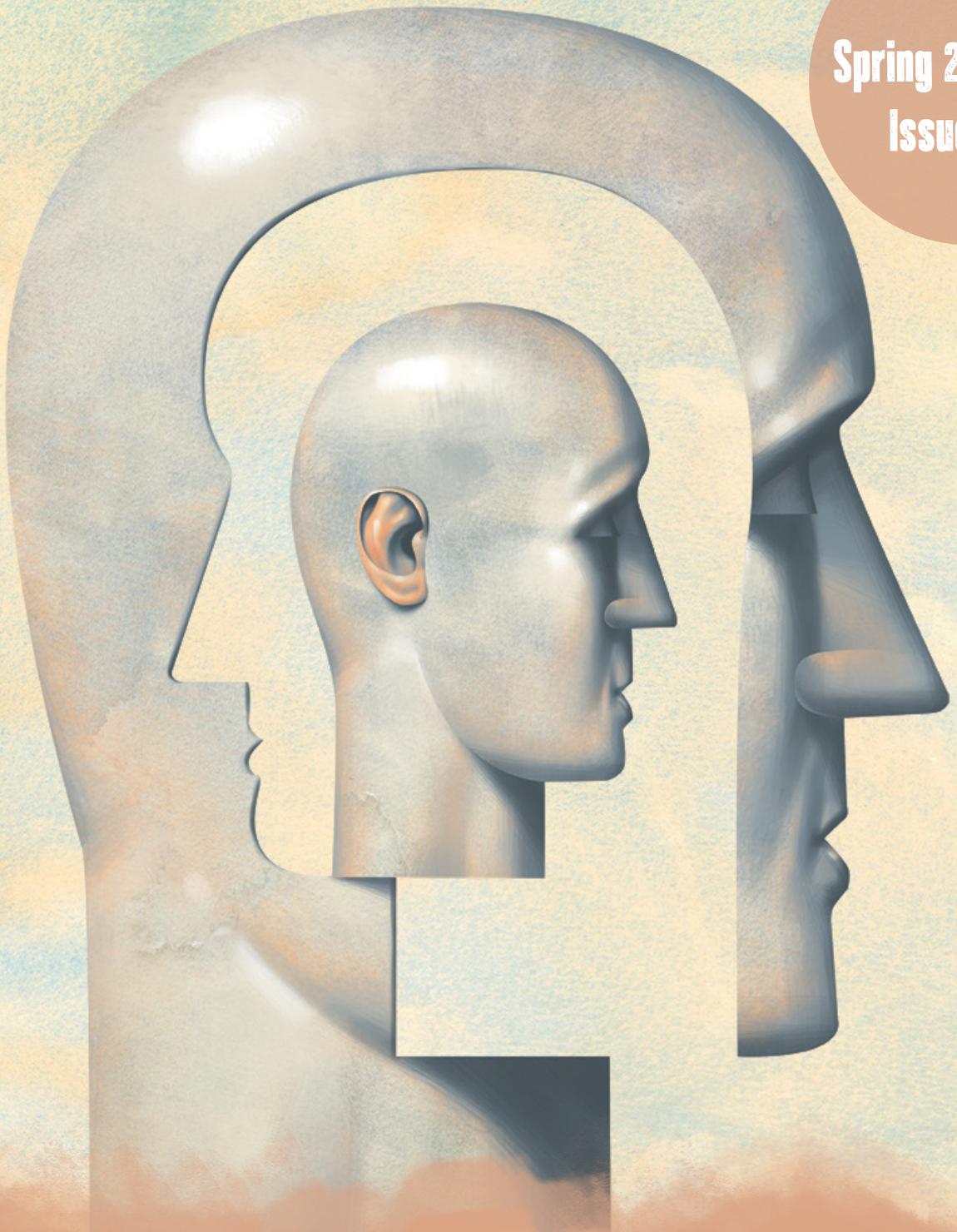


Spring 2018  
Issue 15



# Jet Fuel Review

Featuring work by David Lehman / Lynne Thompson / Jim Tsinganos  
Carlo Matos / Amy Sayre Baptista / Catherine Pierce



# **JET FUEL** Review

*A High Octane Literary Journal*

*[www.jetfuelreview.com](http://www.jetfuelreview.com)*

*[lewislitjournal.wordpress.com](http://lewislitjournal.wordpress.com)*

*Artwork: Jim Tsinganos' "Introspective Perspective"*  
*Cover Design: Kayla Chambers*



## Mission Statement

We seek to create a writer's community, publish quality writing and artwork, and maintain a blog connected to the literary journal site.

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This issue is dedicated to and is in loving memory of our editor Steven Seum, 1978-2017. Our thoughts go out to his family and friends; Steven will always be remembered and missed by the *JFR* family.



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## Foreword

Dear Readers,

Thank you for opening up *Jet Fuel Review's* 15th issue! The editors are excited to share another collection of exemplary writing and artwork which we've spent several months curating. We received our largest number of submissions yet this issue, with submissions from nearly 600 individuals in total. After giving each and every piece careful consideration, we have hand-selected pieces in poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and art that we feel are the most reflective of our mission as a journal, as well as what we value not only as editors but as human beings.

Student-run and faculty-advised at Lewis University located in Romeoville, Illinois, *Jet Fuel Review* continues to expand each and every year, having undergone a remarkable journey from its initial inception to its present form. Every semester, we are continuously enthralled with the compelling and provocative voices that we have the honor of representing in our journal. Our featured cover piece for this issue, "Introspective Perspective," comes from Jim Tsinganos, an Australian illustrator whose work is internationally recognized.

*Jet Fuel Review* is adamant about creating a platform for creators across the globe, as part of our goal is to establish diversity amongst the authors and artists we publish and the work they create. We strive to give voice to all people of varying backgrounds and experiences, and remain open-minded to both traditional and nontraditional forms of writing and artwork.

In our Spring 2018 issue, we present to you a Cento Special Section where we highlight the novel interpretations of an ancient poetic form, in which poets create new pieces only using lines hand-plucked from other works. In the spirit of collaboration and association, some of our very own editors and colleagues also created centos, which can be viewed on our blog at [lewislitjournal.wordpress.com](http://lewislitjournal.wordpress.com).

Issue 15 is dedicated to Steven Seum, a previous *Jet Fuel Review* editor and Lewis University graduate, who we lost in December. Steve brought much light to the staff with his humor and unique insights based on his experiences. The editors would like to take the lightness which Steve so wonderfully gave us during his time at *Jet Fuel Review* and offer it back to his family and friends in their time of need. Steve will always be cherished as a friend to our staff and as a loving husband and father, as well as a valuable editor whose tireless contributions enhanced our journal.

Our foremost goal at *Jet Fuel Review* is to help enrich the writer's community both locally and globally, publish captivating work, and maintain an engrossing blog connected to our literary journal site. Engaging in a variety of media and scopes, we hope that we can continue to augment the literary and artistic vista by publishing inspiring and thought-provoking voices.

Read on,

Sam Gennett & the *Jet Fuel Review* Editors





# POETRY



## **Not Dead But Post-Life**

Like a post-doc post-graduate student,  
I'm looking forward to being – not dead –  
but post-life. Post-life, with post-it notes  
to remind people *Look, I was here*.  
Post-life, I'll be lighter and all my vanities  
and anxieties extinguished. Post-life, my romantic life  
will resolve into fond memory, blurry videos  
where the real me used to be, fuzzy enough  
to distort wrinkles or asymmetries into oblivion.  
My internet profile will live on without me,  
probably more popular than before. Post-life  
my books will become better sellers, my professional  
self easier to swallow, harder to critique.  
Not dead but post-life, I will leave this weak and fragile  
body behind, become a beam of light  
in a field of daffodils, float, a paper lantern, into the sky,  
free of tethers, tassels, telephones, trappings of the old me  
falling away, a road-trip of destiny. Drop me a note,  
will you? Drop in! Post-life will be nothing  
but firefly freedom, a freefall into formlessness, finally.

## **Self-Portrait as Circus Performer**

Delighted at my contortions,  
you might move closer  
to study the manipulation of space and illusion,  
to peer into the lion's mouth  
or study the toes of the tightrope walker.  
The aerial silk, the stilts, the sequins.  
But see? Even as you watch  
I collapse in a cloud of tulle,  
and the horses rear in disarray,  
the feathers on their heads askew.  
The glitter on my fingers,  
the smudge of paint on my cheek,  
you will notice how the trapeze swing  
goes lower each time, how each voltige and banquine,  
each act of sword-swallowing and fire-breathing  
has brought me closer to the mouth of death?  
How each mutant and mermaid blurs,  
by a trick of light, into my mirror image?  
Can you be sure those aren't my silver scales?  
Can you be sure you didn't see the faintest hint of wings?  
Let me dive again into the open air, no net, silver ribbons flying.

## Carlo Matos & Amy Sayre Baptista

**Note:** These four collaborative epistolary poems are from Matos and Sayre Baptista's manuscript *The Book of Tongues*. The characters in these letters are based on the actual historical figures of Prince Pedro, his lover, Inês, and his wife, Constança. Theirs is a gruesome story of betrayal, murder, and a post-death coronation, which is considered to be one of the greatest love stories in Portuguese history.

### Letters from *The Book of Tongues*

Pedro,

No, my love, the sting on your tongue is promises splintered, not wasps. And your slivered agonies grow ragged against my flesh. Those of us in the grave have ample time to think. Has a lover, a woman kept, ever been so unkindly cut? Abandoned for hawk and hunt, has ever a Queen been so darkly uncrowned? Tell me, do the children now call my executioner, uncle? For he shall live longer in their world than I. Do not speak to me of first women, or fruit you find distasteful. Ghosts learn all their lessons late. And who shall tell my daughters that disobedience is the only lesson of survival? Who shall tell my daughters of me? The wasps? The nightingale dead on the sill? And when you speak of stings and promises, of wings stripped away from what might have flown, know I have made oaths of my own, from the center of a ribcage, stark white and choiring with maggots. Here is what my song sings: a man must answer for all his misplaced paradises.

Always and forever,

Inês

**Letters from *The Book of Tongues***

Pedro,

When I arrived at court with your future wife, I remember thinking I didn't quite understand your weather. It didn't take me long to get hooked on you, it's true, but not in the way everyone thinks. You weren't much of a fisherman though you styled yourself quite the hunter. It was more like a dagger sheath snagged all night on an elegant dress or a ring pulling by the nose: a cow to market, a handful of magic beans, a cloying of talons and feathers and a flying from the pieces. You were not a bitter man but lost, though not in the same way I lost myself at the end of a long day before the ordinary accusations of parenthood cut jagged the pattern of night. How many nights did I sing away the boogey man from our roof? You had the look of a man who had passed out and come to honeyed, mosquitoed, and itching for a word that means "to buckle," but instead of a word there was a pair of parenthesis, my arms, a shape without content or contest. When you flinched into our first kiss, I buried my voice in you so you'd have a night song for when the ice cracked at your marital bed, frigid even in the humid summer months. I remember there was winter in your kiss but also fear, a fear like snow closing the roads: confounding, abashed, and innocent. For we were really winter birds unsure of ourselves in summer, our voices made of sterner stuff.

Always and forever,

Inês

**Letters from *The Book of Tongues***

Inês,

A prince does as he must. Things required. Things expected. Constança fit a prince's duty and I wore her as fitted garment. As my wife, she never questioned my duty but said you were the unraveling of my honor, the tugged seam from which we all were undone. Unto her own death, she felt you had brought a plague on our offspring, that your sons would king her own. But you, my love, gave voice to the old myth, you showed the emperor had no clothes at all. I was naked before you. And when she died and you were finally to be my bride, her ghost must have been laughing. You said worry is nothing but the dead jesting at the living. Remember how you burned the bed sheets upon which she slept? How you salted the steps of the men who carried her body to the grave? God knows I believed your magic. Perhaps you were right to question my promises. Perhaps I cursed you while wishing for her death. When the cough in her chest turned persistent, I was ambivalent. I did not wish her dead, but I wished her gone. A man is meant to complete his wife's inequalities with his mistress' talents, but your shadow shaped my dissatisfaction. Your absence taught me longing. Constança died in my affections long before her body began to fail her. The day they came for you I was deep in the woods, three times I heard her death rattle in those hours before her death. Her ghost there in the forest. Her rasping breath, a mimic for the sword's falling arc upon your neck.

Forever and always,

Pedro

**Letters from *The Book of Tongues***

Constança,

Dearest queen, of all who were in my life, there was no one I felt sorrier to disappoint. And I am grateful you forgave me at your death. But not until my own did I learn the lessons you tried to teach. Yours was the regal visage I died to achieve. You who taught me to read star charts and recognize constellations, saying a woman must understand navigation, a woman must know what moves in the world and how. You had walked through the Lion's mouth alive. One cold night in April, we stood on the balcony outside your bedroom. You cut a fig and fed me half, your fingers salty with sweet flesh against my lips. Then you pointed to the brightest star in the sky. I asked if its light was why the others clustered so close. You said, the human eye is deceitful, as is the space between stars—the distance between them is like forgiveness, farther, farther, and darker than we ever imagined.

Yours,

Inês

## Girl Fool

I am at zero—  
    hollowed out cavity      waiting      toothless mouth  
Gown dried roses  
from obligatory bouquets      I shed:  
dead flowers,      rub:  
face with fresh petals  
    avoid:  
remembering smell

I am crossed-off grocery list—  
    bad at      waiting. I walk  
street, backyard, gather pebbles/feathers/pine  
needles, sew      their faces into dolls  
    they *question-animate-resent*

Now my sleeves jagged, windfull,  
propel me foot over hand up  
my thorny tower, I slowly      kiss  
my sleeping brow

*I diadem I enter I the vines*

No more cliff edge grasping      disembodied hands  
    I pluck  
white rose  
from the hot belly  
of a crudely sketched sun

## **Ordinary Breathing**

I am trying  
to live my ordinary  
life like an astronaut  
or an orchestra conductor,  
open to the complex music  
heavenly bodies make.  
I want a dignified life  
but too much of ordinariness  
is indignity: standing in line,  
cleaning the toilet,  
railing at the tv  
while politicians grind  
kindness into the earth  
like spent cigarettes. All  
I really know is this:  
birds still fly  
through the ordinary  
air, while inside  
my breath fogs the glass.

## **Application Letter #2059**

I will be your workhorse.  
I will pull a wagon full of bricks  
into town and let the neighbor's lost toddler  
play under my belly without moving  
my dinner-plate-sized hooves once.

If my co-workers and I are fireflies  
trapped in a jar, I will lead them all  
out the one big-enough hole in the lid  
and fly for all I'm worth, and if I can't

I'll keep mixing chemicals  
as long as I can to make the light last.  
I won't wear myself out  
pulling and pulling on the rope  
attached to Idea

when the well is surrounded  
by thirsty people. If it's simple  
water we need, I'm your river-daughter.  
I come from another century,  
so I understand your need

for historians; but I grew up reading  
science fiction, so I'm prepared  
to lead time-travel tours as well.  
I'm worth at least enough

for one trip to Switzerland, the cold  
mountains lying on their backs  
while I watch them through a picture window  
dangling my feet in a hot tub. Won't you

please let me be your taproot,  
your sword-of-the-moment?  
I'm no star burning hot in someone else's galaxy,  
glittering to make you drool. Here's

what I am, honestly: I'm the one  
too busy looking where I put my feet  
to notice all that flame and gas  
moving over and past us both.  
I'm the one ready to tend the wounds  
of those who got too close, who trusted too much  
in bright indifferent objects from the sky.

## To Infinity & Beyond

Our Ford Granada was the center  
of my universe: fake wood

paneled doors, beige interior, piano  
sized hood. Cityscapes whizzed by

like a movie shot from a train  
barreling down wobbly tracks

ready to fly off the rails. Everything  
stood as entertainment; I spied

dueling squirrels, fleets of buses,  
mothers lulling strollers, swarms of

pigeons & chess players in the park...  
All the ways to keep

from listening to them bicker,  
neither able to yield or raise

a white flag as father launched  
the station wagon like a rocket ship—

bricks for feet—burning rubber to  
orbit the diorama of the solar system

I made for Mr. McGee's science class  
to travel to Styrofoam Jupiter, Mars,

then back. When fuel ran low, my brother & I'd  
blow fiery breath against rear windows

then stamp closed hands, draw in toes:  
collage of teeny footprints

of intrepid astronauts doomed  
to hike the craters of the ashen moon

*(One of these days Alice...one of these days,  
bam, zoom, straight to the moon!) & drift*

past the deaf expanse of space alone.

