

Thimble Literary Magazine

Volume 5 · Number 4 · Spring 2023

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Cover art: *Fish in the Clouds* by Josephine Florens

The *Thimble Literary Magazine* is based on the belief that poetry is like armor. Like a thimble, it may be small and seem insignificant, but it will protect us when we are most vulnerable.

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Brief Guidelines for Submission

Thimble Literary Magazine is primarily a poetry journal but invites submissions on related topics such as artwork, stories, and creative nonfiction. We are not looking for anything in particular in terms of form or style, but that it speaks to the reader or writer in some way. When selecting your poems or prose, please ask yourself, did this poem help me create shelter? Simultaneous submissions are accepted, but please notify us if the work is accepted elsewhere. All material must be original and cannot have appeared in another publication.

Poetry: Please send us three to four of your poems.

Short Stories: Please send a single work or around 1,200 words. It can be fiction, creative non-fiction, or somewhere in between.

Art: Please send us three to five examples of your art, which can include photographs and photographs of three-dimensional pieces.

Please send submissions to Nadia Arioli Editor-in-Chief, *Thimble Literary Magazine*, thimblelitmag@gmail.com

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Thimble 
LITERARY MAGAZINE

Editor's Note

by Nadia Arioli

Dear Readers,

At the end of 2022, I was listening to a lot of Kimya Dawson, specifically the song “Happy Home (Keep on Writing)” from her “Alphabutt” album, which is hilarious and weird and aimed at children. But the lyrics to this one floored me. At the start, Dawson sings about when they were a child, they always scraped their knees playing the dog in *Annie*. They always had to play the dog because they were the smallest: “[...] but I never complained / Because I didn’t think that I could sing / See, I never perfected that nasally thing / The way all the kids sang in the school play / Now, I know it’s better if we don’t all sound the same.”

It’s so simple but so effective. A moment where the listener goes, “Oh, you’re right. I’m glad we all sound different” What’s particularly poignant to me is that Dawson doesn’t really sing. I mean, it’s way better than I can do, but they’re no Sinatra or Dion. But it works. Dawson sounds like Dawson, sincere and raw and, well, human.

As an aside, the late Barbara Walters did an interview with Elliot Page when *Juno* first came out and mentioned Dawson’s music specifically as being quirky and gimmicky and bad, and Page defended it calling it vulnerable and real. Dawson found this whole exchange hilarious and wasn’t hurt in the least. It seems Dawson has internalized their own

credo: It's better if we don't all sound the same.

Here, too, we have a choir in harmony, which, of course, only works because the singers are singing different notes. Sure, I know I prefer free verse to formal, images to abstractions, but even so, Young does not sound like Duncan does not sound like Winston does not sound like French. Tall's and Florens' work does not look alike Everyone looks and sounds like themselves.

I hope no one had the play the dog in the school play. But most of us probably had to at some point. Or, I don't know, maybe I'm projecting.

The important thing is, writing, writing, keep on writing, just make sure your life's exciting.

Keep on writing, though it may look like (*Write it!*) like disaster.

Best,
Nadia

For Robert O'Donnell

by Megan Mary Moore

October 16th, 1987: after a 58 hour recovery mission, Robert O'Donnell rescued 18 month old Baby Jessica from a well. 8 years later, he took his own life.

When you surfaced
with everybody's baby in your arms,
the world's hands, calloused from applause,
slipped back into its pockets and walked.

But when the world watches you bloom,
it waits to watch you wilt, too.

And a baby is a baby until they are
a savior, a parent, a father.
If we are born to save, raise, and
leave then,

it's a gorgeous and terrifying truth—
we were only here for other people.

Flash Flood Warning

by Arvilla Fee

It rains like an unclogged drain.
No longer bound by matted hair
and globs of conditioner, it revels
in its trajectory toward the sea.
It rains like tears in free fall, one
of those ugly cries that contort the
face. It rains like the fiddle in *The
Devil Went Down to Georgia*, when
Johnny shows the devil how it's done.
It rains like the shameless shake of a
Saint Bernard after a bath, like splats
of paint carelessly flung on a blank
canvas. It rains like a garden hose
in the hands of a toddler, each step
closer awarded with a shot up the
nose. It rains like a pep rally during
a homecoming football game, feet
stomping, drums thumping, staccato
cheers erupting from the fans. It rains
like God's wrath during the days of
Noah, and you start counting off the
animals in pairs of two. It rains like
memories.

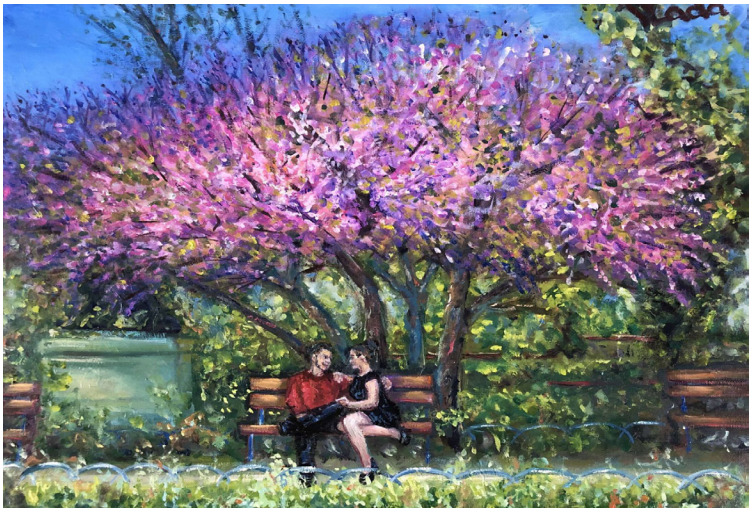
First Dog

by Kelly Fordon

Grownups had better things to do.
You got used to it, there was
the dog. The dog smelled terrible,
but you could not have loved her more.
You learned to think of yourself
in hypotheticals, in the second person,
but the dog was Shannon, she had
a name. She liked to swim, she shed
too much. In the woods she'd approach
anyone. Sometimes you walked her into
shadowy places where the babysitters
couldn't find you. Perpetually petrified,
you learned early on to avoid them.
Shannon wasn't much of a guard dog,
but she was affectionate. Unlike the
babysitters who snarled, bared their
teeth, wandered through the house,
long-limbed monsters dragging
their coarse and knotty knuckles.
Shannon hid under the bed,
you with a blanket in the closet.
After they found you, you moved
to the bathtub, then to the attic.

So, she didn't technically save you.
Maybe no one could have, but you
had a witness.

It was something.



Judas Tree by Josephine Florens

Needles

by Madeleine French

In my hand
a size 10 Tulip applique
—short and thin and sharp—
for English paper piecing
with each satisfying stab
I sew my hexies and triangles
into clever new designs

In my machine
a Microtex 80—that tiny sword—
gleaming pointy and pitiless
under the Bernina's bulb
for puncturing waxed canvas, cork
or foam interfacing; materials
that might be trouble

In my vein
a butterfly—I think—with a clear
tube, one of the smallest
for gauging lymphocytes to
a tenth of a point; numbers matter
(they say) when I still can't
believe how my blood betrayed me

(I went

by Thomas Hobohm

to college early, a desperate fifteen-year-old boy in an orchard of over-ripe apples that smacked the ground with a thunk or thump or some other onomatopoeia, I don't know and I don't care what sound they made, the point is the dining hall was empty, green, and lonely as hell (hell must be filled with tropical plants—all that luscious heat would comfort me if I believed in it, if I could imagine him there without rolling my eyes (not that he belongs there, necessarily, no matter what my therapist says I knew what I was doing, like Jesus when He died on the cross, He wanted to go down into that cave for some sweet relief, because trust me, being a pariah is exhausting (His first death didn't really count and I thought it wouldn't count either if I was on top and it was merely statutory (I thought it's not his fault he found me there friendless & in the pits of it (not his fault that I told myself it wasn't that awful & couldn't have sex for half a decade without a prozac panic attack rollercoaster ride & slobber sorry I'm so sorry so they always said no it's okay even though that's not what I needed to hear (even though all I needed was someone to tell me it was gravity that brought the apples down (gravity that goes on for all space and time (gravity that can never reach 0 (in fact, physicists say, if it did, everything would blow up again

A Simple Question of Measurement

by Brian Baumgart

The rule is simple: to collect maple sap
it must be below freezing at night, above by day.
Go in only so deep—
measure twice, drill once; this could be our refrain

to keep from killing

the trees. I'm careful, hold my cold palms against
the bark, pretend I can feel the maple's heart
while my knuckles crack and bleed from the late
winter dry air. When the sun

opens wide, the drips collect quicker: we all want
to touch our tongues to the slightly sweet leak,

like prayer.

If the season is just right, black bears lick the spigot
as their first sip after the long winter sleep.

The rules are mostly about ratios and measurements,
forty to one, two-hundred nineteen degrees, one tap per ten:
I live in inches and gallons, my own body grown wide and heavy

in winter-weight—a size up, measured in pounds
and the tightness of fabric across my shoulders and belly. I measure
too often, consider if the bears consider their girth
as emotional weight, if they think

in percentages and measurements, or do they just know
what's right—they don't need to pretend the maple's heart beats
because they already know its truth, and that rules
are a weight all their own.

Never Truly

by Ann Weil

She's not an oracle,
simply my therapist.
I bring my basket
brimming to her now—
can you believe it—
now only once
every two or three moons,
an offering of fears
laid at her feet.
She peels back the dark
cloth, takes in the writhing serpents,
notes their diminishment
in size and power.
Only garden snakes,
she smiles, her eyes
sparked and celestial.
All is well, she decrees,
and my right mind nods,
while my left hesitates,
remembers how
small creatures grow
and hunger— flames
seeking oxygen.
We are never truly
out of the woods.
Look, see the fossils
of our footprints.

Precipitate

by Carella Keil

Last night
windows open
whips of cold air

My body melting
like snow
onto yours

“Robert Died” (a text message)

by Christina Kelly

There would be no autopsy.
We decided together,
my brother’s girlfriend and me.

An older sister is supposed to protect.

On a foot bridge in Vermont,
water rushed loudly beneath me,
and through me.

I was afraid to walk to the other side.

Or to turn back.

Silhouettes

by LeAnne Hunt

My daughter creates a silhouette of us,
my figure carried within her own

as once my body did hers.
We are black and white images,

opposites and oppositional,
a disordered flight of butterflies,

rising. I am encapsulated,
absorbed. I burrow deep,

let her carry me into the next world,
a small fluttering no one sees.

A Recovery

by Kristin LaFollette

When he was in the ICU, my father was wrapped
in blankets from the warmer, the linens enveloping

him in a shell of protection. We imagined he would
emerge from this cover as something new, like a deer,

antlers bright with blood-softened velvet. We wondered if,
in his new body, he would remember the rhythmic sounds

of the ventilator, mimic them as he chewed bundles of
grass between his molars. Or if he would remember

his wrists tied to the bed rails to keep him from removing
the tubes and wires, undoing any progress and unraveling

our names from deep in his hemispheres. It was my job
to create an archive through the collection of remnants:

When the boy and I retrieved our father's truck from the
field, I peeled the sticky notes, checklists and itineraries,

from the windshield and the dash, taped them into a journal
with a cottonwood leaf, a flattened length of IV tubing,

an origami crane made by my aunt in the waiting area of the emergency room. My foot was heavy on the gas the whole way

home, a rush to get away from what I couldn't describe then: The earthy smell of unwashed hunting clothes, the boy's hair,

color of autumn husks, the yellow brown of a young fawn, just visible out of the corner of my eye—



Geisbach Ottobeuren by Josephine Florens

East Dallas, Texas

by Alejandra Peña

It is 2006. I am 9 years old. I am at the movies with my family. There is a group of younger guys sitting in front of us. One of them lets out the most disgusting, most heinous fart that has ever been ripped in the history of putrid farts. We all make faces at each other—the smell saturated the entire theatre. I try to make eye contact with my mother but could not find her. I soon realize that it is because she is standing up, gagging into her shirt. In the middle of the theatre. While the movie is playing. Solely because she loves the drama of it all, I am convinced. She is loud. She is causing a scene, a spectacle. I watch her with a terrified expression but cannot stop laughing at her. And with her.

My mother has black, curly hair. She swears it was an auburn color when she was younger. She bleached it once when she was 25 and the roots started growing in black. Allegedly. I am unsure of the science behind this and if it even is possible. But I nod every time she tells me this story. I want to believe her.

It is 2001. I am 3 years old. I drop fish food all over the kitchen floor and panic. Big footsteps are coming. I cannot pick up the fish food quickly enough with my hands. Bad, bad, bad. My mother screams. My head hurts. And then nothing.

My mother has calloused, coarse hands. They are damaged from years

of handling bleach and other chemicals. For several years, she had a job cleaning the apartments my father had renovated when first starting his own remodeling company. The apartments were beautiful, rich, expensive—but the work was painful, exhausting, and paid poverty wages. She often looked down at her own hands. She laughed. And then she cried.

It is 2004. I am 6 years old. I bring home *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss. It is the first book that is mine—not the public library’s, but mine. I hold it in my hands with excitement. The hardcover is glossy. The pages are robust with color. *Green Eggs and Ham* is everything I could have ever wanted. My mother holds my head in her lap and asks me to translate it from English to Spanish for her. I nod and say *sí*. *Sí*.

My mother is fat. She has not been this way forever—no, not always. She shows us pictures of her in her youth. “See, I was once beautiful.” She boasted. Her face lit up. This photograph is the reason she made me drink green tea every morning and wear spunks. With every flash of her smile and with every wave of her polaroid, one of my biggest fears slowly comes to fruition.

It is 2010. I am 12 years old. I read books all day, everyday, and whenever I can. I read them during church. I read them at school during lunch. I read them at recess. I read them while my mother is talking. At the age of 12, I have collected a closet-full of them. The absence of me living in reality upset my mother. One day, she forces me to throw the books in three black plastic trash bags. She drives me to Half Price Books to sell them. I cry and plead. Half Price Books gives me \$5.35 for the three trash bags. My mother drives me back home without saying a word.

My mother has lost four of her teeth due to rot. Our family had no dental insurance and could not afford to have them fixed. So, they fell out. I knew a new tooth had fallen out when I heard the wailing coming from her bedroom. It was not the usual wailing. It was a bloodcurdling, nightmare inducing wail. One that could start wars. She would not leave her bedroom those days. “Don’t look at me! Don’t look at me!”