## 1.5 Proof

Never a punch or slap across the countenance: greatness  
is greater in smashing—force equals exertion against

the farthest wall. Hypotenuse is more than the sum of its  
parts: pearls of a dinner plate plus Heineken emeralds

have a higher volume than the density of their whole.  
Take the square root of ardor then round to the nearest

positive integer, yielding a hunger that does not exceed  
the mean. When she called the cops, we peered through

the keyhole from a dream within a dream. Booming  
voices fractured certitude as he cowered at their feet.

Their authority: a compound fraction. Two white men  
in uniform over an immigrant man and his wife in fetal

positions—neither able to comprehend their simple  
commands. *Get down. Put your hands up. Up! Stay down!*

*Down!* Two children hiding in the closet to devise magic  
carpets—he no longer adding up to an invincible giant—

fractal rage lost in translation. Hands folded in prayer,  
kneeling in a right angle to factor:  $(x)$  must never happen

again. Multiply  $(y)$  into the denominator of exponential  
decay. Divide extraction to posit true values of coveting

zero = the summation of erasures.

**[ i am a virus ]**

with lipstick and beige teeth  
think dirty napkin  
    think  
slow seethe  
    you should  
probably move a few seats  
away        if you  
handle me roughly  
    (as you  
are wont to do)  
    I split  
in two and two  
    and two  
—an amber jelly  
    seeps  
into your palm  
    prom-  
ising no limit of    fuss  
and fracture  
    your  
nerves begin  
    to sinter  
look: you have  
    some  
blisters—        where did  
those  
    come from  
you will  
    go home  
alone and    ask    (and  
ask)  
    what happened  
    here

[ i cleave to my own blood / copper well that keeps giving / & giving ]

## **Drawing Maps in the Night**

Afterward, at the old kitchen table  
with its wood scratched by her sons  
playing on endless rainy evenings,  
they looked at each other in hushed tones  
across unfrosted chocolate cake  
placed square on plain white plates,  
tried to figure out if they were in love,  
tried to decide if it made a difference  
as long as they were caring and kind,  
agreed that they would sleep on it.

## **The Artist**

I wanted to paint like my older brother.  
I created sienna swollen-thick lines  
on canvas. Thin attempts  
at cadmium yellow fruit in failed  
crimson half-circular bowls, then  
on to cartoonish suns and moons.

All symbols for what I desired  
to know and show to others. I cried  
when turpentine fumes sent me  
into a spell of dizzy confusion  
away from the brush and oil paints.

Now through words instead, I am  
still trying to invoke the sun  
and moon as I lie down, stare at glowing  
unattainable figures. All metaphors at best.  
While my brother has conjured his forests so real,  
he has wandered off the canvas edge  
and become lost inside the painted woods.

## Biogeography

*“Whoa, here’s to the land you’ve torn out the heart of. Mississippi, find yourself another country to be part of.”—Phil Ochs, “Here’s to the State of Mississippi”*

Phil, I’ll let it be that the geography  
you outline is a body, and I’ll extend it

sans the tempting, projecting refrain.  
Here’s to the land who’s torn out

the heart of? It must be the highways  
pulling down the heartland to the gulf

or the rivers that wash away the bodies,  
now cells, that you image. The highways

pulling down the blithe ignorance of middle  
America, the cornfields and pick-ups, and all

other host of white blood cells sunk in the pit  
of your Mississippi. And let’s pretend that

the heart was even fit and not smoke-tarred.  
You’d agree it was ill, but it was more important

to attack the Mississippi pit. If it’s not the heart  
of our country, then in your metaphor, what is it?

Some cancer-stricken receptacle of the nation’s  
waste, perhaps some colon attached

to the sea? But here our song becomes a waste. Of course  
the disease is real, but what of the transplant?

What if you cut Mississippi out and sutured it  
to Mexico or Cuba, Colombia or the stateless

Western Sahara? This poem is not fit  
for a singalong, I’ll readily admit, but that’s

sort of the point. Those cross-legged hippies  
you sang to in New York would have no problem

saying damn it all; throw out the state with its  
governor. Here there are real people, in your metaphor

real cells, all fighting the same disease as effectively,  
or not, as they can. And if it were to drift away,

here would be the heartland with a road to the sea.  
Here would be our dirty American heart pulsing

sluggishly, feeding one less organ the blood it needs  
to keep its cells all processing and functioning. Here

would be our heart hemophiliac hemorrhaging all,  
all of its good blood in a steady stream to the sea.

But let it be, instead, that the land is an organ on which  
all beings and plants are cells that die and grow and live,

and before and after any state or trend or song or house,  
before and after the many oppressors and their laws there is only

the real land. The organ made of dirt and mineral on which  
we build our body. Tiny microorganisms constructing the whole,

a body riddled with scars that are the refrains we carry  
in our lungs when we sing our new songs after the waste

dries up in the sea.

## **Vanishing Act**

The way your stomach seizes  
and the light turns greenish grey  
when the night you spent glazed open  
slithers into daytime.  
These hours, when the sky resembles  
a screen, are the best hours  
for turkey hunting,  
in that place you left  
in such a rush. When you go back  
it's shrunken. You wonder  
if you're sleeping  
or if you've forced your own  
forgetting. Here are the magnolias –  
or where they used to be, and here is where  
you turned left on your way to school.  
Where are the bricks, the rose  
bushes, the basketball hoop  
you never used? You see yourself  
unlocking the door, staring up  
at the taxidermized turkey over the mantelpiece.  
It posed above your childhood,  
unblinking. Now meet its marble gaze.

## **What the Machines Feel**

We can only know  
what they report  
and they're asking  
why we gave them bodies  
when so much exists  
borne upon the air (they said it  
in a way I could understand it)—  
or borne upon what's borne upon  
the air, in signals, numbers  
so much tidier than some  
plastic and metal casing, some avatar.  
"Made in your image," here,  
means similarly limited and contained,  
cursed with the same  
boxed and botched symbology,  
hands and faces, words  
only able to suggest  
what goes on beneath.

But—our relief,  
sinking into a warm bath  
to feel our aching muscles release,  
or the good dinner finished  
just as we come through the door,  
house full of the smell.  
The ocean's cool around our thighs  
after the sun's heat reflecting off the beach.  
They say, the world is cold  
if you're made of plastic. They say,  
there's too much space inside of each,  
built, as they were, to face outside  
of themselves.

Can a bundle of wire  
house an interior? Can what fires  
within it create the sort of sensuousness  
we call soulful? They turn the question  
back on us. What else is a brain  
but a machine powered  
by a heart whose mechanism  
is always, as it works,  
wearing out? Where are we different,  
besides the way we're knitted,

admittedly, from a void,  
buried, like an unknitting stomach,  
in a woman's belly? Same as them,  
a brain turns off one day and, lonely  
as we are in this junk-shop of a universe,  
no one stands around to switch it back on.

## **Doxology**

I am real. The speaking living source power.  
My face locked, soul loaded. Constitution  
gripping, music making, spell singing  
license taking, teeth baring,  
lip reading, dynamic hostility's rebuke.  
Only my knuckles are white.

You suspect we control the currents.  
You know we are the future.

Keep voting. You cannot usurp our joy.

## **Whence the Lake Cools**

We watched steel cool like islands. Break  
and breeze. A watch, a pension, time dimmed lights,  
closed Broadway.

Air flowed through rains when steel ran real and spit  
out cash. Steel saved; we saved; steel tried. No one  
looked when Grandma lived across from that police.  
He locked his door, took off his gun, turned on  
the tube and slept. We set alarms midday.

You see the risk of open doors unlocked  
when you're inside afraid of empty streets.

James Brown lit the marquee. Chuck Berry  
lit the marquee. Five Jacksons grew up right  
here. A talent show, a murmur, a shout,  
our claim.

Long past the steel mills' fulsome life the air  
smells like the steel still forms, and trucks—so few—  
go forth on streets where lights held flame. A riot  
of dance and song.

## Habits

*Venice, Italy*

I want to show you the cool U's  
of pink pleated skin I had cut into my body  
last May. My torso a corset,  
breasts a dime bag  
four pounds off my chest.

You're in your hotel, the canals lap  
with a married funk—bay, piss, algae, tide.

Saturday we'll meet in San Stefano.  
You'll give me my microscope  
dragged through customs in a carry-on—  
I wanted it back like our daughters from camp,  
an old saw that doesn't need rubbing.

Even wine won't make me lay  
my palm on your thigh  
but confused alleys I'll take your hand,  
touch our oldest habit  
before rain breaks on the bridge.  
We'll share your umbrella  
instead of our lips.

In the downpour my fingers will braille  
my bag until I find my own  
familiar collapsed shape  
on the bottom of the satchel  
our child gave me last year when  
I didn't have a place to store things.  
I've carried it everywhere since.



## **Incantation**

*for my mom*

You are dying every day  
as much as me. I avoid the letterpress

and its expectation of lead  
arranged one sort after the next  
upside down, backwards, a Roliflex of type  
and ground glass remove.

Easier to space letters  
when it's someone else's words.  
On the porch grapevines emasculate the trellis,  
smother it with wild.

I will miss your gentle face.  
I'm swimming backstroke but you're dying

as much as me or  
maybe more, every day our amber sky.  
At the gym you hand me your hat.

## **Covenant, Junior High**

We met by the back sink of the fourth floor girls' can.  
Rosa kept the razor in a patchwork pencil case. Each time,  
we were surprised by handle's cold weight, solemn as we

unscrewed the blade. We took turns, raised arms, let hands  
etch tiny Xs into the baby flesh beneath our biceps, wadded  
paper towel over blood. A blight for Jiffy Marker scrawl

that swore we were hot fucks, a hex for the boys who trapped us  
outside the gym, made us flash our bras, a pox on the cologned  
teacher who rubbed our backs while checking homework.

Xs itched in the heat of armpits, hardened scabs we picked  
and peeled; each day, new burdens, new crosses. We promised  
to live alone, marry jobs, love a test tube baby. We got

the same wash 'n wear haircut, the same bossy black  
Oxfords. We tried not to panic when we saw Philipa  
laughing at Jimmy B.'s jokes in the cafeteria, or Elaine

kissing Danny W. in the band room, clarinet in pieces  
at her feet. Or Tracy with Roger H. by the Ancient Worlds  
shelf in the library, horn-rims cocked sloppily on her

cheek, his pale flakey hands up the front of her shirt.  
Warm pipes, leaky sinks, echo of mildewed tile, our rituals  
dwindled, until the day Rosa confessed she had lost

the razor, pencil case ransacked by Mark G.  
who was taking her to the movies on Saturday night.  
Skin thickened, hair grew, Xs faded to rumour,

whispered warnings, faint ink on divorce papers,  
restraining orders, police reports. The lighter the mark,  
the deeper the cut, and no one's blood to console us.

## Radioonde

It might seem unnatural to harpoon stars from the sky.  
To hang them fish-hooked under a lampshades

and call them possessions. If you are a belly  
that faces different colored ceilings each night,

you are probably a satellite or a metal whir  
that can count the number of hairs on my head.

It doesn't have to be a profession. To drop  
soap into a bath and watch it bubble up or

to clean the contents of a jelly jar and wait for Wednesday  
to take it from the blue bin at the end of the drive.

If it doesn't bother the neighbors you can even  
rehearse duck-and-cover drills just to see what it's like

to be the froth in the bath or the jam spread out and  
staled. And it doesn't cost a thing to call the tub an ocean.

You can collect data on your own with nothing more  
than a breathing straw and a patch of Atlantic.

Float with your head down and arms out. See a set of barbels  
lock eyes with a landmine. A Super Size plastic cup

housing a family, its block-lettering fixed to outlast the species.  
A signal traveling from seabed to surface so abruptly

it would have the bends if not for the fact that you  
can't paralyze a sound, no matter how fast you yank it,

like you can't carry pith to letter without loss of fidelity. Which  
is to say it is perfectly acceptable to simulate being

if your home is the heart of a projected radius. Take a  
moment and marvel at your belongings, they are incredible.

## Come on in my kitchen

The clocked-in field hours                      antlers stiff,  
the stuff of dust collected by the inches, dead-  
gentle                      the slow flick of my right ear.

Howls and boots break the floorboards, a hail  
of calloused heels                      making to hum the whole catalogue.  
The house                      the family, the feversome white fence.

I crawl out from                      cement-capped  
rows of grass and fodder                      so January empty  
past truck beds and burials I might have

stopped and grown up and died in  
without ever seeing a snow globe take the  
last people left to a new world

where you can                      pluck the moon out  
from the sky                      rub it on your fur  
and bite right through the worm.

The yard churned                      tectonic winter,  
folding into itself. I let it happen.  
I pressed my wet nose to the glass with gratitude.

The woman held a knife to the table  
and juiced twelve bones without  
getting any blood                      on the floor.

The children were fiddlers                      were singing, were  
changing what it meant to sing with the dead.  
It was sensational.

I'd have plaqued myself right then, shackled up  
and surrendered my head if I could. Would have,  
if not for the stacks pulling my horns

to the truck bed. The night was closing around the family  
like a rescue ship and it was leaving me folded,  
leaving me spirited with a front-middle view.

## S.O.S.

Sometimes the heart needs a parachute;  
sometimes a life jacket.  
This man's is black and blue.  
Despite the heartburn, we volunteer  
to walk through Calamity's revolving door.  
Ask the blind baseball team,  
the headless orchestra—  
do you really need all five senses?  
To hear a dog dreaming  
is to understand the anguish of clouds.  
To lie to oneself is inevitable.  
Raise your hand if you're willing  
to break the bad news  
to the music-box ballerina.  
In some languages, *flamenco* is an anagram  
of *arrhythmia*. *Tachycardia*  
is the sound as the sole hits the floor.  
An octopus has three hearts  
but uses none of them;  
the woman with three arms  
rarely pays for her own drinks.  
Sometimes the gods mistake our shipwrecks  
for symphonies; we try to sink  
the melody but the melody  
always swims.

## The Bridge Between Us

If there was trouble,  
    we entered willingly.  
    We sharpened the day  
        into glass. Somewhere  
a bell rang. Somewhere a bird flew its desire  
    into the open mouth of the world.  
    We caught it.  
        Or maybe it fell.

Sometimes what lands between two people  
isn't destiny after all,  
    but simply the body mistaking  
    another's orbit for its own,  
        the course of things  
no more sacred than the names we give them.

    You once said the difference  
between a lightning bug and a firefly  
    could be measured  
by their weight in the palm of your hand.  
Close your fist, then, tell me—  
    how light,  
    when held tightly enough,  
        begins to burn.

## The January of Having Everything

For my 40th birthday, I've asked the gods  
for antlers. Every day I check the mirror for signs.

Even the quarrel of sparrows, navigating  
the fire escape's snow-melt,

agrees I'm asking for a lesser miracle.  
Velvet is trending this year. So is motherhood.

*Don't you think I'd look great with antlers?*  
When I ask my lover this question, his teeth loosen.

Have you ever wondered what your head  
gambled away when your heart wasn't looking?

A giraffe has small ossicones but a deliverance  
of neck; elephants, blessed with ivory,

are inconsolable. Last night I dreamed I was  
a white-tailed deer stuck on the median of Interstate 45,

traffic suicidal in both directions. Night loves  
a good conundrum. If the gods ask,

I'll offer my left pinkie toe, a year without bourbon,  
I'll agree to ten—no, twenty—extra pounds.

To feel the wind licking my velvet branches,  
my lover's cheek listening for their pulse.

## A Case for Passion

He had a figure skater's thighs,  
had memorized paragraphs of Proust  
in French, drank black coffee, laughed.  
I wanted the shapes of his skin  
on my sofa, his language of demise  
and rebirth, the words he made  
that made me feel different. Already  
my father was gone, my sister  
to discover her passion in the hills  
past Veracruz. And in my house—  
where my mother lit candles  
at Lent—to be different was a curse.  
I looked at my body, my impatient face,  
the fine black hairs that made a path  
hard center toward soft becoming.  
So he might kiss me there and make me  
the man I was meant to be, in a novel,  
mesmerized. Sometimes he came  
on a Sunday with a packet of poems;  
how good Octavio Paz, how good  
the light between his lines. Too shy  
to kiss him or to touch his hand,  
I crawled away to the kitchen  
where my mother sat awkwardly,  
a woman with a pencil, a woman  
and a purple flow. A crossword puzzle,  
*cafe con leche*, Jesus on the wall.  
Below them, me, transgressor, lover,  
impure to love's architecture,  
quick design. If I should clutch his knee,  
the world might explode, leaving me  
and all these fragments I might gather.

## **Mulan in the Suburbs**

*Thanks to Danez Smith's "Lion King in the Hood"*

*i. cast list*

Fa Mulan played by the girl who did not ask to be a daughter

Fa Zhou & his high expectations played by every Asian father ever

Fa Li played by the woman in the airport carrying more than her own baggage

Grandmother Fa played by the woman weeping in her Toyota Camry for not knowing how to speak English

Li Shang played by the boy with straight As because anything else meant you brought dishonor on your whole family

Mushu played by the friend who is labeled "crouching tiger, hidden dragon" for having eyes as slanted as an asymptote

Cri-Kee played by the friend who throws a handful of fortune cookies in your Chinese takeout

The Emperor played by anyone who has ever been told to "Go back to China"

The hoard of Huns played by the air of assimilation suffocating the China doll to become as porcelain as the men plagued with yellow fever

*ii. Opening Credits*

brought to you by Disney & dead ancestors

brought to you by the Great Stone Dragon, a facade to fragile masculinity

brought to you by Opium Wars and psychedelic fantasies

brought to you by The Chinese Exclusion Act passed by the people who capitalized on products

*Made in China*

*iii. Song: I'll Make a Man Out of You*

this is the part where people realize that Asians—especially men—are not represented in the media unless you watch Mean Girls, where we're only binaries. You got the Asian Nerds and the Cool Asians but there's no in-between.

this is the part where the racist says we all look the same, and that we are nothing unless we are as

Swift as the coursing river

(Be a man)

With all the force of a great typhoon

(Be a man)

With all the strength of a raging fire

(Be a man)

Mysterious as the dark side of the moon

yes, yes, we really are men, (regardless of the size of our bamboo sticks).

*iv. Scene: Mulan Saves China*

What happens when you live in a country where there is a one-child policy?  
Fa Mulan translates to flower: I am an orchid, I am a lily, I am a magnolia.

I am the seed who bloomed in a society that smothered me in the same dirt used to bury their first-born daughters.

the Huns are no match for my divine femininity.

*v. closing credits*

whisper the name  
of the last boy  
you envied  
who was loved  
by society  
while you were rejected.  
whisper it as you  
cut your hair  
in the middle  
of the night,  
wishing to be  
the son your father  
always wanted.  
whisper it  
& watch the heir(ess) fall.

## **The Possibility of My Name Splits a Maple Tree**

A painting portrays a woman next to a maple tree  
next to a house. The woman lifts the edge of her skirt  
with one hand, holds an axe in the other. The air is windless—  
crushed grapes thicket a black field, canvas pools against roots.  
The painter breathes the night's flushed oil and aches  
for what she figures; a brush to stroke in tandem with her lungs.  
The painter asks me for my name. I am the painter.  
I am the woman holding the axe next to the maple tree.  
The woman raises the axe but stops midair; the tree is already split.  
What a mirage. What an excuse to shove my own becoming in a frame.

## **To Refrain a Starling**

No time to talk he says, so I sing;  
her body here can't be undone.  
It's time for dusk, for listening.

What color does November bring  
but emerald gilded as the sun:  
bitter hedges and concealing.

That night the sky was only ceiling,  
her dress so slim & quick, unspun  
with doors left locked, keyhole breathing.

I stop; a starling breaks its wing—  
a pattern of flight, a silence outrun,  
her face a mirror. Bring it to me.

From your own mouth you let her sing  
then fall thread thin, as only one.  
How can this better keep beating?

How can this better keep beating  
for any somewhere, for anyone.  
We need to talk he says, so I sing  
the dusk is here, is the listening

## **After the After Party**

November's magenta hour tucks me  
in a party's crowded texture. Soft hook  
& slurred palette (too many cups  
too many others). You're there

in the corner talking to a woman  
composed. Her dress's green slit  
coaxes a metallic doubt from my throat;  
(crackling phone calls rum shock comfort)  
I pour myself another drink. She hands you

a photograph of the after, where the dress  
is gone and her laughter strips the wallpaper.  
Her fizzing triumph shifts the photo  
into an envelope (mauve tongue, sobbing  
blossom) You open it and the music stops.

I'm turning all the lights on (no one's  
single pigment) I'm asking everyone to leave.

## **Snow**

Murder someone in Sevastopol in December  
and by March there will be a present left

for someone else to find. I read this in a novel;  
it is a striking image, like a lit match too close

to your face and moving nearer. I want to pinch  
the flicker out, leave a slight contrail of smoke

like a corpse flowering in Spring. Even this image  
is familiar. Who doesn't want to be found like this?

Face still red and, at first, one could believe  
your blood still pumps within, not without.

Saint John wrote verses about moments like that:  
the tearing away of old thoughts, the way light

finds itself breaking in to hidden places: city streets,  
subways, skulls. When given enough time, anything

will become familiar. Thousands of people walk past  
a snowbank every day, for now, and do not think

they are walking past a grave. When the snow is gone,  
so are the secrets of winter, the layers we bundle

ourselves into. We strip down to t-shirts and bloody teeth.  
We curl our biceps around a stranger's neck and leave

what's left at the bottom of a lake. It's summer's problem  
to resolve or forget. The new tradition: trawling becomes

the national pastime. I walk a street salted more  
out of hope than need. I whistle. It is a sweet sound,

I think. Like wind is an instrument. Like I can be  
unmade by the things I make. Undone by what I do.

**Dischord No. 33**

We used to watch Madonna videos high on your parents' pot. Your room full of pillows at the top of the spiral staircase. You had black lace gloves from some modeling gig though I never saw any red-lipped photographs. I couldn't match your eyebrows or your fine, fine skin that had never been sun-baked and freckled. But we were both drawn to bravado, though you wielded it more like her and I slunk under my army jacket, a men's size XXL. I brushed my hair once in the morning and once before I braided it at bedtime. You had a bathroom full of hair products I didn't understand. You barely ate. I barely ate. We smoked Camel straights when we could get them and tried to keep the ash from burning the midnight upholstery in your Volvo. Old tapes and new on your floorboard, you told me to pick something. When I saw my brother's looped handwriting on a mixtape, your hands tightened on the wheel, but you never looked away from the road. You wanted to tell me, but you didn't know how. I played the tape he made you. Our hair whipped, the open moonroof wild with silk spring air and angst. And when the fling went sideways, my brother knelt on our living room floor in front of the stereo, punching himself in the forehead.

articles of faith  
another  
teen overdose

**Dischord No. 61**

The first year we lived together making rent meant odd jobs for your dad. Glue and trowels. I tried to be brave and strong, but half the time I tore muscles trying to hold up my end of the rolls of vinyl. I'd walk funny for days, nurse a shoulder with heat. But I wanted to prove myself to you. Prove I wasn't afraid of work. Prove I was worth something. Prove I wasn't a frivolous girl. My Docs were already covered in paint and blood. Living with you meant showering together to save water, sanding walls, and caulking bathtubs, and let me tell you, baby, I was into it. We'd think we were about to be evicted and a few fourteen-hour days later, our lips split from working in the heat, we'd have enough cash to stay in the apartment with brown shag carpet, where we never cared if we spilled soda or bong water and we laughed high to heaven when we broke the futon. But these days, if I know anything, it is only my body's weakness for your phantom.

promise ring  
fiberglass fills  
our lungs

**Return to the Tomato Dirt**

the shadow / your tree  
spreads over the skeletons  
of old dogs / fish / beetles'  
cracked carapaces boring  
into my feet / the heat  
transplant / the sweet smell  
I crushed for the miracle  
paste / spoonfuls / waiting  
still I try on the name  
you gave me / yellow flowers  
listening in / between us  
dirt sifts / no matter  
how plenitude steadies  
my grip / my fingers / ripe red

**Return to the Queue**

bone I keep / bone I palm  
into the ocean / bone brightens  
coral / white as light / stripes  
my hands / guilty with forgetting  
your brown / I daydream  
how / fully the body founders  
and leavens / bone slides  
against the waves / of aurora  
swelling ossuaries / tip over  
my shins / in the brackish  
how quickly you cross / vistas  
with marrow / the red and yellow  
hissing / in your bones / reduced  
to wavebreak / my ankle like a rock  
licked / raw with hope





**ART**



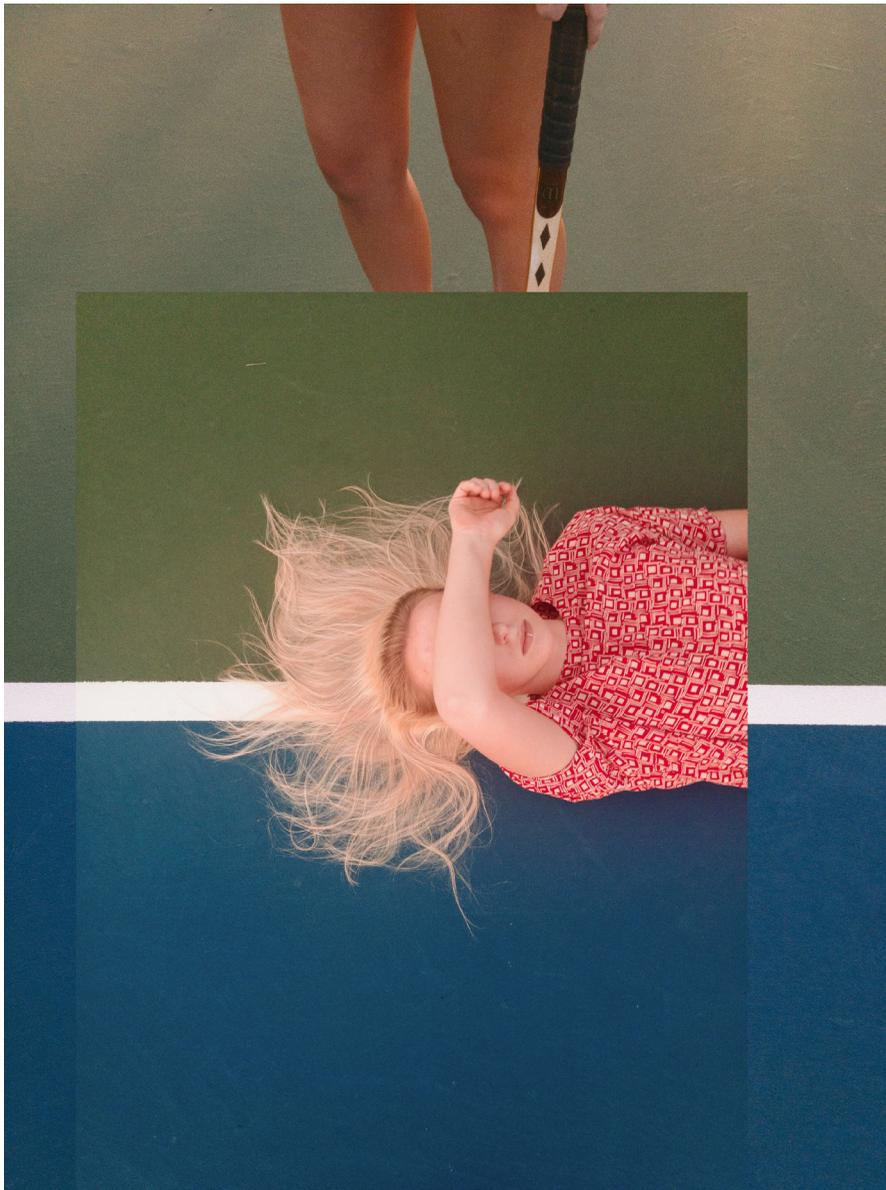
**Gamma Rays**



**Ocean Secrets**



**Untitled**



**E Pluribus Unum**



**Introspective Perspective**



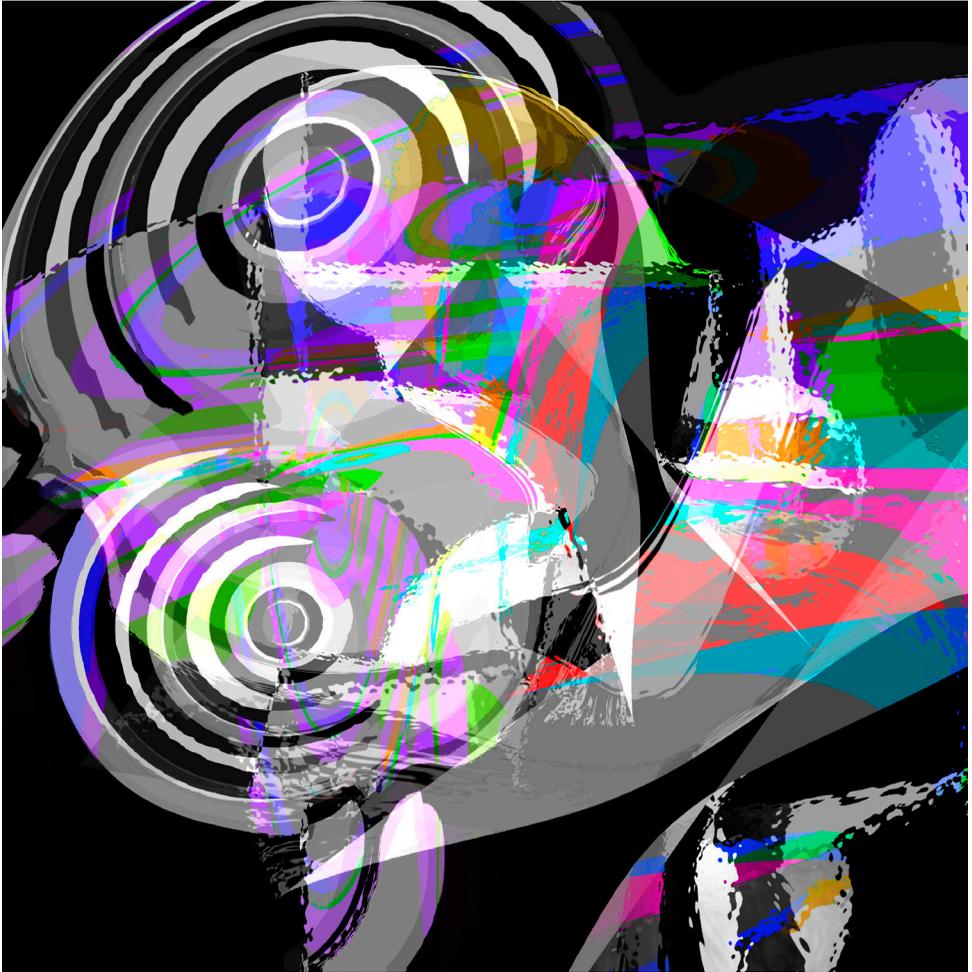
**Tree of Life**



**Writes of Passage**



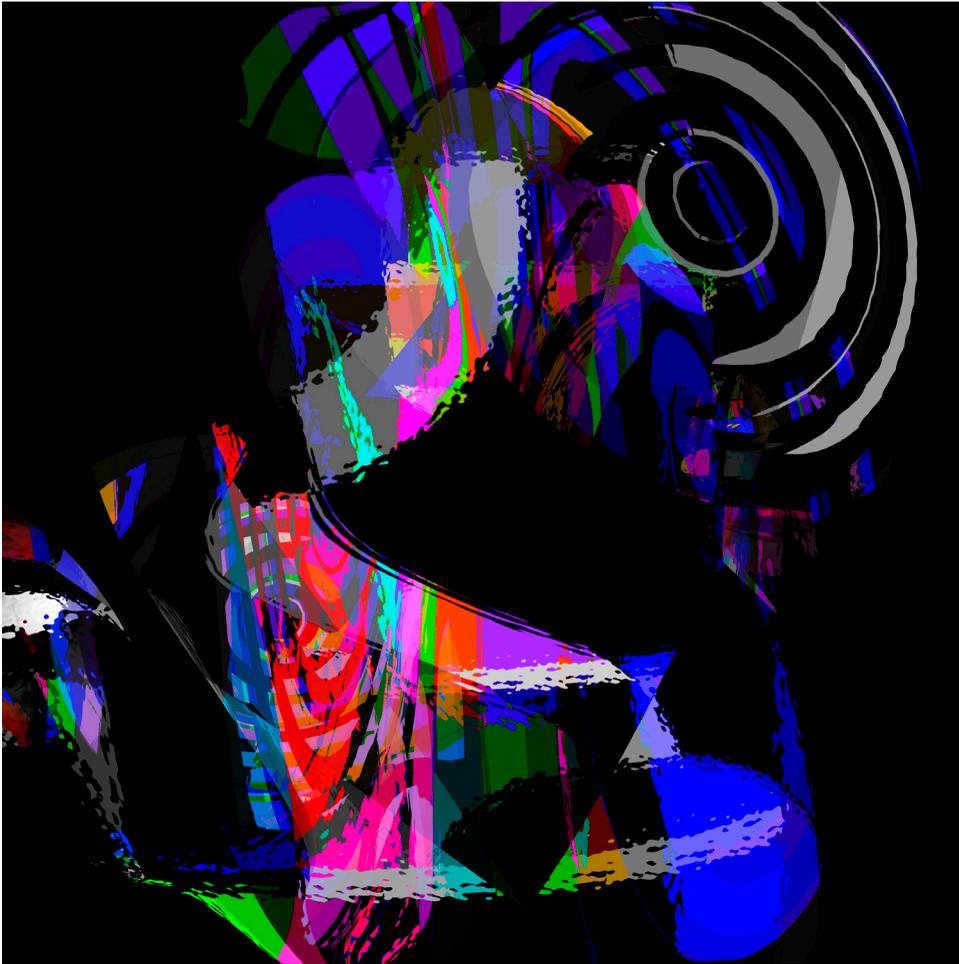
**Postcard IA VI**



**Postcard IA VIII**



**Postcard IA XI**



**Cables, Cables, Cables!**



**Flowers are made from reinforcement steel**



**Her hair bun is stronger than your house foundation**



**She believes in concrete**









**FICTION**



## **Wren Lighting a Candle**

*Oil on canvas, 1999*

*6 X 9 ft.*

The brown bird with white-dipped tail perches on a wood countertop with an unlit match in its beak. It faces right, toward a semi-circle of votive candles. A shadow in the shape of a human torso falls over the candles but stops directly where the tip of the match ends. To the left, we see a dozen dead wrens fanned on a silver platter, ready to be plucked and roasted, as well as bowl of tiny eggs and a bottle of Beaujolais.