It is 2018. I am 20 years old. I am moving out of my parent's house for the first time. She gives me avocados and a box of instant rice before I go. When I leave, she waves goodbye to me. I watch her hand ripple in the sunlight. I absorb her goodbye as if it will be the last.

My mother is Mexican. She speaks close to no English throughout my time in Elementary School and Middle School. When she finally learns English, she does so with a thick, heavy accent. I am ashamed. I ask her not to speak to me when dropping me off at school. She looks embarrassed when I ask this of her. The next day she does not say I love you. She simply drives off.

My mother has two brothers. Both of them have been in prison for several years during their lifetimes. She would pay the exorbitant amount of money it takes to call them on the phone every time they were incarcerated. She would hear horror stories. Sexual assault. More violence. She would cry on the phone. She would cry the entire day after. I gave her space simply because I did not want her to tell me about what my uncles confessed to her. I did not want to feel heavy. She carried the load alone. I am selfish.

It is 2016. I am 18 years old. My mother finds me downing a bottle of pills in my room. She angrily grabs me by the shoulder and drags me to the bathroom, shoves her fingers down my throat, and asks me to throw up. It does not work. I wake up in a hospital. My mother picks me up after two days of being inpatient. While driving me home from the hospital, she closes her eyes periodically. She prays. She does not make eye contact or speak to me for a week after. She finds peace.

My mother is forgetful. When leaving the house, we both ask each other, "phone, wallet, keys?" We are missing one of them every single time. Leaving the house takes 10 minutes for this reason. Regardless of the system, after driving for ten minutes, she will ask me, "have you seen my phone?"

It is 2014. I am 16 years old. My mother cooks breakfast for me and my siblings every morning before we go to school. When my siblings and I are done eating, she stands by the door and lets us walk to school if we are not running late. By the time we leave, she has cleaned the entire house. An hour after, she goes and cleans other people's houses. When my siblings and I come back home, she has already prepared another meal for us. This is done without reward or notice, almost like it was done by a ghost.

My mother had a horrific childhood. Regardless, she is deeply close with her own mother. I suppose they have forgiven of each other's sins. Or perhaps they hold those locked inside a place where no one can go, not even themselves. If my mother and her mother were to peek through, they would lose everything that they have hid away from. Even so, digging rot out does not equal bravery or intuition. Sometimes it simply requires survival. Who gives anyone the right to break into their own home and rob them of their most valuables, anyway? Who wants to break open?

It is 2022. I am turning 25 years old in less than a month. When I am sad, I imagine my mother caressing my face gently while swaddling me like a baby. She runs the bath. She washes my hair carefully and then combs it. She speaks softly and tells me not to worry because she will take care of me. I believe her. Every time I believe her.

The Four Stages of Flight

by Sharon Venezia

Hundreds of Thousands of Migratory Birds 'Falling Out of the Sky'
-EcoWatch Headline, September 16, 2020

I

They say we nose-dived into the earth mid-flight,
flycatchers, swallows, warblers,
falling out of the sky by the thousands.

Just last week we were singing our call and response,
now we are a prayer dying in someone's mouth.

II

When I flew from the nest everything was lift and thrust,
my migration path unfolding like an ancestral map.

I follow the land beneath me by the texture of light
gathering the fields. I move across the sky like a small god.

III

It's not how we intended to leave the world
though the light was just right, burning the edges
of cottonwood and maple, fields of color beneath us,

green becoming blue becoming endless sky.

IV

Some call me Wildfire. Some call me Apocalypse.
A sputtering constellation of weight and drag,
beak and bone. Wing by wing,

we are little feathered griefs
scattered across the landscape.

Perhaps it's all the sky can hold.

Why I Admire Armadillos

by Elizabeth Burk

What's that? I ask. My husband has stopped the car to show me a tupelo tree. He's amused. *You've never seen an armadillo?*

I don't answer. I can't tell the difference between goats and sheep in a field—why is he surprised? Hunkered by the side

of the road—a dense hump-backed bundle, black marble eyes, it sits immobile. Frozen with fear? Or maybe it's me

who's frightened. I approach, drawn to this self-contained miniature dinosaur, ancient survivor in its armored shell—if you shoot

an armadillo, the bullet is likely to ricochet. I later learn when surprised or threatened they leap five feet straight up

in a futile attempt to escape—another endearing trait—although they often land under the wheels of an oncoming car.

How do they have sex? I wonder that evening, a question I've been asking recently about all living creatures, especially

those of a certain age. *Hard-ly*, says my husband.

The online article I find, "The Sex Life of an Armadillo

Is More Depressing than Yours,” is strangely comforting.
The male sniffs and paws the female, who kicks at him

with her back feet. When ready she wags her tail, afterwards
retreats into a burrow in her private shelled container.

No double messages, no conflict about invasion
of space, an existence that, at times, seems enviable.

Passports

by Rebecca Schumejda

When we go, when we get there,
the place we were going,
the place we ended up.
The dream my husband had
when he was dying of cancer—
the house in ruins. Us hiding
behind crumbling walls and now

standing in line at the post office
waiting to take passport photos.
It's been five years since we stood,
a family of four, waiting here.
Now, I submit new documents—
official death certificates.
One for each of our daughters.

Why did you leave us?
This is the form I have to fill out
to apply for my grief passport.
This is the form
and if I cross anything out,
I must start over. This is
a reminder that it's just me,
me and two little girls and I

can't mess this up. There was
a roof that collapsed,
a floor that crumbled. There is
a lady, holding a camera,
who says don't smile and the drip,
drip of the chemotherapy
traveling through you like
a lost tourist. Where she asks,
annoyed I skipped a section
where do you plan on visiting?



Littoral by Josephine Florens

Places I have Cried for You

by Linea Jantz

-1-

The mountain hides
Wrapped by the storm that
Presses cool kisses to my temples
Unleashes a tide of snow
To blanket the sleeping Earth
I watch snow dust the feathers
Of geese floating calm water
They call to each other
Remember how before the night came
The mud gave
Soft beneath webbed feet
Sparkled with frost
Crackled with ice.

-2-

A grey curtain of water hushes drowsy pines
The tap of raindrops beading on my helmet
As the forest fades into charcoal

Fog drifts and winds through charred snags and bare branches
The clouds come to Earth to walk this wild cemetery
With reverence

My pedals crank steady up the hill
The slow slosh of tires through puddles of beige
Seeping into the sand

The rain flings itself at my face
Wind in my ears, wild with the screech of wet brakes
My phone battery died from the cold long ago

I return to the parking lot
Wrestle a muddy bike onto the rack
Splattered in sand and storm

Smiling

In the fogging car
I wrestle out of a soaked jersey
Pull a warm sweatshirt over clammy skin

I drive home to the
Swish
Tap
Of wipers across my windshield
The red glow of tail lights
Heater humming.

-3-

At first the snow drifts sideways
In a delicate dance with the pear tree branches
The kettle keens as
I arrange Mandarin oranges
In a cheery yellow bowl
Dimpled peel waxy beneath my fingertips
And now the window frames a snow globe
Echoing with the croon of a distant train
The cottonwood and the chokecherries now twins
Branches gently swaying in the swirl of flakes
That dive and twirl like winter swallows
Lightning bugs of white
Two pigeons race home
Out past the power lines

My nails bite into orange rind
A flower that blossoms beneath my hands.