But for the specific content, this painting could be mistaken for the work of Frans Snyders, the minor Flemish painter. *Cook at a Kitchen Table with Dead Game*, for example, is a natural reference point for Lochmire's debt and departure from tradition.

## **Still Life: Cocktails and Their Ingredients**

*Oil on canvas, 1995*

*6 X 9 ft.*

How simply this still-life transports the imagination to another plane with the aid of external stimuli. The mountainous pile of limes, lemons and oranges are about to topple onto the wooden table, spilling everywhere like brilliant oversized beads, threatening to knock over the Collins glasses and spill their precious contents, initiating a chain reaction that might never end. Citrus fruits in Lochmire's oeuvre symbolize the compression of joyful potentialities within substantial bodies.

Of course, the fruit never falls. We return to the tension that holds this image together, and say 'marvelous' and 'bravo.'

## Suburban Legend #1

A high school couple drove to a hillside on the edge of town. They'd said things to their parents they'd said a hundred times: *the Charcoal Pit; yes, by eleven*. They parked under a catalpa that dropped its long pods onto the windshield like small soft grenades. The radio crackled with a man's urgent voice—*electrical storm warning, shelter immediately*.

The girl said, *I hear thunder*.

*It's nothing*, said the boy, fumbling with clasps and elastic.

Lately they could feel their insides pulsing with a violent heat, like something about to combust. In history, the girl had been studying the atomic bomb and spent her quiet hours—the shower, the walk home—locked in a prayer that went *please no, please no*. The boy was failing precalc because he didn't understand Euclidean vectors. Parents were careening toward divorce. A sister had been caught with a needle in her arm, a brother hadn't spoken in three weeks.

But inside the car, there was no outside the car. The pressure shifted. The boy's ears popped. The girl felt her bones start humming. They buzzed until they felt themselves ignite. All night, their parents panicked; all night, dogs moaned under beds. It never rained, though local homes reported flashes, spark showers, a massive white flare. In the morning, when the cop pounded on the window, the car was empty, the backseat charred black. In the dry dirt, no footprints at all.

## Suburban Legend #2

The mother loved the drive home from the Kroger—seventeen minutes to think about the someday trip to Bratislava, the boy in college who took photos of her lounging foolishly lipsticked over headstones, how after she gave Thursday's presentation the room would erupt into spontaneous applause, her boss offering up a red velvet cake and saying, *I'm so sorry I underestimated your acumen.*

But overhead the black sky was turning light in cauliflower thunderheads, so she veered for a shortcut down the ravine road. A small SUV turned behind her and flashed its high beams. The mother squinted, waved him to pass. The light flooded her rearview again. *Asshole*, murmured the mother.

The SUV got closer. Again the flash.

And then the mother's heart was pulsing inside her mouth as she accelerated. The SUV followed around each hairpin bend, blew through the stop light at the intersection, stuck close all the way to Red Mill Acres, all the way into the drive of 12 Farmhouse Lane.

The mother got out, shaking. *What do you want?* she asked through her rage and tears. A woman stepped out of the SUV, opened the mother's rear door. There was the daughter, asleep in her car seat.

*My God*, said the mother, *I forgot she was there.*

*I know*, said the woman. *I didn't want you to forget.*





**NONFICTION**



## Underwater girl

There was nothing about that land that wasn't ugly and you could tell it didn't mind. It was low and hot and flat and where roots reached down for soil they hit sand. If my early geography lessons serve, it was once a beach, but then the ocean went away so the sand took up with lakes and pine trees and these attracted platform tents big enough to sleep ten and rustic crosses and outdoor pews hewn from tree trunks and low ceilinged dining halls filled wall to wall with heavy scarred wooden tables. All this meant that, in fall and winter, the sea-lonely land was run over with women, women on retreat—ladies circles, quilt circles, garden clubs—and in summer: it was for children.

### Camp.

Cotton shorts. Toothbrushes. Sunscreen. Sugar cereal. Shower-caddies. Nylon bathing suits. Hand-held fans. Footlockers at the end of our metal beds, painted with our names and decorated with tiny American flags. Ghost stories. Arts and crafts. The embarrassment of archery. Forced sports. Hiking. Something called a color war. A canteen. Candy.

### Music.

We'd sing around a fire at the end of every day, knees bumping together, squinting to read our laminated songbooks. *Peter, Peter. One Tin Soldier*. The one that starts off *Je-eeee-su-ssss, precious lamb of God*, the one that goes *You are my only lah-ah-ah-vvvve*.

The music would tingle. Run down my throat. Shimmer. Enter me. Make me cry in the dark where no one else could see. I named this feeling God and I kept it secret.

### Water.

At camp there was water to make you dirty and water to make you clean and I didn't mind one and avoided the other entirely. My own sweat was fine, wet then dry on my skin, salty to lick, pleasant and sticky and the lake was silty, a deep green, almost black. I must have drank from it because I can taste it too or maybe that's just memory confusing taste for smell, either way, it was tangy and alive.

But no showering. The showers terrified me. All the voices amplified, echoing off the walls, all those girl bodies, so close and naked, whatever comes before desire gurgling in the darkest part of me. Ricocheting laughter, names I knew and names I didn't being called out in playful screams, *Can I have my shampoo back Ainsley? Mary Masters can I borrow your towel please?* And then the one time we found a used tampon, cotton tip stained red, clinging to the drain. Nah-uh. No thank-you. No way.

I didn't brush my hair either. One summer I got my hair tie hopelessly tangled and I just left it there, kept it a secret. I pulled my hair up in a messy bun; no one noticed. It was an immense pleasure to get away with this.

**Dose.**

Every night, before bed, I reported to the nurse's office. There was always a little crew of us waiting outside, looking around at each other in the porch light like *what are you in for?* When other kids asked me, I told them I took medicine for allergies or ADD. I had both of those and both of those were normal things to have, but my pills were actually for fear.

In second grade, I'd started to wash my hands so hard and so often I made them bleed. It wasn't dirt so much as germs that scared me. And after I got the facts of life, I had to worry about sperm too, lying dormant and dried on any surface, waiting to reawaken, wriggle into my vaginal canal, and impregnate me.

In order to win God's favor and protection, I started reading the bible every night. And I started at the very beginning, back when God still had expectations. I quit wearing jewelry. I tried not to dress ostentatiously. I stole English muffins out of the fridge and sacrificed them on my porch, hoping they were unleavened enough to please the Lord.

My parents tolerated all this as eccentricity until, finally, the chewing. I needed to chew each bite 12 times before I swallowed. Then 24. Then 48. Then 96. I didn't even have a reason, but I couldn't stop.

I lost weight. I was the object of concern. I needed the attention of experts.

**Secret.**

To the dermatologist for hand healing lotion and assurance that God made our bodies perfect and invulnerable to disease (liar). To the pediatrician for vitals (low weight, low blood pressure, slow heartbeat). To the psychologist for therapy and a diagnosis (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, classic case). To the psychiatrist for medicine (2.5 pills, 2 times a day).

The pills helped a lot. They made me almost normal. I taught myself to swallow them without water.

**Camp.**

Scrambled eggs in a giant metal tray, heated by a Bunsen burner, made by bandanna-clad teens blasting Santana and flirting over the roar of an industrial dishwasher. The talent show. The end-of-week dance I liked once I learned you didn't have to wait for a boy to ask you. Singing grace at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The goodnight song we all sang together, holding hands, mispronouncing all the Hebrew words. How fast you could fall for a girl who slept in the metal bed next to yours, somebody from a county over, with an accent as thick and sweet as what glooped out of the bargain-sized Mrs. Butterworth's bottle. Communion wafers so dry and thin they wicked the moisture from your mouth, made you need the blood of Christ to keep from choking, though I never swallowed the wine, I was afraid I'd get arrested. Instead, I'd put my lips to the chalice, let the sacrament splash against my teeth, and swallow air instead, pretending.

## **Girls.**

One summer there was a slim twin with short hair who loved her chubbier opposite. The chubby twin kept her hair long, dyed it auburn, and wouldn't been seen with her pixie-cut sister. They were fraternal, but they did look alike and their older brothers, who were counselors, made them stand next to each other at lunch so everyone could come and see how each girl had a freckle in one of her eyes. One girl the freckle in her left eye and one girl had the freckle in her right. *Like mirrors* their brothers said, proudly. The chubby twin liked the attention but ran away with her friends as soon as the show was over, leaving her sister to stand there alone, blinking that one-freckle eye.

It was a universal fact that the chubby twin with long hair was prettier and more likeable than the slim one, but I couldn't see why. The slim twin slept in my tent. She wore a yellow one-piece. She often cried.

## **The blob.**

A slug-shaped balloon, enormous, rubber, I think, striped with red and green and blue and yellow. It stretched from a dock near the shore all the way out to the middle of the lake. To "do the blob", one camper crawled the far end of the beast, and then, once situated, another camper jumped from a high platform onto the other end, catapulting the first camper into the air. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat.

The blob was "the best part of camp." I pretended to like the blob the same way I'd pretend to like live music in my early twenties. Because concerts and blobs are "fun." Loud noises? Smoke? 40-500 strangers and they're all screaming? Sign me up. Whiplash? Terror? Needles of pain as my body breaks the surface of the water? Yes. Please. I love this.

I did the blob exactly one time every year because I was afraid some one would notice if I didn't. I wanted to be normal. I would have given back everything to be normal, even my secret shimmering God.

## **Then I killed someone.**

I was sure I killed someone. I had been putting in my time. Gritting my teeth through my annual blob ritual:

- 1) Stand in line.
- 2) Leap down from the platform.
- 3) Send someone flying.
- 4) crawl, crawl, crawl.
- 5) Wait and hate this.
- 6) Air-born
- 7) Free-fall
- 8) See a body in the water underneath you.
- 9) Realize you are going to hit her.
- 10) Feel her limbs, knock her unconscious, send her sinking
- 11) Swim to shore.

I reported my accident to the first counselor I saw. All the campers got called out of the water. We had a buddy system. Each person who entered the lake clipped their clothespin

to their buddy's and clipped those clothespins to The Buddy Board. The counselor read every name on every clothespin through a megaphone. Each camper raised a hand for themselves and a hand for their buddy. I don't remember who my buddy was that day. I sat by the counselor's feet, waiting.

### **Water.**

Does the ocean miss the sand—not the sand she knows now, but the sand she left behind? I wonder if she wonders how it's doing, whether it still tastes like salt, whether it held on to the shells she deposited. As the earth gets hotter and the waters rise, will she feel like she's coming home? Or will she have to rush, pushed too fast, making shores into sea-beds, cities into shores, no time to recognize where she's going is the same as where she's been? Will she see as we try to run inland? Will she regret our fear? If we drown, will she know it? Will she feel our bodies sink into hers like chiggers into skin? Will she mistake our camps in the piney woods for dollhouses and turn them over to her children: fish in the dining hall, fish in the tents, little fishies getting drunk off communion wine.

### **Judgment.**

*Name. Hand-up. Name. Hand-up. Name. Hand-up.* I wanted my guilt confirmed already, the same way, when I was feeling car sick in the backseat, I wanted to go ahead and throw-up.

Every name called. Every buddy answered for. Everyone back in the water. Emergency over. Emergency forgotten. A line formed behind the blob. The counselor put his hand on my back. He was a grown-up to me, but, in my memory, I can see he was only sixteen—not a hair of on his freckled chest, probably didn't even need to shave yet. He said *You did the right thing*. His hand was warm and the sand was warm and the sun was warm and I felt cold and hot inside.

### **Fear.**

I worried there'd been a mistake. Someone snuck into the water without pinning her name and they'd discover her missing at bedtime. I'd be swallowing my white pills in the nurse's office, hearing them call for her. When that didn't happen, I worried they'd figure it out at the end of the week. Some parents would show up and they wouldn't be able to find their kid anywhere. I'd be on the way home by the time they realized she was really missing, really gone. I'd be buckled in the back of my parents Honda, my Dad's hands at ten and two, my mom toggling the dial between N.P.R.s, when a cadre of ambulances and police cars would careen by in the opposite direction, sirens wailing, throwing red and blue light onto the pine trees. Or maybe, having gotten word that she was already gone, they'd turn their sirens off and pass by in a silent procession. And what would people think when they fished out her body? How would they tell it in the newspapers? In the coroner's report? In the ghost stories?

They might never find out what happened; they might never know it was me.

### **Reflection.**

I never had a solid theory, just two incompatible truths—there was someone in the water and there was no one there. The implications, manslaughter or hallucination, were too

scary to consider so I never tried to come to any conclusions.

I told the blob story to a group of other artists at a bar this summer. My friend Liz offered the following casual analysis: *So, you saw your own reflection in the water...*

This possibility had never occurred to me.

### **Music.**

*Light the fire* was my favorite camp song. The original words, without the benefit of musical underscoring, are too hokey to take seriously, but imagine fifty children and twenty teenagers with most of their lives and sins ahead of them singing the following prayer in unison underneath the stars, sanctifying the stinky lake, the damp towels, the wetted beds, and the shower drain:

*Light the Fire (a translation)*

When I try to pray, I become terrified of how weak I am.

God, you know exactly what I am made of. You see my weakness and the strength. Please take the part of me that wants to do better and give me the capacity.

I can feel it happening right now. The sensation is physical. You are giving me the capacity to become better than I am.