-4-

First light glows in the mist rising off the lake
The kayak slices through the water
The entire valley vibrates with
The strident calls of geese echoing from every direction
The mountains rest, deep in slumber behind gauzy curtains as
The sun heaves its blinding glory over the forested ridgeline
Sets the fog a dance with copper
Like the taste of a penny placed beneath your tongue
Of all the places I've cried for you
This was the most beautiful.

When I Was a Kid

by Henri Feola





YOU EVER REALLY LOOK AT
THE INSIDE OF A MELON?
THE SEEDS BEOW ALL TANGLED
TOGETHER LIKE ROPES
OF TOAD SPAWN



TREES WRAP AROUND TELEPHONE WIRES,
BODIES AROUND BULLETS.

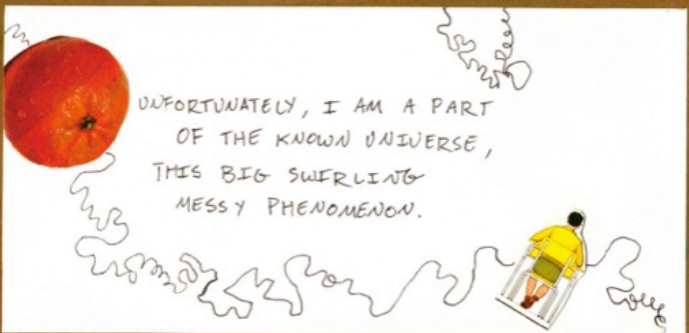
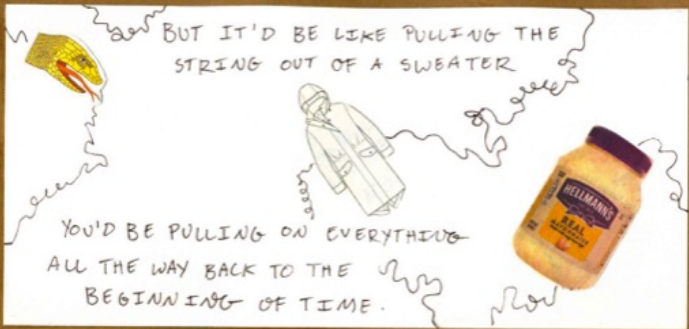


I THINK ABOUT IT ALL THE TIME.

WOULD I BE BETTER IF
NONE OF IT EVER HAPPENED?
KINDER, MORE TRUSTING,
LESS OF A SMARTASS.



WOULD I DO BETTER
IN AIRPORTS?



To Live Deliberately

by Ann E. Wallace

When I walked 'round Walden Pond
on a warm March day, I traced the foot-
print of the small cabin and wondered
about Thoreau and his solitude,
deliberate yet close to all he held dear.

Days later, home in my city,
my eldest simmered and coughed.
I gathered her and her sister, pulled
the door shut behind us and spun
a soft space where we might keep safe.

We did not know then that the thick
walls would hush and dim the sounds
of the street beyond, quiet and quieter,
and create an echo chamber for the cough
unending of my fevered daughter.

The cough resounded in each chime
of my phone, the CNN, NPR, New York
Times alerts, texts from friends, calls
from the doctor. We heard the world
shutter as she, then I, grew sick and sicker.

Alone in our city, I thought of Thoreau,
of his small pond and his long saunters,
of his dear Emerson who would come
sit for a spell in the cabin in the woods,
and leave his friend replenished.

When Thoreau emerged from the woods
two years later, he was a changed man
returned to a static world. But as we fought
for sleep, for air, for life, we had no idea what
strange and silent world would await our return.

Theseus in Old Age

by Michael T. Young

There had been a clue for getting out.
But in these later days, large portions of life
get lost in the wide cracks between events,
and memory itself twists into a labyrinth.

How many corners did I turn in Paris—some with you,
some with others from a past so distant
none of its light can reach our telescopes?

Shadows crawl over wallpaper
smudging its design and images to a fog,
seep into details of the crown molding
until they're nondescript as night.

I never expected my mind to become a maze
with shifting walls and floors, shuffling mementos
until their meanings change.

There used to be a vase of peonies along this hall,
I think. Or maybe that was downstairs by the phone.
The souvenir of our time in Florence
was placed in a cupboard for so long, the dailiness
of the other cups rubbed onto it.

I once held your hand all night as we slept,
only to wake and realize you were someone else,
or I was.

There's a bamboo box on a shelf by the sink,
a reliquary of objects from long ago
meant to conjure places and people.

Here's a newspaper clipping, a lacquered Russian egg,
a plastic horse pendant. But their magic
no longer calls to me, echoes I'm too far away
to hear—long faded to silence.

Even this piece of thread, golden, so finely woven:
I think it was supposed to lead me somewhere.



The Magic of Reading by Josephine Florens

Little Rivers

by Rachel Feld-Reichner

I saw the way your hand drifted to your chest,
the way your fingers lightly
felt around
looking for your heart,
for that steady beat.

I do the same,
with my foot,
constantly
tapping
the hard ground.
I need to know
that something will break my fall.

Aren't we all
falling?

But when our son
comes
in the night —
eyes closed,
limbs
slumber walking.

He is so sure —
that he will find
the liminal space
between our bodies
your heart
and my feet.

His little body
always fits.

Suddenly
we are both
so still,
on this
riverbed
of little breaths.

The Grammar of Tragedy

by Darci Schummer

I.

“Write in past tense,” I tell students at the technical college where my English classes are populated by poor people, veterans, immigrants, and refugees. “What you’re talking about already happened.” Runs becomes ran. Points becomes pointed. Shoots becomes shot. Although we talk about verb tense all semester, their stories still gallop forward in real time.

When I close my eyes to sleep, the beat of hooves echoes in my mind. Everything that ever was still is.

II.

“It’s important to be specific,” I say to the class. “If you use a word like ‘they,’ be clear about who ‘they’ refers to. Who is ‘they’?”

Then they put me in a hole to be killed, a student, now dead, writes. He survives the hole; he survives the they, whoever they are, only to drown in the pool of an apartment complex. It was after the war broke out in Monrovia. I was trying to get across town to get my little sister from school when they question me and put me in the hole.

Upon learning of his death, I can’t stop thinking of him. I read a

newspaper article about the accident. GIRL, 9, RESCUER DROWN IN PLYMOUTH, the headline reads. Mentioned just as “rescuer” in the title, the article states that “...the 26-year-old victim whom friends identified only as ‘Moses’ lived with his fiancée.”

I unfold Moses’s full name like a prayer; I remember his glasses and posture, the way he explained to me that, once, his life had been saved by sheer luck.

III.

“Can you give more details?” I ask. “It’s just me who is going to read it,” I say. “No one else.” Often the students don’t look at me when I ask this. They look at their laps. Their hands in their laps. They catalogue every millimeter of carpet around their feet.

The sound was like a fist punching a pillow, one of my students, a veteran of the war in Afghanistan, writes in his revised draft. Then I saw my buddy fall down.

At night, I dream of Kandahar. I hear endless fists burying themselves in down.

IV.

I do not remember what I say to King about his essay.

He is an excellent writer, but more than that, he is kind. He begins to care for a fellow student who is severely autistic. Slowly he explains and reexplains directions to Levi. His voice assumes a higher pitch, and when Levi does something right, King praises him.

I do remember giving King’s essay a 95/100, an unusually high score for me.

At the beginning of the essay, King is a boy of 12, chosen to reside at the presidential palace in Liberia along with other boys like him, boys who are smart, boys who have potential. At the beginning of the essay, he is happy. But the story must take a turn, of course. Maybe in this

class I gave my “Hell is story-friendly” spiel, lifted from Charles Baxter. Maybe this is why King unleashes demons onto the page.

The other government officials were taken out behind the palace, tied to poles, and shot, he writes. Just like that William Tolbert is ousted from power, and King’s life is irrevocably changed. He writes about lying in bed, a 12-year-old boy, feeling sick and depressed after having watched the executions of multiple people.

Does anyone help him? Does anyone talk to him about what he witnessed? Does he sleep at night? I should have asked him to add those details, but I never did, and that feedback no longer matters.

Soon after our class ends, King stabs his wife 63 times, breaking off the tip of a knife and leaving marks on her spinal column. For the rest of his life, he will live in jail.

For the rest of my life, I will be unable to reconcile the two Kings.

V.

Year after year, compositions replete with trauma crack open across my computer screen: abuse, alcoholism, assault, addiction, poverty, post-partum, PTSD, war, war, war, repeat. Outside of school, honor-bound, the grammar of these tragedies becomes my own, the stories forming patterns on spinning lamp. The lamp turns around, around, around, casting soundless light across the theater of my bedroom, and unable for the world to sleep, I watch the dramas play again, again, again.

*Instructions for a Young Archeologist**

by Shannon K. Winston

Majoonsuo, Eastern Finland

1.

Note the hair's width (9.6 cm) and the magnification (867x).
You're a witness at an 8,000 year remove.

2.

Close one eye, stare through the electron microscope.
Hover over the child's grave with the finest brush.

3.

From the Stone Age, she's now dust and fibers.
Write in the margins: how old is she?

4.

Catalog each object carefully: willows, nettles, fishing nets.
Hover over the child's grave with the finest brush.

5.

Separate fragments from the soil with water.
Transport all evidence back to the lab.

6.

Hover over the child's grave with the finest brush.
Record the hair at her feet. Dog or wolf? Did they die together?

7.

You picture a girl buried with fur-lined shoes.
You speculate at an 8,000 year remove.

8.

Twenty-four feather fragments tickle your fingers.
You dream of waterfowl, the finest brush.

9.

In Finland, the soil's pH erodes the past.
The child's remnants are an exception. Hover-

10.

In a forest, the finest brush.
Hush. Hush-

11.

Soft red ocher.
The earth is a face-

12.

At her age, your mother traced the contours
of your eyes, your jaw, your nose.

13.

*Paint my face, you'd beg. Even now,
feel her reach for you through the darkness—*

*This poem is inspired by CNN's article "Stone Age child's grave site in Finland reveals surprises" (November 2, 2022).

Dear Paul

by SR Young

“And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.” – Acts 9:8, KJV

I see what you mean: the road to Damascus
is long & twirling like sand in sea breeze, rivulets
of oasis heat. But Damascus, your first sanctuary,
is a gassed out, excavated shell. Children lie
face first in footprints filled with water. Men
are ghosts dancing in raining ash & drywall.
You saw God in your cataracts & felt him
touch your blood-rushed cheeks. The last time
I saw God, I skinned my knees on red rocks
in Colorado. All around, valleys deferred
to boulders set loose by Big Thompson.
The river raged & the sky purpled, my breath
slowed & my knees bled, & then, then I saw—oh God—

She was black & bright, like a funeral pyre,
or a shadow at noon. She placed her palm
on my cheek; I felt her fingers trace my eyebrow.
Her hand was wind & blood pressure.
She smelled of cedar tree & freefall. Her eyes
were not in every place. They were fine print,

constructed & leveled. I did not go blind.
I thought of the Tabernacle, I thought of my sins.
Then, I thought of you.

You, who instructed me to fear my father
& pity my mother. You, who told me to scorn
my body & loathe my desires. You, who led me
to believe that no matter my deeds or my faith,
the kingdom will not be for me. Paul, you
were never a changed man. You never saw
God. Saul witnessed drowning children
& ghost men. He wept. After, when a trail
of windswept tears gathered bits of sand
like a tax collector, you opened your eyes.
All around, a world of flame & ash,
caked in the heat of a stalling sun. Still,
with your breath slow & your knees bleeding, you stood,
washed your face with spit & scrambled
like a blind man to the gates of Damascus.

Have You Taken Your Mad Woman Pills Today?

by Jordan Stokes

*Try our easy-to-swallow premenstrual pills!
Embellished in a hot pink bottle, these little suckers
will save your already-unbearable wife from utter hysteria!*

Huddled in the corner, I pressed my forehead
to the wall, coaxing my burning temple to cool
against the cement block wall.

*“PMS” pills are here to liberate you from female
irritability. Because who wants a moody, melodramatic woman?
Who wants a BLOATED, moody, melodramatic woman,
at that?*

My mother gave me the pills to take
when I was thirteen.

*Our PMS pills help curb those catty cravings
to ensure your wife is up to your standards throughout her menstrual-
cycle.*

“I was just like you,”
She said, a grimace gracing her mouth.
“Full of fight.”

*No longer will you have to nudge your fellow man
and whisper "It's her time of the month!" because our premenstrual
pills positively eliminate these feminine outbursts.*

She laughs. I don't know who
told her she was a madwoman.

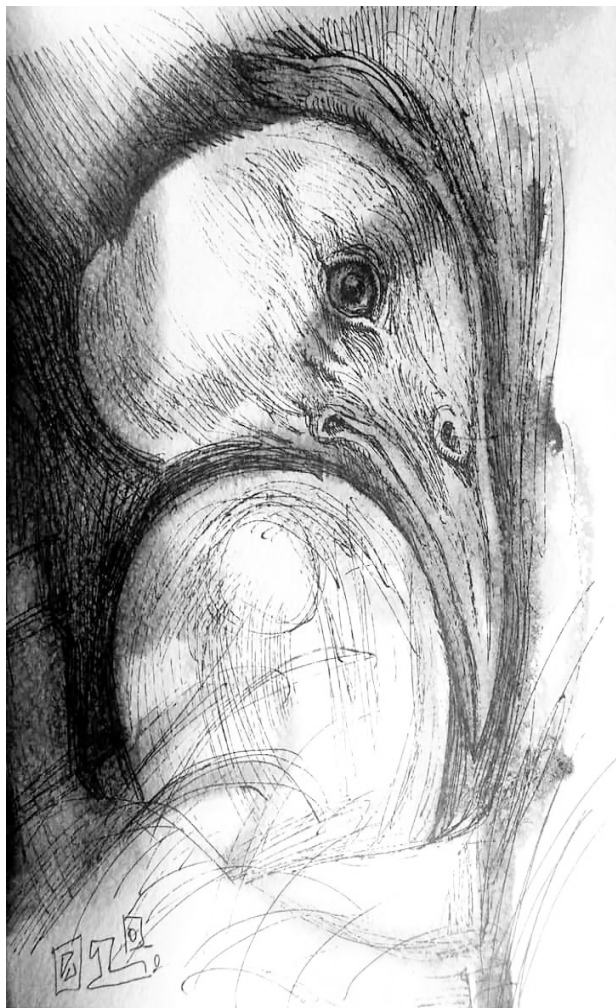
Because don't we deserve more, ladies?