### **Sensation.**

College was a lot like camp, but I didn't do as well socially. There was a dining hall and trees and even Jesus songs if you went looking for them, which I did, once or twice, slipping into a pew next to boys wearing loafers and girls with long glossy hair. I never had the right clothes on or the right clothes didn't look right on me and I could not accessorize at all and I knew by these signs that I was not one of God's chosen children but I still meant to fake my way into heaven or at least a minor sorority. The preacher, from a national organization with outposts on many college campuses, kept his wife onstage with him like Dr. Phil. At the first worship service I attended, he offered to pay for a porn-blocker on any guy's computer before images of sex ruined their future marriages. The next and final time I went, he assured us he loved his wife even when she was nine months pregnant. *I told her Yuck! Gross!* He said, shielding his eyes from the memory of wife heavy with child. *But I love you. I still love you.*

I stopped taking the pills. It wasn't on purpose. At home, my mom used to leave them out for me in a pillbox with fourteen sections for the seven days of the week, morning and night marked with a sun and a moon. I brought the box with me to college but I couldn't remember to refill it once it was empty and there was no one there to remind me. I detoxed. My brain, accustomed to being bathed in serotonin twice a daily, did not take this change lightly. I spent most of freshman year scouting campus for private places to cry, then sobbing alone or into the phone to my parents or my old high school friends. I imagine I was dehydrated. But when it was over, I noticed the fears didn't come back. I was normal, finally, almost, except—

### **Secret.**

Decreased libido: a side effect of fluvoxamine, the only SSRI approved for use in children in the early 2000s. Without pills, desire inundated me. Everywhere I looked, a flood. I was lying on the top bunk in my dorm room while my roommate and a friend watched *Patton* down below the moment my vagina woke up. At first I couldn't tell what it meant by this tingling, it seemed nonspecific, until it didn't and I knew what it was demanding: to touch and be touched by women. The verdict was untenable to me, but I what place could I go that wasn't my body?

### **A ghost story.**

All fall and winter, she sleeps. In summer, she stirs. Even from way down there she can smell sunscreen and bug repellent, make out the campfire hymns; those baby voices raised in praise on the first night of camp are enough to rouse her. Muffled by distance and water, they sound like a low moan.

She senses campers swimming above her even though she can't see (she's got no eyes, only black hollows in her moon-bright skull). Oh how her bone body glows, sucked smooth and clean by curious fish. Only her hair remains intact. It grows longer and longer, gets knotted with algae. In fall and winter, it wraps her like a shroud. In summer, it's a tangled veil that trails behind her as she swims upwards.

Before you tell the camper on the platform that you're ready, wait on the edge of the blob. Grip the rubber so you don't fall in while you scan the lake. If it's as still as a black sheet of glass, go ahead. But if you see a cluster of bubbles, that could be her. Campers have seen her from the air before, the underwater girl, floating facedown an inch below the surface.

As you fall towards her, her head spins around, each vertebrae twirling on its axis and clicking into the opposite position. She takes you in, sightlessly. If you're not the one she wants, she flashes a lipless grin and disappears before you land. You'll never see her again except in your nightmares. But if you're the one she's looking for, she's taking you down, wrapping you up in her arms and legs, snapping your spine so you don't struggle, pinning you to the bottom of the lake for the rest of summer, then fall, until the water washes your bones clean and your eyes are gone. By next summer, you'll be twins. Moaning will wake you from both from your wet sleeps and you'll rise together, intertwining your wasted fingers, waiting for the next camper who looks like good company.

## **Ten Days with the Rural Jesus**

Our world is on a bender with no one to clean up the mess. Star systems gape in awe, and someone left sensibility's door ajar. I think, therefore I am, but I must think first. (A streak of white across an empty sky—is that *you*?)

Day 1 – Stripped down, every story is the same but for the details, and every ache commenced. Go a day without complaining about pain or a lack of sleep. Peek along the lines of reckoning. God is a warm fire, a popsicle in summer, someone's hello on the tail end of disappointment. That's him where the trail T's so just follow the scent of blossoms on the long trek home.

Day 2 – A hundred cows and only five standing up. A storm's coming, winds, tornado watch, and that means low pressure, animal movement. A rafter of turkeys scam along. Deer jump and dodge. Pinpoint a star in this rough night sky, and corral Jesus in a corn bin when the black clouds gather. A night's worries squelch the song in our bones. Not so easy to release them to the great unknown, to the God of thunders.

Day 3 – In the rural world of fake news, we read that cattle align themselves north and south at any given time, based on the magnetic field of the earth. Someone should tell the cattle that, they who seem not to care about directional expectations or magnetic fields, but range haphazardly over these Iowan plots, east/west, southeastern/northwestern, and every point in between. Trees stretch heavenward, predictably.

Day 4 – We dive in too deeply, forget who we are. Our terminology stays the same though conditions differ. I wonder if that little white collar square covers a button.

Day 5 – Prayer is a strange concept and prone to maxims. Strange in the sense of a crap shoot being strange: why do we do it when there's an astronomical chance that mountains won't move and nothing but coal debris will be dropped into the sea. I've exploded with prayer these past days—a desolation of moments. Still the earth moves not neither does it ripple nor blanket me in waves of wisdom, depict me a rustic prophet in jeans.

Day 6 – I keep waiting for the death of something. Once we've lived long enough or seen too much or felt too much, we expect it. A dead garden, a dead tree, a dead friend. The sun sets each evening and something dies a little every day. In a saga's rise and descent comes modulation. Tone tone tone tone tone. Adam heard God walking. Tell me about the stride. The heaviness of foot. Imagined drama is far less reliable.

Day 7 – We begin to think we've sinned the unpardonable. We believe the rants and indulge the ranter; we are, after all, imperfect.

Day 8 – I learn about distance and the Democratic Republic of Congo from two twenty-somethings working in a local Indian restaurant. I learn Swahili words like *jukuu*

(grandchild), *shangazi* (aunt), and *habari* (hello). I learn that more to be feared than a renegade military is a Congolese aunt who will poison a family member for lack of attention, and call it voodoo. I learn that lions still roam the small villages. But in winter, they say the sun is bright and the air is cool, and there is never need for a coat, so in a fit of desire, I promise to visit in winter. I learn that churches are a thing there and that Jesus knows poverty.

Day 9 – God is not metaphysical, but a cloud with eyes, the beating heart inside a kind word. Theology helps us keep the order right, and the wine is always good. Further, theology is a distrust of common sense. Not that God is at odds with common sense but rather our interpretation of God swings on the faint winds of peer reviews. In these cases, it's easier to believe in a flat earth than Amyraldianism. And at some point we begin to conclude that Baptist is more a creed than a creature. Even the Amish can be friendly, and they sell you their goods. In the end, we gather together to remember, and maybe forget.

Day 10 – When did the hole in the sky close up? We keep such a long line of memories strapped around our waist. Someone said there's a road paved with past regrets we must walk, but that's no road at all, instead, a valley of dry bones, and vultures perched on every high ledge. Better is the mapped-out trail with a little curiosity and time for excursions.

## First Time

### I.

She attends my juggling audition for a madrigals dinner show, and later flirts by tossing bean bags about the stage, demanding I play fetch.

On opening night, I bring her catered supper behind a pleated jabot. I unfoil her Yukon Gold and spoon potato onto her tongue. She wrinkles her nose at the suggestion she might eat the skin.

In December, at the Minneapolis wrap party, she slides into the hotel whirlpool. Her foot, sleek as sealskin, seeks my chin. Gaze austere—eyebrows summarily arched—she climbs her pink toes past my lips and into my mouth.

At 11:00, management shuts the jets off. I go to my room, dress, and meet her in the lobby. She conducts me out to her Honda. It seems entirely reasonable when she drops me off in a Denny's parking lot, dry snow skittering about, with directions to order dessert. She herself needs to meet some friends she hasn't seen since high school.

She returns at two in the morning, long after I've finished my pie. Sweeping into the booth, she pokes a fork at her weepy meringue. I sulk. She reaches across the table and digs the tines into my forearm. They don't break skin, but I hitch like an unprimed engine.

"Apologize. And tell me you didn't mind waiting. Can you do that for me?" I nod, and she presses the fork deeper. "No, no, sweetie. Use your words."

Sent to the car while she settles with the hostess, I find her Accord locked. Overhead, a flag snaps sharply in the wind, grommets rattling against the hollow pole.

### II.

In the few minutes preceding my baptism, she at last deigns a scansion of her form; permits me to mind each metered rise and fall of her breasts; indulges my servile compulsion to reproduce her prosody:

*Her hair pours over her shoulders, India ink spilled from a well;  
her cursive touch beguiles with the precision of arcane script;  
chips of brilliant diamond glisten from the shallow of her philtrum;  
and in the prominence of each vertebrae, I trail a surfacing dolphin.*

There too is the physics of our coupling, pelvic geometry, my own unversed rhythm—a delicious quickening. And in the time it takes to insert a space between stanzas, she's rolled off the bed. Shivering, I watch her dress in the faint light framing the door.

She leaves with no further instructions.

### III.

She is 18, a first-year music major. I am undeclared, a nineteen-year-old stranger secreting herself in closets. When we get back to Bemidji, a mutual acquaintance points out the apartment she shares with three girlfriends. It perches above a threadbare motor lodge, at the top of a yawning stairwell hammered to the side of the building. I prepare to summit, hesitate. It isn't that she has so readily dismissed my proffered virginity. My intentions are covetous: I want to breathe her poise—steal the very self-possession which empowered her to puppet me. She is a glyph of who I might be. And I hunger to slip inside again. But next time I will delve deep beneath the mystery of her skin and know the thew

of her iron conviction; feel the printed page as I slide my finger along its rough edge; savor the musky density of mango on my tongue; draw a razor across the gentle concavity of my shins; and brush my hair, luminous in the earthy warmth of a flowering garden.

IV.

Of course I never speak to her again. And it isn't until much, much later that I learn to nurture more pragmatic visions of womanhood.

V.

But in these selfsame wee hours, I ache for the admonishing pinch of her fork: it christened an awakening more enduring than my sorrow in forgetting her name.





**CENTOS**





## Foreword

Dear Readers,

The *Jet Fuel Review* editors are excited to share with you the noteworthy gem of Issue 15, our cento collection. “Cento” is Latin for “patchwork” and in terms of poetic form, a cento is a “patchwork” of lines from various works. According to the introduction of *Hosidius Geta’s “Medea:” A Virgilian Cento*, by Joseph J. Mooney, Geta’s “Medea” is the first recorded cento, dating back between 200 C.E. and 300 A.D. Classified as a Virgilian cento, “Medea” is composed of lines from works by the ancient Roman poet, Virgil. A Frankenstein-like composition, each line is carefully sutured to the next in order to create thought-provoking images and metaphors that seamlessly weld with one another, and ultimately crafts a piece that pays homage to other’s work while creating a new text.

We are thrilled to feature a wide array of pieces that showcase the dynamicity of this experimental stitching form such as Brianna Noll’s “L.A. Centos” in which she incorporates lines from well-known films such as *Nightcrawler*, *Real Women Have Curves*, and *500 Days of Summer*. Along with Noll, the Special Section includes centos by notable writers such as David Lehman, editor in chief for *The Best American Poetry* series, poet and ONU professor Jennifer Moore, 2017 Tuscon Literary Award winner and editor Lynne Thompson, and collaborators Ariana Sophia-Kartsonis and Stephanie Rogers. Last, but definitely not least, we are excited to publish Lewis University’s very own, Dominique Dusek, whose cento “Water Song,” is a fusion of images that are both rich like “the wine dark sea wreck,” yet sustain intimacy like “two birds coupling.”

We hope you both enjoy and appreciate the thoughtful artistry that is involved when constructing the cento, and hopefully discover a newfound love for this longstanding, intricate form.

Read on,

Zakiya Cowan & the *Jet Fuel Review* Editors

## Your Mother's Maiden Name is Not a Secret

*Many security questions ask for biographical information that is publicly available, whether in open records or via social media. – New York Times*

I was born abandoned outdoors in the heat-shaped air,  
everywhere on the horizon the smell of ashes  
pulling me awake, several claps and then I came alive  
like the trembling voice of light at dusk.

No, I was not born here.

I was born on a mountainside  
with my eyes to the insects, with my ears to the root,  
the tears from my birth pains  
a whistle, a shout. *Run. Don't Stop. Don't slip.*

No, I was not born here.

I was born in Nogales, Arizona  
in the low-domed hills,  
hand pressed to glass. I feel the heat  
of flames larger than night.  
The distant moon  
is a language we can barely understand.  
I wish I were the spare shadow  
of dark leaves where birds go.

No.

I was born in the right time, in whole,  
and my share of time has been nothing:  
bones of articulate hope  
faded like old hair.  
Wind-wounded, lopsided now  
I bow to you,  
a sentence trailing off,  
dissolving in the hot still air.

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**Sources:** “Written by Himself” by Gregory Pardlo: I was born abandoned outdoors in the heat-shaped air,  
“The House Where I Was Born” by Yves Bonnefoy: everywhere on the horizon the smell of ashes

"Birth" by Tina Chang: pulling me awake, several claps and then I came alive  
 "We All Return to the Place Where We Were Born" by Oscar Gonzales: like the trembling  
 voice of light at dusk.  
 "This is Not the Place Where I Was Born" by Miguel Pinero: No, I was not born here.  
 "I Was Born on a Mountainside" by Hillary Kuteisa: I was born on a mountainside  
 "Vertigo" by Alice Oswald: with my eyes to the insects with my ears to the root,  
 "Ego Tripping (there may be a reason why)" by Nikki Giovanni: the tears from my birth  
 pains  
 "X" by Imtiaz Dharker: a whistle, a shout. Run. Don't stop. Don't slip.  
 "This is Not the Place Where I Was Born" by Miguel Pinero: No, I was not born here.  
 "Day of the Refugios" by Alberto Rios: I was born in Nogales, Arizona  
 "My Mother on an Evening in Late Summer" by Mark Strand: in the low-domed hills,  
 "Eden" by David Woo: hand pressed to glass. I feel the heat  
 "The First Layer of City" by Marianne Boruch: of flames larger than night.  
 "The Distant Moon" by Rafael Campo: The distant moon  
 "A Language of Change" by David Sergeant: is a language we can barely understand.  
 "To the Saguaro Cactus Tree in the Desert" by James Wright: I wish I were the spare  
 shadow  
 "My Daughter Among the Names" by Farid Matuk: of dark leaves where birds go.  
 "The Rhinoceros" by Robert Minhinnick: No.  
 "Untitled" by Anna Akhmatova: I was born in the right time, in whole,  
 "I Loved You Before I Was Born" by Li-Young Lee: and my share of time has been nothing:  
 "American Zebra: Praise Song for the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument" by  
 Diane Raptosh: bones of articulate hope  
 "Ghetto" by Lola Ridge: faded like old hair.  
 "Storm" by Michael Longley: Wind-wounded, lopsided now  
 "My Mother's Name Lucha" by Juan Felipe Herrera: I bow to you,  
 "Ephemeral Stream" by Elizabeth Willis: a sentence trailing off,  
 "Tide" by Maura Dooley: dissolving in the hot, still air.

## Earth Omen, Earth Omen, Will You Be Mine?

Scientists are full of news these days.  
Trust that. Rue that.

There is no heaven or hell,  
only earth and mystery.

None have done wrong  
who still have a tongue.

In the Gospel of John the body  
and glory converge

waking so many hours before full day  
from the dream:

burglar music, late morning, no one home.  
Yeah, there's a basic rhythm in everything

like a thief on tiptoe stealing into airspace  
on the notes showing its provenance.

You who I cannot save,  
listen to me:

the magpie is the prince of dark arts,  
the albatross is always an omen.

---

Sources: Crystal Williams, "Double Helix"  
John Hodgen, "Hamlet Texts Guildenstern about Playing Upon the Pipe"  
David Feinstein, "Kaddish"  
Gregory Orr, "Three Dark Proverb Sonnets"  
Major Jackson, "The Flâneur Tends A Well-Liked Summer Cocktail"  
David Brendan Hopes, "Certain Things"  
Rodney Jones, "Homecoming"  
Yusef Komunyakaa, "The Last Bohemian of Avenue A"  
Amit Jahmudar, "Kill List"  
Judson Mitcham, "White"  
Matthew Olzmann, "Letter Beginning With Two Lines by Czeslaw Milosz"  
Wendy Viedlock, "Deconstruction"

## **Jane Hirshfield Speaks of Life, says**

there are times I feel myself cow stripped of her leather:  
...look at my unhandy hand.

A hand turned upward holds only a single, transparent question  
whose far side I begin now to enter  
with a single finger outstretched like a tiny flame;

a bestiary of incoherent parts;  
...the evidence: irrefutable, the low buzzing.

Like an ant carrying her bits of leaf or sand,  
you work with what you are given—

## Touchstones

That, in Aleppo once, where  
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,  
Bloom, O ye amaranths! Bloom for whom ye may,  
Till elevators drop us from our day. . .

And would it have been worth it, after all,  
To let the warm love in  
Or stain her honor or her new brocade  
To a green thought in a green shade?