Let's Get Dressed

by Andrea Krause

I unzip the one-piece pajamas,
& out comes the crumb of a body.
At once soft batter. I want to stir
what is already too late.
Slip the sweater over her head.
Ambling in sudden dark, brunette crown
through the opening. I can't help it.
My body knows this struggle.
A year and a half ago. Unlit night
until jarring morning. Ulna, radius,
humerus, emerge as a set, into mine
waiting. Hands I am learning
to fit myself into. Graze the divet
where I once fed her
without stopping to notice.
I don't name it a wound, but it healed
over like one would. A dimple
of old news. I won't call it a scar.
Gauntlet of pants to thread next.
She resists each tube, fierce
beaters emulsifying chocolate cake.
It is hard to acquiesce to jeans.
We have that in common. Our urge
to roll away. Your face asks mine

for certainty. My answer—exalting
you, lapping up your every scrap—
purely self-serving, cannot assure
our permanence. What clothes did I wear
before I was clad in mother? I disappear
pink toes into tiny cups of socks.



Bird by Irina Tall

December Again

by Steve Denehan

The outside mat is frosted
honeycomb crystals
that crunch beneath my feet

I walk to the birdfeeder
top up the seed, to cause
a temporary scattering

the birdbath is frozen over
I tap it with my fingernail
enjoying the small tinny echo

one of the cats emerges
from underneath the laurel
an orange shock against the snow

I pour some cat food into his bowl
the sound dulled
by the thin air

the postman rings the doorbell
It can't get any colder!
Let's hope not!

I am alone in a postcard
a fairy-tale scene
I am alone, but I know

that later, my daughter and I
will blow misty puff breaths
pretending to smoke cigarettes

I look at the sky
slate grey and interrupted
by a high-flying buzzard, who

when it looks down
must see
only white

Sewing Machine

by Phoebe Reeves

I.

Inside this
poem is a
moment where
light slants
at sixty
degrees—hold
up your hands
like a sextant to
the horizon
and the page
will give you
latitude and
longing, dappled
shade in the
shape of maple
leaves shaking
their fingers over
the dark
corners of a garden.

II.

From outside the poem,
all is in shadow, a boat
in a shallow river, running
always aground on
exposed sewer pipes and
shame's effluent current.
Hold your hands up to the
poem like a sexton carefully
closing the church's shutters
against a storm. Rain
sluices off the shale and
sandstone of the hills, rinses
the slate roof of the sanctuary.

III.

Before and after this poem are both a sham.

Hold it in your hands. Trace the stitches sewn
into seams, the threads moving between two
surfaces. Inside the poem, your shackles loosen.

The world looks less a shambles—a farmer swiftly
sexes a pile of chicks and separates them accordingly,
but the poem doesn't give a shit about that kind
of thing. It clutches them all in its sexless arms.

A Crapshoot

by Jackie McManus

is what he calls it as he cracks half a dozen eggs
in a skillet with last week's fried potatoes,
a fistful of fresh spinach, kernels off an ear of corn.

But he's craving meat again. Rummaging
through his parent's refrigerator, he sees
last night's flat iron steak, slices it diagonally,

adds more salt than necessary, just enough
pepper. He is thinking *what else*
when his mother arrives home from work.

Together they stare at the skillet. He stirs
as if memorizing some movement his arm will soon make:
lifting a Corona at the bar with old friends;

standing in his ocean-side bedroom
struggling to balance his father's rifle in the air,
its barrel against his mouth.

He decides it needs nothing. Stirs.
His mother smiles, just glad to have him home.
Three years from now she will say *I want*

to spank him. She can't imagine that
rifle going off, so she makes him a child again,
one who needs tough love to set him straight.

She is looking at the mess of leftovers in the pan,
him, sliding the skillet off the stove,
both of them surprised about the life they love

and how they got it all wrong.



Garlic and Apples by Irina Tall

Patterns

by Diane LeBlanc

In mid-January, I buy one of those coloring calendars. It's not my first choice, but it's better than 12 months of Harry Potter. In my kitchen, the black lines on creamy paper defy a shapeless landscape of snow and ice outside. But I know that months will pass before I touch the white spaces of the smirking frog, the daisy mandala, and the giant polka dot mushroom with lanterns hanging from its gills. Flipping through the months, I resolve to color only when I want to. I hang it without color, January's butterflies swirling in negative space.

*

Another bone-colored winter gives way to spring mud and moldy grass. By now I've moved my tin of colored pencils and an egg-shaped sharpener to the kitchen counter. May's potted blossoms are skeletal but seductive. I practice shading the edges of geraniums, pansies, and poppies, as if the sun were always to the east. Then my real poppies need to be thinned and the roses pruned. I never finish coloring May's tiniest leaves.

*

I was nine or ten when my father decided to replace the muddy area in front of our back porch with a concrete patio. It had to be functional so that he could get rid of the warped two-by-fours he rigged into a

wooden walkway during Vermont's spring mud season. Then he and my mother started to imagine a picnic table and pots of geraniums on flagstone or pavers laid out like the city's old cobblestone streets. I suppose concrete reminded them too much of our cellar floors and driveway walls, the hours of cement my father poured under flood lights after his workday ended.

Soon my father was spending evenings at the kitchen table drawing diagrams. He had this vision of a flagstone-looking patio made entirely of concrete. Instead of different colored stones, he would dye concrete red, green, brown, and dark gray, then pour each into a sectioned wooden mold the size of the patio. After removing the mold, he'd fill the gaps between colors with gray concrete.

My father seemed to enjoy the puzzle of creating the patio with no adjoining sections of the same color. He labeled and relabeled the sections R, G, B, DG, pausing after each inhale, holding his breath for a few seconds, then forcing the exhale through his nose. When my siblings and I heard this breathing, we tiptoed and did quiet things. Some evenings my father took his diagrams to his recliner and worked the puzzle while he watched the news on low volume. He never said much about the process, but he must have redrawn lines and resized sections in order to keep the colors separate.

After mud season, my father emerged from these evenings with a clean blueprint. He borrowed a cement mixer from his brother and devoted Sundays that summer to the patio. I know that his pattern worked because after the patio was finished, my sisters and I made a game of jumping from color to color, and our moves were never easy steps sideways or forward.

Sections of the patio cracked and crumbled over the years, measures of time and wear. My father repaired them with small batches of hand-mixed concrete. Then one November morning, he collapsed not far from the patio. That was 30 years ago, when he was the age I am now. When I think about it, I can't imagine him dying anywhere but near the house and all of his projects.

*

*

At the center of November's mandala, two fish curl head to tail. Around them, interwoven leaves, corn, and art deco vines stretch to the edges of the page. The more I color, the more the complex patterns appear. I complete a section of leaves with three shades of orange and two shades of green, then look outward to the ring of shells that imitate fish scales and fins. They'll echo the fish with blue, maroon, rose, and gold. I start waking at 5:30 a.m. to drink coffee and color before I walk the dogs. I imagine I'll finish before Thanksgiving. But when I'm coloring, I don't look beyond the patterns. I don't look beyond November to winter and the moment when I lift the page and the colors of these hours are gone.

On Surviving Together

by Terin Weinberg

Golden shovel after José Olivarez

The hive is humming in the dark. I
know because I've been inside. I know
their voices, their paper-wings, we
can imagine them huddling close, to exist
in the darkening winter, because

I know it's cold inside. The queen of
the brood dwells at the heart of what
her maiden's wings provide. We
know they are alive by the riches they make.

Contributors' Biographies

Nadia Arioli is the editor in chief of *Thimble Literary Magazine*.

Mikki Aronoff's work appears in *New World Writing*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, *Tiny Molecules*, *The Disappointed Housewife*, *Bending Genres*, *Milk Candy Review*, *Gone Lawn*, *Mslexia*, *The Dribble Drabble Review*, and elsewhere. Her poems and stories have received Pushcart, Best of the Net, Best Small Fictions, and Best Microfiction nominations.

Brian Baumgart (he/him) is the author of the poetry collection *Rules for Loving Right* (Sweet, 2017), and his poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction have appeared in a number of journals, including *South Dakota Review*, *Big Muddy*, *Spillway*, *Whale Road Review*, and *Signal Mountain Review*, among others, as well as in the anthologies *Rewilding: Poems for the Environment and Working Stiff*. His poetry has been nominated for both the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net awards. Brian is an English professor and previously served as the Director of Creative Writing at North Hennepin Community College. He was 2018 Artist-in-Residence at University of Minnesota's Cedar Creek Ecological Science Reserve and currently is a coordinator for the Minnesota State Write Like Us Program. He is the father of two teenagers, both of

whom are absolutely ridiculous and terrifying. For more: <https://brinandbaumgart.wixsite.com/website>.

Elizabeth Burk is a psychologist who divides her time between New York and southwest Louisiana. Her three published collections are: *Learning to Love Louisiana*, *Louisiana Purchase* and *Duet—Poet & Photographer*, a collaboration with her photographer husband. Her work appears or is forthcoming in *Atlanta Review*, *Rattle*, *Calyx*, *Southern Poetry Anthology*, *Louisiana Literature*, *Passager*, *Pithead Chapel*, *PANK*, *OneArt*, *Cervena Barva's Rock Anthology* and elsewhere.

Steve Denehan lives in Kildare, Ireland with his wife Eimear and daughter Robin. He is the author of two chapbooks and four poetry collections. Winner of the Anthony Cronin Poetry Award and twice winner of Irish Times' New Irish Writing, his numerous publication credits include *Poetry Ireland Review* and *Westerly*.

Arvilla Fee has been married for 20 years and has five children. She teaches English Composition for Clark State College and is the poetry editor for the *San Antonio Review*. She has been published in numerous presses including *Poetry Quarterly*, *Inwood Indiana*, *50 Haikus*, *Contemporary Haibun Online*, *Drifting Sands Haibun*, *Bright Flash Literary Review*, *Stone Poetry Quarterly*, *Teach/Write*, *Acorn*, *Last Leaves Magazine* & others. She also won the Rebecca Lard award for best poem in the Spring 2020 issue of *Poetry Quarterly*. What Arvilla loves most about writing is the ability to make people feel something. For Arvilla, poetry is never about rising to the heights of literary genius but about being in the trenches with ordinary people who will say, "She gets me."

Rachel Feld-Reichner received her MFA in Creative Writing for Children and Young Adults from VCFA. Poetry was her first love and though she writes across genres she always circles back to poetry. Her poems have been published in English and Hebrew. When she is not writing she works as a doula and women's health advocate while raising her beautiful boys.

Josephine Florens graduated from Odessa National Academy of Law and received a Master's degree in Civil Law, graduated from Odessa International Humanitarian University and received a Master's degree in International Law. She started painting in 2017. She studied individually at the Art-Ra school of painting. Josephine Florens is a member of the National Association of Artists and Sculptors of Ukraine, member of the Odessa Marine Union, Ukraine, honorary member of the Union of World's Poets and Writers. She creates oil paintings in various genres, such as portrait, landscape, still life, genre painting, animal painting, marina. She works with oil paints and calls her direction of painting as modern vintage. She lives in Bad Grönenbach, Germany, as there is a war going on in Ukraine. Her website is <https://josephineflorens.com>

Kelly Fordon (she/her/hers) is the author of a short story collection *I Have the Answer* (Wayne State University Press, 2020), a novel-in-stories, *Garden for the Blind*, (WSUP 2015), a poetry collection, *Goodbye Toothless House*, (Kattywompus Press, 2019) which was adapted into a play, and three award-winning poetry chapbooks. She hosts "Let's Deconstruct a Story." www.kellyfordon.com

Madeleine French lives with her husband in Florida and Virginia. You may find her in front of a sewing machine, behind a copy of *Persuasion*, or occasionally on Twitter, @maddiethinks. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Poetica Review*, *Paddler Press*, *Black Fork Review*, *Hidden Peak Press*, *West Trade Review*, and elsewhere.

Thomas Hobohm (they/them) lives in San Francisco, but grew up in Texas. They're interested in interrogating queer desire. When they're not reading or writing, they like to play volleyball and explore independent cinemas. They don't know how to drive!

LeAnne Hunt (she/her) grew up in the Midwest and now lives in Orange County, California. She is a regular at the Two Idiots Peddling Poetry reading at the Ugly Mug in Orange. She has poems published in *Cultural Weekly*, *Spillway*, *Harpy Hybrid Review*, and *Lullaby of Teeth: An Anthology of Southern California Poets*. She publishes a blog of writing prompts and apologies at leanehunt.com.

Linea Jantz, M.Ed, lives in eastern Washington where she can often be found exploring the hills near her home, following the rise and set of the sun. When she is not exploring the outdoors solo or with her delightfully wild and sweet children, she has an unfortunate tendency to find herself stomping around the house asking why she just stepped on another Lego. Her poetry has earned prizes in contests hosted by Shextreme and Adventure Bound Books. Her writing has also been featured in several outdoor magazines including The Dyrt, Single-tracks, and Trail Sisters.

“I wasn’t the kind of person who was afraid to show her scars. I saw beauty and strength in survival. Now I see survival, strength, beauty. And scars.” Carella Keil is a poet and digital artist who uses writing and art to explore avenues of self and healing. She is the recipient of the Stanley Fefferman Prize in Creative Writing (2006) and 2nd place winner in the Open Minds Quarterly BrainStorm Poetry Contest (2017). Her work has appeared recently or is forthcoming in Columbia Journal, Skyie Magazine, Wrongdoing Magazine, Deep Overstock, Nightingale & Sparrow, Existere, Superlative Literary Journal, Stripes Literary Magazine, Writersesque, Chestnut Review, Glassworks, Door is a Jar, Sunday Mornings at the River, Grub Street and MONO. [instagram.com/catalogue.of.dreams](https://www.instagram.com/catalogue.of.dreams) [twitter.com/catalogofdream](https://www.twitter.com/catalogofdream)

Christina Kelly is a writer living in Montclair, NJ. Instagram: [@thefallenprincess](https://www.instagram.com/thefallenprincess)

Andrea Krause (she/her) lives in Portland, Oregon. Her work has been published in: The Penn Review, Maudlin House, Kissing Dynamite, and elsewhere. You can find her on Twitter at [@PNWPoetryFog](https://www.twitter.com/PNWPoetryFog) and at [andreakrausewrites.com](https://www.andreakrausewrites.com).