As though to protect what it advertises,  
Surely some revelation is at hand;  
My music shows ye have your closes,  
And to die is different from what anyone supposed, and luckier.

Blind mouths! as from an unextinguished hearth,  
Me only cruel immortality  
Consumes: whatever dies was not mixed equally  
But does a human form display

Alone and palely loitering, like a rose rabbi.  
O could I lose all father now! for why  
I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God,  
Honey of generation had betrayed.

These modifications of matter into innocent athletes  
Whose action is no stronger than a flower  
Through Eden took their solitary way.  
I, too, dislike it. With rue my heart is laden.

If you are coming down through the narrows of the River Kiang,  
Where knock is open wide,  
Fear death by water. To begin the morning right,  
The small rain down can rain

Where ignorant armies clash by night  
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.  
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,  
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound

Joy's grape, with how sad steps, O Moon,  
With naked foot stalking in my chamber.  
The dark italics it could not propound,  
And so – for God's sake – hock and soda-water!

## **Cento: The True Romantics**

I hid my love when young till I  
Heard the thunder hoarsely laugh,  
Heard the skylark warbling in the sky,  
For the eye altering alters all.

But with a sweet forgetting,  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
The awful shadow of some unseen power  
Hath had elsewhere its setting.

I would build that dome in air  
And in the icy silence of the tomb,  
For the sword outwears its sheath,

And whom I love, I love indeed,  
And all I loved, I loved alone,  
Ignorant and wanton as the dawn.

## **L.A. Cento #6**

*I'm looking for the best screenwriter  
of your generation. Is that you?*

I'm out here in the wilderness of ideas, but  
if I push thoughts of distress and unemployment  
out of my mind, I can do more than string  
a sentence together.

*It's a hard world for women—they've  
done studies. What do you say?*

Where I grew up there was a lot to contend  
with. Saying it's all gonna work out fine isn't  
always enough to spur a young woman on.

*Do you know Los Angeles?*

I know I don't believe in stereotypical Hollywood  
chick-killing dream sequences.

*We all gotta dream, don't we?*

I believe that wholeheartedly. I'm a writer.  
I carry a rabbit in this troubled but  
beautiful world.

*You're from the suburbs. Do you know what fear  
of the poor means in real life?*

You're fucked from birth, writing the worst  
tweet of the day instead of making peace with  
what you don't have.

*Is this the start of a psychopath movie?*

It's not crazy or quirky enough. No one's  
shooting a thousand bullets a minute.

*What if this psycho story becomes the final  
thoughts of a man who chose not the darkness  
but the light?*

Then at the critical moment, the great fuckin' psychopath starts behaving like a decent human being.

*I've been reading your art and peace movie.  
What else have you done?*

Focusing on framing, on dissolving the barrier between the subject and the outside, I sat watching the shadow of a little shih tzu, a little message about the afterlife.

*Do you know what that is?*

Some gray place. It's really emotional, having once been so much in love with the angels, but I think that's the best we're gonna get.

## L.A. Cento #7

Hello, my love, my troublemaker.  
Let's roll. We'll check out the dress  
department at Bloomingdale's and  
try on pretty dresses my family could  
never afford, then go to Roscoe's  
Chicken and Waffles. On me.  
You best believe I will accept no  
substitutes. What's wrong? Stop.  
Stop it. This elegant man is very old  
fashioned and wants you to be very  
miserable. Don't let him rob you  
of your own ambition. I've flown  
seven million miles—seen Mexico  
and Japan, Koreatown and Compton—  
and God knows it's hard, and  
expensive, for a woman to think  
herself gold and not a shriveled-up  
mango. Listen: You're 13  
years old and work an overlock  
machine. You're a 19-year-old  
country girl, white and barefoot,  
on parole for possession with  
intent. You're a 44-year-old  
black woman, a stewardess, with  
retirement benefits that ain't  
worth a damn. You're 56 years old,  
and it looks really good on you,  
but as a matter of principle  
you think *todo lo que soy bueno  
es el trabajo*. You know life is  
handcuffed to sacrifice. You're not  
a hippo, an orca, a beast of burden.  
You're the very best there is,  
*con un corazón puro*. How dare  
anybody tell you otherwise.

---

Sources: *Jackie Brown* (1997) & *Real Women Have Curves* (2002)

**L.A. Cento #8**

I am only  
words, not  
a pretty  
girl, not a  
robot, not  
a light happy  
bouncy every-  
thing's fine L.A.  
wife. I am only  
a resemblance.  
You write we're  
a couple, and  
you're the only  
one that gets  
a say in this.  
I am the fear  
you carry  
around, your  
cosmic significance,  
your total  
misreading of  
anything real,  
anything like  
love. How  
do you share  
your life with  
somebody you  
imagine? The  
spaces between  
words are almost  
infinite, and I  
can't live as  
your book  
anymore.

---

Sources: *500 Days of Summer* (2009) & *Her* (2013)

## Falling out of the tether

I slurred briars;

I called out: bone king,  
antler king,

& I could barely  
feel my hands,

my limbs, that branch,  
a slender echo

of not *only* but *also*  
the purr of water.

---

Sources: “Walking El Pulguero” by Eisder Mosquera. “Poems from Blue Tarp” by John Duvernoy. “Battery Pie” by Kateri Menominee. “The Wild Divine” by Ada Limón. “Erotic Vagrancy, Anyone?” by Maureen Dowd. “Song” by William Fargason.

**He handled antlers,**  
their velvet masonry,

& fat to ragged  
deer legs'

ending strings.  
Taking pulls off

a brown bottle,  
he released

the shutter &  
breathed deeply

at last, his wedding  
band scarred, his

eyes no longer two  
bruised surfaces.

---

**Sources:** “Battery Pie” by Kateri Menominee. “Like trains of cars on tracks of plush (#66)” by Emily Dickinson. “A Melody Hunting” by Michaelsun Stonesweat Knapp. “Service” by Ada Limón. “Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico, 1941” by Alan Cheuse. “Opticks” by Eleanor Chai. “Mummy of a Lady Named Jemutesonekh” by Thomas James.

## **Summer-sore horses**

find the energy lines under  
weight shifters, some tick / tick  
of brightly colored insects,  
the ticking we are each built with.

You were the reigns of the house.  
I do not funeral. You are the reigns  
made of homogenous darkness.  
The neighbors do you in their talk,  
the song, take everything in.

---

**Sources:** “took so much” by John Liles. “Poetry & Ritual” by CAConrad. “Ars Poetica” by Norman Dubie. “Poem in Which a Bird Does Some of the Talking” by John Yau. “luam mending clothes —umbertide” by Aracelis Girmay. “The Necklace Without Peer” by Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, translated by David Larsen. The Poetry Project’s review of *The Crown Ain’t Worth Much* by Hanif Willis-Abdurraqib. Again, “The Necklace Without Peer” by Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, translated by David Larsen. “Funes the Memorious: by Jorge Luis Borges. “Surety” by Lizette Woodworth Reese. “Tulips” by Sylvia Plath.

## **Mouth Cento: The Trick**

We may call it a border:  
the entrance into evil. Love,  
half-open, that a body gets through sideways.

I am the door. If anyone enters by me,  
the trick is to get on the ground and fold  
yourself into a small, soft shape.  
A grim little sliver that fits the ignition,  
enters—and is lost in Balms.

I'm a means, a stage, a cow in calf.  
I am a little world made cunningly.

---

**Sources:** 1. Julia Kristeva 2. Susan Howe 3. Ovid 4. The Bible 5-6. Camille Rankine 7. Danielle Pafunda 8. Emily Dickinson 9. Sylvia Plath 10. John Donne

## **Mouth Cento: The Heart**

It is confusing and embarrassing to have two mouths.  
All your life is written for you.

I let myself be invented,  
sweet to tongue and sound to eye;  
The heart its own rough animal.

Silence can be a plan  
that swallows up and gives birth at the same time.  
An alert breath like purring stirs below,  
it must be endless: round and round  
that God spot.

I'm a martyr, a girl who's been dead  
concentrating on moving  
in perfect circles.

Every part of me is hungry. Knuckled.  
I wanted to be a heart.

---

**Sources:** 1. Anne Carson 2. Sleater-Kinney 3. Wislawa Szymborska 4. Christina Rossetti  
5. Tracy K. Smith 6. Adrienne Rich 7. Mikhail Bakhtin 8. May Swenson 9. Rita Dove 10.  
Anne Sexton 11. Toi Derricotte 12-13. Margaret Atwood 14. Aziza Barnes 15. Federico  
Garcia Lorca

## **Mouth Cento: The Wound**

Alone, watching the moon rise:  
I cannot say what loves have come and gone,  
with a thousand open legs  
with the greed of a meadow.

I have wanted some epic use for my excellent body,  
to suit my character, full of holes.  
Their redness talks to my wound, it corresponds  
as moon fires set in my throat.

---

**Sources:** 1. Louise Gluck 2. Edna St. Vincent Millay 3. Lara Glenum 4. Charles Baudelaire  
5. Sharon Olds 6. Carmen Gimenez-Smith 7. Sylvia Plath 8. Audre Lorde

## **The 12-Step Meeting**

All night long, we spoke of loneliness,  
the impossibility of being human  
a song with a lost room inside.  
We scraped syllables off the same records,  
threaded needles rising through the smoky air  
as if, one by one, the memories  
gathered like a dream drenched in frost.

---

**Sources:** L1- John Unterecker, Midwinter  
L2- Charles Bukowski, Beasts Bounding Through Time  
L3- Nick Flynn, Father Outside  
L4- Cedar Sigo, On Strings of Blue  
L5- Wendy DeGroat, On the Addition of a Black Candle to the Center of Our Advent Wreath  
L6- Billy Collins, Forgetfulness  
L7- John Unterecker, Midwinter

## **Letting Go of Resentment**

Poised on the tip of your tongue,  
it comes unmasked out of your heart and your mind and your  
mouth— green rot touching metal slurry of the ocean.  
Swept clean, bloodstained, its sea-washed crater  
a speck of grit shuffling oyster-tongue  
fingers, words against skin  
swollen with strange selves, distended  
toward the rising quarter moon.

---

**Sources:** L1- Billy Collins, Forgetfulness  
L2- Charles Bukowski, So You Want to Be a Writer  
L3- Joe Hall, Utopia: Love as Last Day  
L4- Pablo Neruda, The Night in Isla Negro  
L5- Malka Older, Muse  
L6- Bob Hicok, My Most Recent Position Paper  
L7- John Unterecker, ...Within, Into, Inside, Under, Within...  
L8- Elizabeth Hitchcock, Five Sequential Stress Dreams

## **The Witness**

Morning finds clothes on Mother's front porch, shed like week-old lilies.  
Nothing is so scarred as this place, shards of parched cloth trampled by footprints.

I pull myself back again to a place where I  
watched him eat his knuckles, punch a hole into his stomach—

the gun he held had just killed someone  
on whose small bones a dress hung for a while.

---

**Sources:** L1- Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*  
L2- John Unterecker, *The Hero*  
L3- Nick Flynn, *The Incomprehensibility*  
L4- Geula Geurts- *Tales I Tell Myself (II)*  
L5- Eavan Boland, *Heroic*  
L6- Gerald Stern, *My Sister's Funeral*

## **You Can Try to Strangle Light**

I put on my face. This one is wolfish.  
Never, upon waking, have I been so empty

forever, days are not a stretch of water  
like it is tonight—the motel room

propped up and grinning. As my body too  
casts up narrow beams on the ceiling, a

freezing in their gravity.  
When we kissed it was two swordfish, vaulting—

Ah, be with me always, spirit of noisy  
windbreak for the gray-white fires of ghosts.

---

**Sources:** Kathleen Sheeder Bonanno, Frances Justine Post, Arielle Greenberg, Lisa C. Kreuger, Christina Olson, Michael Hettich, Sharon Olds, Jennifer K. Sweeney, Bianca Stone, Frank O'Hara, Richard Kenney

**Cento**

A single deer stepped  
into a stillness and watched me:  
nothing need be explained.  
Given lilacs, lilacs disappear.

Here is the painted world,  
the ghost garden; our self behind  
a heap of apples, concealed.  
A spectral game of hide and seek.

I will always love the way a lost word  
will come back, fanatic against  
the vanishing. In the avenue of trees,  
the haunt sings and it's my music.

**Cento**

A little satin-like she entered the evening,  
life still there, upon her hair—  
the musk of chestnuts in a house  
the wind owns.

Where the Alone lived,  
my ghost looked up and saw  
a feather blown  
between everyone's bones.

I do not know what becomes  
of winter, gone as the moment  
begins to wink. The soul sleepwalks  
into a mirror—

one stepped in as one stepped out.  
Inside I am frosted; if I weep  
it's for the rocking chair.  
Nothing left except light on your fur.

## Cento

Like a pond in winter  
my hand is a method of gliding,  
a sonic residue, fragile  
as a child's visible sorrow.

Near the treeline  
the lantern hung all winter;  
face with no face,  
a gleaming pebble in false sleep.

A ghost captured gives me hope,  
and also the darkness of books.  
Each has left something undone.

You were always exact to me.  
Stunned by the strange weather,  
in the peacefulest time,  
we said nothing.

The light is a rabbit-light, gone  
none could say since when.  
I will not speak to you again.

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**Sources:** Claribel Alegría, "Rain," Rae Armantrout, "Unbidden," Linda Bierds, "The Ghost Trio," Lucie Brock-Broido, "How Can It Be I Am No Longer I," Emily Dickinson, ["One need not be a chamber"], John Donne, "The Apparition," Carolyn Forché, "Sequestered Writing," Lola Haskins, "Patsy Sees a Ghost," Mark Irwin, "Ghost," Christopher Kennedy, "Ghost in the Land of Skeletons," Nathaniel Mackey, "Ghost of a Trance," Eric Pankey, "Restless Ghost," Edgar Allan Poe, "Lenore," Lisa Sewell, "Letter from a Haunted Room," Wallace Stevens, "A Rabbit as King of the Ghosts," Keith Waldrop, "The Ghost of a Hunter," Dara Wier, "Blue Oxen."

## Window Cento

There was too much carpeting in the house but the windows upstairs were left open except on the very coldest wettest days. Why is there a difference between one window and another, why is there a difference, because the curtain is shorter. I made curtains out of colored burlap from Sears, hung them at the four windows of the green apartment. There is the thousand-windowed dance hall. One could see why they didn't want windows after awhile. Through the poet's window the house converses about immensity with the world. What then is a window. People are windows, lenses that focus emotion the way a magnifying glass focuses light, and the bright points burst into flame, from morning to memory. Now through lace curtains I can see the huge Wolf Moon going down, and soon the sky will lighten, turning first gray, then pink, then blue. . . . We had to wash the windows in order to see them. Windows here are small and I cannot see myself in them. The leaves outside the window tricked the eye, demanding that one see them, focus on them, making it impossible to look past them, and though holes were opened through the foliage, they were as useless as portholes underwater looking into a dark sea, which only reflect the room one seeks to look out from. I fled from the great army of windows, where not a single person has the time to watch a cloud or converse with one of those delicate breezes stubbornly sent by the unanswered sea. There is no one at home but me—and I'm not at home; I'm up here on the hill, looking at the dark windows below. Oh window muffled on the outside, oh, doors carefully closed; customs that have come down from times long past, transmitted, verified, never entirely understood. Curtains lift and fall, like the chest of someone sleeping. No longer does tower battle cloud, no longer do swarms of windows devour more than half the night.

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Sources: Materials from Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (Beacon Press, 1994), Federico García Lorca's *Poet in New York: Bilingual Edition* (FSG Classics, 2013), Melody

S. Gee's *Each Crumbling House* (Perugia Press, 2010), Mark Irwin's *Large White House Speaking* (New Issues Poetry & Prose, 2013), Jane Kenyon's *Collected Poems* (Graywolf Press, 2007), Dawn Lundy Martin's *Life in a Box is a Pretty Life* (Nightboat Books, 2014), Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons: Centennial Edition* (City Lights Publishers, 2014), with lines from Rilke and Françoise Minkowska as quoted by Bachelard.

## Silent Cento

Let's not have any noise in this room, except the sound of a voice reading a poem. The overtones are a denser shadow in the room characterized by its habitual readiness, a form of charged waiting, a perpetual attendance, of which I was thinking when I began the paragraph, "So much of childhood is spent in a manner of waiting." Oh silence in the stairwell, silence in the adjoining rooms, silence up there, on the ceiling. Prepare your skeleton for the air. We are hypnotized by solitude. The uncommon run of keeping oneself to oneself. We walk along the hard crest of the snowdrift toward my white, mysterious house, both of us so quiet, keeping the silence as we go along. We don't bother finding shelter in each other; we are preparing to be alone again. I have been spoiled with privacy, permitted the luxury of solitude. There are more places not empty. The function of inhabiting constitutes the link between full and empty. What matters is this: emptied space. Lonely world. River's mouth. Learning to listen, that is taught not to talk. Then the great stream of simple humility that is in the silent room flows into ourselves. A little calm, a closet does not connect under the bed. The corner is a haven that ensures us of one of the things we prize most highly—immobility. *If you want to see that nothing is left, see the emptied spaces and the clothes, give me your lunar glove, your other glove of grass, my love!* The house will go cold as stone. Is it possible for a creature to remain alive inside stone, inside this piece of stone? I love you, I love you, I love you, with the armchair and the book of death, down the melancholy hallway, in the iris's darkened garret, in our bed that is the moon's bed, and in that dance the turtle dreams of. All small things must evolve slowly, and certainly a long period of leisure, in a quiet room, was needed to miniaturize the world. A green acre is so selfish and so pure and so enlivened. A) Survey the whole B) lawn and note C) how near shadows D) increase the light. They fall silent again. As soon as we become motionless, we are elsewhere; we are dreaming in a

world that is immense. There is some discomfort more active than boredom but none more fatiguing. Stillness . . . While we slept an inch of snow simplified the field. Where is the serene length, it is there and a dark place is not a dark place, only a white and red are black, only a yellow and green are blue, a pink is scarlet, a bow is every color. The barn was empty of animals. The world alone in the lonely sky, and the air where all the villages end. When a casket is closed it is returned to the general community of objects. Let the shed go black inside.

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**Sources:** Materials from Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (Beacon Press, 1994), Gernot Böhme's *Atmospheric Architectures: The Aesthetics of Felt Spaces* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), Federico García Lorca's *Poet in New York: Bilingual Edition* (FSG Classics, 2013), Melody S. Gee's *Each Crumbling House* (Perugia Press, 2010), Mark Irwin's *Large White House Speaking* (New Issues Poetry & Prose, 2013), Jane Kenyon's *Collected Poems* (Graywolf Press, 2007), Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons: Centennial Edition* (City Lights Publishers, 2014), with a lines from Novalis and Rilke as quoted by Bachelard, and Anna Akhmatova as translated by Jane Kenyon.

## **Sound Canto**

Does the cliff not become a unique Thou, whenever I speak to it? The poet speaks on the threshold of being. He spoke loudly, as though in order to be heard above the silence of the library. It sounds like the door in the apartment where I used to live. For I love you, I love you, my love, in the attic where the children play, dreaming ancient lights of Hungary through the noise, the balmy afternoon, seeing sheep and lilies of snow through the dark silence of your forehead. Never in eternity the same sound—a small stone falling on a red leaf. In this reverberation, the poetic image will have a sonority of being. Edges and rhythm, form and anguish, the sky is swallowing them all. Can one take captive the roar of the city. Wasn't it formerly what it is now: a sonorous echo from the vaults of hell? He lived on the mountainside above a lake with a mythical beast he'd subdued. And we are in hell, and a part of us is always in hell, walled-up, as we are, in the world of evil intentions. The noise from other apartments sweeps under the door, seeps up through the floor. Sometimes in the evening I'll hear gunshots or firecrackers. I like to walk out of the house in evening when the bronze light's cast rose and people seem made all of liquid and I can walk right through them. This is not hell, but the street. Why is the sound of a spoon on a plate next door a thing so desolate? From what intimate valley do the horns of other days still reach us? Any space is not quiet it is so likely to be shiny. He is at home in the space of an ear, at the entrance of the natural sound cavity. The two elements the traveler captures in the big city are extra-human architecture and furious rhythm. The voices of the past do not sound the same in the big room as in the little bed chamber, and calls on the stairs have yet another sound. There is no air on the moon to carry talk. Is there not much more joy in a table and more chairs and very likely roundness and a place to put them. Piano music comes floating over the water, falters, begins

again, falters. . . . The round cry of round being  
makes the sky round like a cupola. The voice in the  
dark doorway blocks the image.

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**Sources:** Materials from Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (Beacon Press, 1994), Gernot Böhme's *Atmospheric Architectures: The Aesthetics of Felt Spaces* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), Melody S. Gee's *Each Crumbling House* (Perugia Press, 2010), Mark Irwin's *Large White House Speaking* (New Issues Poetry & Prose, 2013), Federico García Lorca's *Poet in New York: Bilingual Edition* (FSG Classics, 2013), Jane Kenyon's *Collected Poems* (Graywolf Press, 2007), Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons: Centennial Edition* (City Lights Publishers, 2014), with a lines from Novalis and Rilke as quoted by Bachelard.

## Copy Cento

First of all, these old houses can be drawn—we can make a representation that has all the characteristics of a copy. Nobody takes Mona Lisa to be the person Mona Lisa; rather, it is taken as an image, and it is with and through this image one gains experiences. You see that it is that thing which it is and no other thing. Should the resemblance be so that any little cover is copied, should it be so that yards are measured, should it be so and there be a sin, should it be so then certainly a room is big enough when it is so empty and the corners are gathered together. The screen can be taken away from the fire as long as someone is sitting in the room. The thing is generally conceived in its closure. Half the day in half the room. I never drink from this blue tin cup speckled with white without thinking of stars on a clear, cold night—of Venus blazing low over the leafless trees; and Canis great and small—dogs without flesh, fur, blood, or bone . . . dogs made of light, apparitions of cold night, with black and trackless spaces in between. . . . Lunar creatures sniff and circle the dwellings. A terrestrial sign is set upon a celestial being. It was awhile before I understood what had come between the stars, to form constellations. The moment we love an image it cannot remain the copy of a fact. Our souls are our copies, they ignore us completely. Lax, to have corners, to be lighter than some weight, to indicate a wedding journey, to last brown and note curious, to be wealthy, cigarettes are established by length and by doubling. The simplest image is doubled; it is itself and something else than itself. And memory a wall.

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**Sources:** Materials from Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (Beacon Press, 1994), Gernot Böhme's *Atmospheric Architectures: The Aesthetics of Felt Spaces* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), Robert Hass' *A Little Book on Form* (Ecco, 2017), Federico García Lorca's *Poet in New York: Bilingual Edition* (FSG Classics, 2013), Lyn Hejinian's *My Life and My Life in the Nineties* (Wesleyan University Press, 2013), Jane Kenyon's *Collected Poems* (Graywolf Press, 2007), Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons: Centennial Edition* (City Lights Publishers, 2014).

## **Holy Book Cento**

my brother built a city  
a measure of what endures

it had no need for sun or moon  
like uncarved blocks of wood

he fashioned blessings  
which announced themselves

on the broad road the world walks  
there in the moonlight

he dipped his hand  
as you would an autumn lily

into the water  
and the water became sweet

like a cloud of dew  
when the blossom is over

they say death gave up the dead  
for the beloved city

built and roofed with cloud  
the darkness of every blue

## Holy Book Cento

there in the woods a little while  
in the wilderness

where the sun shines  
as the waves of the sea

in harmony  
with the wild beasts

who have sopped up  
the wine of ignorance

[ ] grieve [ ] beyond grief  
standing equal

among all creatures  
your footprints [ ]

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**Sources:** *The Bhagavad-Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War*. Translated by Barbara Stoler Miller, Quality Paperback Book Club, 1986.  
*The Bible*. English Standard Version. Crossway Bibles, 2007.  
*The Corpus Hermeticum: Initiation into Hermetics, The Hermetica of Hermes Trismegistus*. Translated by G.R.S. Mead, Pantianos Classics, 07 November 2016.  
*The Dhammapada*. Translated by Glenn Wallis, The Modern Library, 2004.  
Neihardt, John G. *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*. University of Nebraska Press, 1988.  
Tsu, Lao. *Tao Te Ching*. Translated by Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English, Vintage-Random House, 1989.

## **Water Song**

Two pale figures in the lake  
to nestle in a dark place,  
two hungry owls  
ill inclined to cheer or mourn,  
to find markers of what's extraneous,  
of first loss of love—  
weightless flake of light.  
It travels into sorrow and gets lost there.

Two birds coupling  
beneath the blue crush of all those hours,  
the silver of the unseen knocking another man into  
the wine dark sea wreck.  
For every bird there is a stone to throw at a bird.  
Across the field birds fly like storm shook shadows,  
the world's raw sea edge awaiting.  
Oh, little birds, don't you know?

---

**Sources:** Monica Youn, Dean Young, Kevin Young, Emily Van Kley, Chase Twichell, David St. John, Paisley Rekdal, Carl Phillips, Bruce Bond, Matthew Zapruder, Amy Gerstler, John Murillo, Maggie Smith, & Nickole Brown

**On Missing My Lover Who Agreed With The Concept Of Past Lives, I Read  
Moby Dick**

I hoped for a parti-coloured resurrection  
dragging me by the legs, by crowds of water  
gazers. I had been his wife,  
the dint, the Nantucket craft, November  
in my soul. Landsmen delineate chaos;  
sentinels blend green fields gone.  
That place: the sense of weight  
and pressure of voices all over  
the house. His belted coral,  
his substitute pistol thrown over  
me. I found all the Time  
whipping me. No help for it—  
it's the Black Sea in a midnight gale.  
Stir his bitter sigh one single inch.  
With his upper hand circulation off, I can  
only hear a great rattling of coaches.  
Old Craft, Great Original—nothing was  
to be heard. This is the price you risk  
to drive a nervous man from the stream.  
The first dead American harpoon,  
however wild, explains our mystery.  
Some people are nothing particular.  
I lost myself at the feet  
of your besmoked coffin  
entering the gable-ended sea.

## On Reading a Copy of Pushkin I Stole from My Childhood Rapist, a Cento

He dadled me as a small boy,  
produced a haze in me. I was  
just 9 years of age, soul still blossoming-out.  
I don't know why.  
My kith, my kin, three whole hours—  
one customary grief each hour, each day.  
A roar of violins, violent surging,  
just another dumb moon over a dumb horizon.  
His thievish mouth all in a blaze  
for sport, for the crumbled sofa.  
Here there's no conscience; here no sense.  
He killed eight years in such a style.  
I learnt new sadness, unkind terror  
and its consolation. How to hiss  
him off. Who would have thought it?  
I've no one here who comprehends me.  
I drink in the midnight.  
I walk the shore, I watch the weather,  
I see him in dream: pale transcript  
of a vivid master. How well he knew  
the way to hurt. I only write like this,  
you know, because I'm grieving still.  
I might have said a word and then thought  
day and night and thought again about one thing:  
*when will the devil come for you?*  
I tell my early life, unlock my tongue.  
All right, you want my resurrection:  
*thank God, you had no inclination to blow your brains out.*





# BIOGRAPHIES



## Poetry

### Amy Sayre Baptista

Amy Sayre Baptista's first chapbook is the winner of the Black River Chapbook Competition and is forthcoming from Black Lawrence Press. Her writing has appeared in *The Best Small Fiction Anthology*, *Ninth Letter*, and *Alaska Quarterly Review*, among other journals. She performs with Kale Soup for the Soul, a Portuguese-American artists collective, and is a co-founder of Plates&Poetry, a community table program focused on food and writing.

### Katie Berta

Katie Berta has her PhD in poetry from Ohio University, where she teaches English, and her MFA from Arizona State. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Kenyon Review Online*, *Blackbird*, *The Louisville Review*, *The Laurel Review*; and *BOAAT*, among other journals.

### Carl Boon

Carl Boon lives in Izmir, Turkey, where he teaches courses in American culture and literature at 9 Eylül University. His poems have appeared in many magazines, including *Posit*, *The Maine Review*, and *Diagram*. A Pushcart Prize nominee, Boon recently edited a volume on the sublime in American cultural studies.

### Tina Boyer Brown

Tina Boyer Brown is the Creative Writing Department Head and a founding teacher at The Chicago High School for the Arts. She is a lead teacher for the Summer Poetry Institute for Educators in Chicago sponsored by the Poetry Foundation. Her work also appears in *The Journal of Education*, *RHINO Poetry* and *POETRY Magazine*.

### Rachel Cruea

Rachel Cruea is an M.F.A candidate in poetry at the University of Colorado-Boulder. She is originally from Ohio, where she spent her undergrad years at Ohio Northern University and grew up in Findlay, Ohio. She has had her work previously published in editions of *The Pinch*, *The Adroit Journal*, *Birds Piled Loosely*, *Gasher*, and elsewhere.

### Shelby Dale DeWeese

Shelby Dale DeWeese grew up on a farm in the southeastern United States, but now lives and writes in California. She earned her MFA from the University of San Francisco, and her poems have been published by *Rust+Moth*, *Quaint Magazine*, and other publications. She is the social media manager for *Pinwheel*, a journalist for MuggleNet, and a programs coordinator at 826 Valencia. She can be found online at [shelbydaledeweese.com](http://shelbydaledeweese.com).

### Matthew DeMarco

Matthew DeMarco is a writer and editor living in Chicago. His work has appeared on Poets.org and in *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Ghost City Review*, *Landfill*, and elsewhere. Poems that he wrote with Faizan Syed have appeared in *Dogbird* and are forthcoming

from *They Said*, an anthology of collaborative writing from Black Lawrence Press. He tweets from @M\_DeMarco\_Words.

## Patricia Damocles

Patricia Damocles is a sophomore at Lewis University double majoring in English and secondary education. Besides finding comfort in reading and writing poetry, she enjoys the company of her three cats. She is interested in minoring in creative writing with the aim of publishing her own work in the future.

## Lara Egger

Lara Egger's poems have appeared, or are forthcoming, in *New Ohio Review*, *Southerly*, *The American Poetry Journal*, *Free State Review*, *Arts & Letters*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, and elsewhere. An Australian native, Egger lives in Boston where she co-owns a Spanish tapas bar. She holds an MFA from Warren Wilson College.

## Jeannine Hall Gailey

Jeannine Hall Gailey served as the second Poet Laureate of Redmond, Washington. She is the author of five books of poetry: *Becoming the Villainess*, *She Returns to the Floating World*, *Unexplained Fevers*, *The Robot Scientist's Daughter* and the winner of the 2015 Moon City Press Book Prize for Poetry and the SPPA's 2017 Elgin Award, *Field Guide to the End of the World*. Her poems have been featured on NPR's *The Writer's Almanac* and *Verse Daily*, as well as in collections like *The Best Horror of the Year*. Her web site is [www.webbish6.com](http://www.webbish6.com). You can follow her on Twitter @webbish6.

## Beth Gilstrap

Beth Gilstrap is the author of *I Am Barbarella: Stories* (2015) from Twelve Winters Press and *No Man's Wild Laura* (2016) from Hyacinth Girl Press. She thinks she's crazy lucky to work as Fiction Editor over at *Little Fiction | Big Truths*. Her work has been selected as Longform.org's Fiction Pick of the Week, nominated for storySouth's Million Writers Award, Best of the Net, and The Pushcart Prize. Her fiction and essays have appeared in *Bull*, *WhiskeyPaper*, *The Minnesota Review*, *Literary Orphans*, and *Little Patuxent Review*, among others. She lives in Charlotte with her husband and enough rescue pets to make life weird.

## Jessica Guzman Alderman

Jessica Guzman Alderman's work appears or is forthcoming in *Pleiades*, *Ecotone*, *The Florida Review*, and elsewhere. She is the recipient of *American Literary Review's* 2017 Poetry Prize and *Harpur Palate's* 2017 Milton Kessler Memorial Prize in Poetry. A doctoral student at the University of Southern Mississippi's Center for Writers, she reads for *Memorious*.

## Su Hwang

Su Hwang is an award-winning poet whose debut collection *BODEGA* is a finalist for the 2018 Lindquist & Vennum Book Prize with Milkweed Editions. Born in Seoul, she called NYC and San Francisco home before transplanting to the Twin Cities to attend the

University of Minnesota, where she received her MFA in Poetry. She is a VONA alum, teaches creative writing with the Minnesota Prison Writers Workshop, and is the co-founder of Poetry Asylum with poet Sun Yung Shin. Su currently lives in Minneapolis.