Kristin LaFollette is a writer, artist, and photographer and serves as the Art Editor at Mud Season Review. She is the author of Hematology (winner of the 2021 Harbor Editions Laureate Prize) and Body Parts (winner of the 2017 GFT Press Chapbook Contest). She received her Ph.D. from Bowling Green State University and is a professor at the University of Southern Indiana. Learn more about her work at [kristinlafollette.com](https://www.kristinlafollette.com).

Diane LeBlanc is a writer, teacher, and book artist with roots in Vermont, Wyoming, and Minnesota. She is the author of *The Feast Delayed* (Terrapin Books, 2021) and four poetry chapbooks. Poems, essays, and reviews appear in *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Bellingham Review*, *Cimarron Review*, *Mid-American Review*, and *Sweet*, among others. Diane is a holistic life coach with emphasis in creativity practice, and she teaches at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. Read more at www.dianeblancwriter.com.

Jackie McManus is the author of *The Earthmover's Daughter* (2018) and *Related to Loon* (Finishing Line Press, 2021). She has been published in *Cathexis Northwest*, *Sky Island Journal*, *Rattle*, *VoiceCatcher* as well as many other poetry journals. She resides in Washington with her dog, Maisy.

Megan Mary Moore is the author of *Dwellers* (Unsolicited Press, 2019) and the forthcoming *To Daughter a Devil* (Unsolicited Press, 2023) and the forthcoming chapbook *And Aphrodite Laughed* (Milk & Cake Press, 2023). Her poetry has appeared in *Rattle* and is forthcoming in *Grist*. She lives in Cincinnati where she serves as editor for *Moon Cola Zine*, dresses like a fairy princess and watches too many horror films. You can follow her on Twitter and IG @MeganMary-Moore

Alejandra Peña is a lesbian, Mexican-American poet. Her work has appeared in *Sleet Magazine* and will soon appear in *Another Chicago Magazine*. She loves her pug Kiwi & the moon.

Phoebe Reeves earned her MFA in poetry at Sarah Lawrence College and now is Professor of English at the University of Cincinnati's Clermont College. She has three chapbooks of poetry, and her first full length book, *Helen of Bikini*, is forthcoming in 2023 from Lily Poetry. Her poems have recently appeared in *The Gettysburg Review*, *Phoebe*, *Grist*, *Forklift OH*, and *The Chattahoochee Review*. You can find out more about her work at www.phoebereeves.com.

Rebecca Schumejda is the author of several full-length collections including *Falling Forward* (sunnyoutside press), *Cadillac Men* (NYQ Books), *Waiting at the Dead End Diner* (Bottom Dog Press) and most recently *Our One-Way Street* (NYQ Books). Her latest book, *Something Like Forgiveness*, a single epic poem accompanied by collage art by Hosho McCreesh is out from Stubborn Mule Press. Her new collection, *Sentenced*, is forthcoming from NYQ Books. She is the co-editor at *Trailer Park Quarterly*. She received her MA in Poetics from San Francisco State University and her BA from SUNY New Paltz. She lives in New York's Hudson Valley.

Darci Schummer is the author of the story collection *Six Months in the Midwest* (Unsolicited Press) and the forthcoming novel *The Ballad of Two Sisters* (Unsolicited Press). Her work has appeared in *Ninth Letter*, *Jet Fuel Review*, *Folio*, *Sundog Lit*, and *MAYDAY*, among several other journals and anthologies. Connect with her at darci.schummer.com.

Jordan Stokes is a writer currently studying at Point Loma Nazarene University. Her work has been previously published in *Driftwood Magazine*.

Irina Tall (Novikova) is an artist, graphic artist, illustrator, writer. She graduated from the State Academy of Slavic Cultures with a degree in art, and also has a bachelor's degree in design. The first personal exhibition "My soul is like a wild hawk" (2002) was held in the museum of Maxim Bagdanovich. In her works, she raises themes of ecology, in 2005 she devoted a series of works to the Chernobyl disaster, draws on anti-war topics. The first big series she drew was *The Red Book*, dedicated to rare and endangered species of animals and birds. Writes fairy tales and poems, illustrates short stories. Her work was published in the journals "Gypsophila", "Harpy Hybrid review" and others.

Sharon Venezia is the author of *The Silence of Doorways* (March 2013, Moon Tide Press). Her poems have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, including the *New York Quarterly*, *Grew Sparrow*, *Spillway*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, and elsewhere. She is currently working on a poetry manuscript about dementia.

Ann Weil writes at her home on the corner of Stratford and Avon in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and on a deck boat at Snipe's Point Sandbar off Key West, Florida. She earned her doctorate at the University of Michigan and is a former special education teacher and professor. Her work has been nominated for Best of the Net and appears in Crab Creek Review, 3Elements Review, Whale Road Review, Shooter Literary Magazine, DMQ Review, Thimble Literary Magazine, and elsewhere. Her first chapbook, "Lifecycle of a Beautiful Woman", will be published in 2023 by Yellow Arrow Publishing. Read more of Ann's poetry at www.annweilpoetry.com.

Terin Weinberg earned her MFA from Florida International University in Miami, Florida. She graduated with degrees in Environmental Studies and English from Salisbury University in Maryland. She is a lecturer in the English Department at DeSales University. Terin serves as a reader for Beaver Magazine. She has been published in journals including: The Normal School, Flyway: Journal of Writing & Environment, Red Earth Review, Dark River Review, Split Rock Review, and Waccamaw.

Shannon K. Winston's book, *The Girl Who Talked to Paintings* (Glass Lyre Press), was published in 2021. Her individual poems have appeared in Bracken, Cider Press Review, On the Seawall, RHINO Poetry, and elsewhere. She holds an MFA from the Warren Wilson Program for Writers. She lives in Bloomington, IN. Find her here: <https://shannonkwinston.com>.

Michael T. Young's third full-length collection, *The Infinite Doctrine of Water*, was longlisted for the Julie Suk Award. His previous collections are *The Beautiful Moment of Being Lost* and *Transcriptions of Daylight*. He received a Fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. His chapbook, *Living in the Counterpoint*, received the Jean Pedrick Chapbook Award. His poetry has been featured on Verse Daily and *The Writer's Almanac*. It has also appeared in numerous journals including *One*, *Pinyon*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review* and *Vox Populi*.

SR Young is a queer, genderfluid poet, currently residing in Idaho, where they study poetry in the University of Idaho's MFA program. Their work appears in Terrain.org, Thirteen Bridges Review, multiple issues of 13th Floor Magazine, and elsewhere. In addition to reading for Pleiades and the Cow Creek Chapbook Prize, they are the current Reviews and Interviews Editor for Fugue Journal. Ilya Kaminsky once called them smart, and they like to pretend this didn't mean a lot to them.

She stands rooted to the stoop, squinting against the harsh white sun, braced against the sky loosing its treasure, or a pox, upon the parched patch of earth circling their sharecropper's shack. In the doorway, her husband suffocating in her thin shadow. Their fifth child hard-turning in her belly. To be trapped like this, on a day like bleached bones! With all that they had, and all that they didn't, they rolled the biggest boulder onto the porch, now expecting reward, now wondering where the punishment might come from.



That Was the Day the Blue Boulders Landed by Mikki Aronoff