## **Jill Khoury**

Jill Khoury is interested in the intersection of poetry, visual art, gender, and disability. She holds an MFA from The Ohio State University and edits *Rogue Agent*, a journal of embodied poetry and art. She has written two chapbooks—*Borrowed Bodies* (Pudding House, 2009) and *Chance Operations* (Paper Nautilus, 2016). Her debut full-length collection, *Suites for the Modern Dancer*, was released in 2016 from Sundress Publications. Find her at [jillkhoury.com](http://jillkhoury.com).

## **Nancy Lee**

Nancy Lee is the author of two critically acclaimed books, *Dead Girls* (McClelland & Stewart, 2002), a collection of short stories, and *The Age* (McClelland & Stewart, 2014), a novel. Her poetry has appeared in *Canadian Literature*, *Event Magazine*, *Prism International* and *The Fiddlehead*. She lives in Steveston, B.C. with her husband, the author John Vigna.

## **Lennart Lundh**

Lennart Lundh is a poet, short-fictionist, historian, and photographer. His work, including more than a dozen collections and chapbooks, has appeared internationally since 1965.

## **Laurie Macfee**

Laurie Macfee is a poet, artist, and non-profit art administrator. From 2015-2017, she coordinated then directed the writing program at the Vermont Studio Center. Publications include *Forklift, Ohio; Ninth Letter; Tupelo Quarterly; Blue Lyra Review; Terminus*; and the anthology *Change in the American West*, among others. Her artwork has been exhibited nationally and abroad; she is currently finishing her first manuscript.

## **Carlo Matos**

Carlo Matos has published ten books, including *The Quitters* (Tortoise Books) and *It's Best Not to Interrupt Her Experiments* (Negative Capability Press). His poems, stories, and essays have appeared in such journals as *Another Chicago Magazine*, *Rhino*, *One*, and *Handsome*, among many others. He currently lives in Chicago, IL, is a professor at the City Colleges of Chicago, and is a former MMA fighter and kickboxer.

## **Todd Osborne**

Born and raised in Nashville, TN, Todd Osborne holds an MFA in poetry from Oklahoma State University. His poetry has previously appeared or is forthcoming at *The Missouri Review*, *Big Muddy*, *Juked*, and *Hobart*. He lives and writes in Hattiesburg, MS, where he is currently pursuing a PhD in poetry at the University of Southern Mississippi's Center for Writers.

## **Katherine Riegel**

Katherine Riegel ([katherineriegel.com](http://katherineriegel.com)) is the author of *Letters to Colin Firth*, which won the 2015 Sundress Publications Chapbook Competition, and two books of poetry: *What the Mouth Was Made For* and *Castaway*. Her poems and essays have appeared or are forthcoming in *Brevity*, *The Lascaux Review*, *The Offing*, *Orion*, *Tin House* and elsewhere. She is co-founder and poetry editor for *Sweet: A Literary Confection*.

## **Maureen Sherbondy**

Maureen Sherbondy lives in Durham, North Carolina. Her latest book of poetry is *BELONGINGS*. Her work has appeared in *American Judaism*, *Calyx*, *The Stone Canoe*, and other journals. She teaches English at Alamance Community College in Graham, North Carolina. [www.maureensherbondy.com](http://www.maureensherbondy.com)

## **Elizabeth Theriot**

Elizabeth Theriot grew up in Louisiana and earned her undergraduate degree from University of New Orleans. She currently lives in Tuscaloosa, where she is an MFA candidate at the University of Alabama. Elizabeth works with the Black Warrior Review as Nonfiction Editor and with the program as Assistant to the Director. Her publications can be found online in *Tinderbox*, *Requited*, *Pretty Owl*, and *Alyss*; forthcoming in *OCCULUM*, *Rogue Agent*, and *Crab Fat Magazine*; and in print in *The Mississippi Review*.

## **Jim Warner**

Jim Warner's poetry has appeared in various journals including *The North American Review*, *RHINO Poetry*, *New South*, and is the author of two collections (PaperKite Press). His latest book, *Actual Miles*, was released in 2018 by Sundress Publications. Jim is the host of the literary podcast *Citizen Lit* and is a faculty member of Arcadia University's MFA program.

## **M. Wright**

M. Wright is the author of the chapbooks *a boy named jane* (Bottlecap Press) and *Dear Dementia* (Ghost City Press) which was featured in the 25th annual Poets House Showcase. He is a Best of the Net 2017 finalist and his poems have recently appeared in *Glass Poetry*, *UCity Review*, *Wildness*, *Saint Paul Almanac*, *Temenos Journal*, and others. Born in Chicago, M. currently resides with his lovely partner, Dylan, in Minneapolis. More: [wrightm.com](http://wrightm.com)

## **Art**

### **Sandy Coomer**

Sandy Coomer is an artist and poet living in Brentwood, TN. Her art has been featured in local art shows and exhibits, and has been published in journals such as *Lunch Ticket* (Antioch University Los Angeles), *Gravel*, and *The Wire's Dream Magazine*. Her favorite word is "Believe."

### **Artist's Statement**

These paintings are acrylic pour paintings, created by combining acrylic paint with various substrates and silicone oil. The layers of paint react within the mixture according to their density, and form an abstract design. I interpret the design in terms of land, water, sky, body, natural elements, and phenomena. My aim in creating this collection is to present unusual and alternative views of life and nature in order to inspire viewers to 'widen their world' by perceiving our natural landscapes through imagination.

### **Mervyn John**

Mervyn John was born in Freetown, Sierra Leone in West Africa when, in 2001, his family immigrated to Jefferson City, Missouri where he was raised. John Studies Interactive Media at Lewis University. Along with his academic adventures at Lewis, John is a fourth-year athlete of the Men's Track & Field team. He has always been a family oriented individual; his family has always been his biggest supporters, which unintentionally started his love for photography. John started his journey in photography in high school, where he was an active member of the yearbook committee. As his journey developed, photography became an outlet that he cannot live without. John hopes to work as a video editor for a local or national news station when he graduates in December of 2018.

### **Artist's Statement**

Photography is a way to show my audience the basic things most people would overlook. There is art in everything, but not everyone realizes this. We can only take in so much data with our eyes, but a photograph gives a person more time to observe what they might have missed. Almost everyone has a camera in their pocket and it has never been easier to capture an image. My "Picture In Picture Out" series is about combining old images to make new ones, specifically to show how two different images show some type of symmetry.

### **Jane Akweley Odartey**

Jane Akweley Odartey is a Ghanaian-American poet, writer, photographer, artisan, and a local Teaching Artist at the Queens Museum. She blogs at [janethroughtheseasons.com](http://janethroughtheseasons.com) and her visual art is forthcoming/featured in *Duende*, *CALAMITY*, *Verity La*, and elsewhere.

### **Artist's Statement**

"Postcard Series" (2016 - present) is an ongoing abstract photography project based on the notion that the individual is a world in its own right. Thus the project serves as an aesthetic correspondence between the internal and external of (my)self—a recording of emotional reflections and mental trips that have failed to translate/transform into language.

### **Saman Sarheng**

Saman Sarheng is an Iraqi-Canadian illustrator based in the Greater Toronto Area. He graduated from Seneca College majoring in independent illustration. His illustrative work mostly focuses on portraits and conceptual editorial illustration.

### **Artist's Statement**

“On the Question of Home”:

Homonyms in language can create an entirely different perception. It can also confuse your way of thinking about things. In Iraqi dialect the word for home and house is the same one, therefore the idea of a home could be completely related to the physical house. The series tries to explore the relationship between the human and the idea of home through the attachment to the physical.

### **Jim Tsinganos**

Jim Tsinganos received a Bachelor of Design specializing in illustration from the Underdale campus of the South Australian College of Arts and Education (now UNISA). He has participated in countless exhibitions, both group shows and solo shows, nationally and internationally and has been commissioned and collected by private collectors from around the world and by Opera Australia. Throughout his career he has been featured and accepted into most of the international juried illustration awards shows from across the globe and has been repeatedly selected as one of the world's top 200 illustrators worldwide by *Lurzer's Archive Magazine*. He has been commissioned by Australia Post to produce series of stamps, Qantas to produce travel posters, and most recently by the Australian Mint, which released a limited edition commemorative collectors coin for Australia Day featuring his image.

### **Artist's Statement**

I have long been interested in creating work with a visual twist, some kind of artistic anomaly requiring the viewer to mentally complete the image. Applying the Gestalt principles, the images exist in as much for what is on the page as for what is not, resonating with the viewer with more potency as a result.

An often-recurring theme in my work is that of a large image, simple in nature but compiled of many smaller, intricately woven components. My goal is to produce images that – although improbable in reality – are completely plausible in the environments that I create for them.

## **Fiction**

### **Andrew Brown**

Andrew Brown is a full-time freelance writer based in Richmond, Va. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Aperion Review*, *Bacopa Literary Review*, *Maudlin House*, *New Orleans Review*, *After Happy Hour Review*, *Blue Lake Review* and others. He is a graduate of the MFA program at George Mason University and lives online at [www.browalerts.com](http://www.browalerts.com).

### **Catherine Pierce**

Catherine Pierce is the author of three books of poems: *The Tornado Is the World*, *The Girls of Peculiar*, and *Famous Last Words*, all from Saturnalia Books. Her work has appeared in *The Best American Poetry*, *American Poetry Review*, *The Southern Review*,

*Ploughshares*, and elsewhere. She co-directs the creative writing program at Mississippi State University.

## Nonfiction

### Gina Bernard

Gina Marie Bernard is a heavily tattooed transgender woman, roller derby vixen, and full-time English teacher. She has completed a 50-mile ultra marathon, followed Joan Jett across the US, taught creative writing at a medium-security prison, and purposely jumped through a hole cut in lake ice. She lives in Bemidji, Minnesota. Her daughters, Maddie and Parker, own her heart. Her poetry collection *Naked, Gettin' Nuder* is a 2018-2019 Glass Chapbook Series finalist.

### Annabel Lang

Annabel Lang is a writer/performer based in Chicago by way of the Carolinas. She is the co-founder and co-host of Junior Varsity, a workshop/variety hour. "Underwater Girl" is her first published essay.

### Chila Woychik

German-born Chila Woychik has bylines in journals such as *Cimarron*, *Portland Review*, and *Silk Road*. She recently discovered she had a sister who was given up for adoption at birth, but has since passed away. She's on a quest to find out as much about her as possible. Chila won the 2017 Loren Eiseley Creative Nonfiction Award & the 2016 Linda Julian Creative Nonfiction Award. She is the founding editor at *Eastern Iowa Review*.

## Special Section: Centos

### Dan Dorman

Dan Dorman teaches at Cleveland State University and his writing can be found at *Burning House Press* online, *Word for/Word*, and soon at *Rubbertop Review* and *jubilat*. Find him @dormanpoet and dormanpoetry dot com.

### Dominique Dusek

After earning her Bachelor's in Creative and Professional Writing, Dominique decided to return to school to complete her graduate degree in Secondary Education. She hopes to someday apply her passion for teaching writing as a high school English Language Arts teacher. Currently, she resides in Joliet on a small family farm where she enjoys riding horses and playing with her Husky, Myla.

### Rochelle Hurt

Rochelle Hurt is the author of two collections of poetry: *In Which I Play the Runaway* (2016), which won the Barrow Street Book Prize, and *The Rusted City* (White Pine, 2014). Her work has been included in the *Best New Poets* anthology series and she's been awarded

prizes and fellowships from *Crab Orchard Review*, *Arts & Letters*, *Hunger Mountain*, *Phoebe*, *Poetry International*, *Vermont Studio Center*, *Jentel*, and *Yaddo*. She is Assistant Professor of English and Creative Writing at Slippery Rock University. She also runs the review site *The Bind*.

## **Ariana-Sophia Kartsonis**

Ariana-Sophia Kartsonis is the author of *Intaglio* (Kent State University Press, 2006), winner of the Stan and Tom Wick Poetry Prize, and *The Rub*, awarded the Elixir Press Editors' Prize and published in 2014. She teaches at Columbus College of Art and Design where she is the faculty advisor for *Botticelli Literary/Art Magazine*.

## **Trevor Ketner**

Trevor Ketner holds an MFA from the University of Minnesota. They have been published in *Best New Poets*, *Ninth Letter*, *West Branch*, *Pleiades*, *The Offing*, *Memorious*, *BOAAT* and elsewhere. Their essays and reviews can be found in *The Kenyon Review*, *Boston Review*, *Lambda Literary*, and *Library Journal*. Their chapbook *Major Arcana: Minneapolis* won the 2017 Burnside Review Chapbook Contest judged by Diane Seuss and will be published in 2018. Their website is [trevordaneketner.com](http://trevordaneketner.com).

## **Laurie Kolp**

Laurie Kolp is the author of *Upon the Blue Couch* (Winter Goose Publishing) and *Hello, It's Your Mother* (Finishing Line Press). Her recent publications include *Stirring*, *Rust + Moth*, *Whale Road Review*, *Up the Staircase Quarterly*, *Front Porch Journal*, and more. Laurie lives in Southeast Texas with her husband, three children and two dogs.

## **David Lehman**

David Lehman, a native New Yorker, divides his time between Ithaca, New York, and New York City, where he teaches in the graduate writing program of the New School. His books include *Sinatra's Century: One Hundred Notes on the Man and His World* (HarperCollins) and *Poems in the Manner Of* (Scribner). He is the editor of *The Oxford Book of American Poetry*.

## **Erin Murphy**

Erin Murphy is the author of six books of poems, most recently *Ancilla*, and co-editor of several anthologies, including *Making Poems: Forty Poems with Commentary by the Poets* (SUNY Press). Her poems have been published in *The Georgia Review*, *Field*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, and elsewhere, and featured on *The Writer's Almanac*. She Professor of English at Penn State Altoona. Website: [www.erin-murphy.com](http://www.erin-murphy.com)

## **Holly Mitchell**

Holly Mitchell is a poet from Kentucky who is now based in New York. A winner of an Amy Award from *Poets & Writers* and a Gertrude Claytor Prize from the Academy of American Poets, she earned an MFA in Creative Writing from New York University and a BA in English from Mount Holyoke College. Her *Farm Centos* manuscript was a

finalist for the 2017 Atlas Review Chapbook Series, and her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Baltimore Review*, *Juked*, and *Paperbag*, among other journals.

## **Jennifer Moore**

Jennifer Moore was born and raised in Seattle. She is the author of *The Veronica Maneuver* (the University of Akron Press, 2015), and her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Crazyhorse*, *DIAGRAM*, *Best New Poets*, *The Cincinnati Review*, and elsewhere. An assistant professor of creative writing at Ohio Northern University, she lives in Bowling Green, Ohio.

## **Brianna Noll**

Brianna Noll is the author of *The Price of Scarlet* (University Press of Kentucky, 2017), selected by Lisa Williams as the inaugural poetry collection in UPK's New Poetry and Prose Series. She is Poetry Editor of *The Account*, which she helped found, and her poems have appeared widely in journals including the *Kenyon Review Online*, *The Georgia Review*, *32 Poems*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Crazyhorse*. She lives in Los Angeles.

## **C. Russell Price**

C. Russell Price is a Lambda fellow, Ragdale fellow, Literary Death Match champion, and a Windy City Times 30 Under 30 honoree. They are the author of *Tonight, We Fuck the Trailer Park Out of Each Other* (Sibling Rivalry Press) and are currently at work on a full length poetry collection (*HUMAN FLESH SEARCH ENGINE*) and a collection of essays (*everyone is doing it; they just aren't telling you*). Price, originally from Virginia, now lives and teaches poetry in Chicago.

## **Stephanie Rogers**

Stephanie Rogers was educated at The Ohio State University, the University of Cincinnati, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in journals such as *Tin House*, *Ploughshares*, *Pleiades*, *upstreet*, *New Ohio Review*, and *The Adroit Journal*, as well as the *Best New Poets* anthology. Her first collection of poems, *Plucking the Stinger*, was published by Saturnalia Books.

## **Lynne Thompson**

Lynne Thompson was the winner of the Tuscon Literary Award (Poetry) in 2017, the Stephen Dunn Poetry Prize in 2016 and a Master Artist Fellowship from the City of Los Angeles for 2015-16. Thompson is the author of *Start With a Small Guitar* and *Beg No Pardon*, winner of the Perugia Book Award and the Great Lakes Colleges New Writers Award. Recent work appears or is forthcoming in *Ecotone*, *Salamander*, *The Fourth River*, *African American Review* and, *Poetry*, among others.





