

YOUNG RAVENS LITERARY REVIEW



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Introduction

In Issue 16, we explore the theme of Magic: Lost and Found. We confront our dreams and uneasy realities in the musing mirror of reflection—"I search my own face/wondering what I'd hoped to find" (Anne Whitehouse).

We seek after "dragons, more rare than whales" (Daniel A. Rabuzzi). We ask you to dive deep into moon shadows and mourning with us. Come, fly under the raven's wing, and count the splended slant of each feather! Revel in the "crystal spirit of summer," and the spells found in falling snowflakes (Michael Keshigian).

Say "hello" to your lost imaginary friends, and goodbye to those treasured, yet taken, by the cruel enchantments of time and chance. Break free of the stories that tried to bind you, bone and blood—reclaim your tale! Don't be afraid of despair, for hope and desire will always span that "bridge between starshine and clay" (Shari Lawrence Pfleeger).

Cast your pennies and skipping stones far, and never stop wondering if your wishes will land heart-deep, or sky high. Either way, magic both mundane and marvelous will find us in the least expected ways. "This much we know is true/ or so the story goes" (Damon Hubbs).

Cynthia Yatchman

Ravens



Sharon Wright Mitchell

Astral Projection

Sheer curtains breathe
with the rhythm of night.
I lie awake, imagine
walking barefoot through
dew-damp grass
as the whippoorwill calls.

I picture myself rising,
flying through the screen door
like a sheet freed from the line,
soaring over eaves, gown
fluttering at my feet
while I swim
in cool moonlight.

I butterfly and backstroke
watching my moon-shadow
fly beneath me on the lawn.
When I'm sleepy, I land
and tiptoe to bed,
sailing through my dreams.

For a moment, the morning sun
challenges my sense
of what was real and what was dream—

then I stretch, and my toes touch
the damp edge of my gown.

Mitchell Untch

Epitaph

“Earth, isn’t that what you want: to arise within us invisible? Isn’t your dream to be wholly invisible someday?” –Rilke

When you moved, the swath of sheets wrapped around you became another piece of clothing still fortunate to wear you, to turn as your leaf-torn body turned, your torso, your hips, the scalloped bones of your chest, the clasped hands, the ear’s taut drum where words, my words, lingered and strayed sometimes singing the way birds sing their quiet happiness for having flight, singing for the earth that gives back what it takes, the eye’s bright oracle singing, the harpsichord of the heart singing until emptied of desire, if only I could see you in the shape I once saw you, carved from the brightest part of a stone, your shadow woven silk unraveling inside the doorway,

your shadow grown from your shoulders like wings after the sun’s fury, like water dripping down a window, the cloud’s departure leaving only your beauty to be seen, remembered, if only I could forget this apparition, this belief that still frightens me outside in the yard where you now reside inside the open mouths of flowers, inside trees that spin with your thoughts, inside leaves that fall to the ground like words unuttered, because I cannot go where you are, where your breath dries, where your bones root, because if I saw you now I could not move, could not steady my hand on the door, turn the knob with my fingers, could not feel it without feeling your

hand’s warmth, that flooding gesture, because if I remember the truth and I wake and move and allow myself to feel I will feel, because if I lie with my eyes closed and find that you are still here, still the wind’s song turning in the dark, still your mouth opening mine, opening me, the handle, the door, the ceiling, the wall, still looking each summer for your car to turn up the driveway, for the sun to make way for your body, to burn a bright hole in the air, then I will know that the world is wrong.

Jared Rich

Where the Stars Grow Blue



Lynn White

Wishing and Hoping

The pool was clear and deep.
The children peered over the age
to see the coins glistening on the bottom.
They wondered what wishes had been made
and if any had come true
but no one could know.
No one would tell
them their wish
as they waited
to watch the coin
fall into the cascade
down into the wild white spume
and then into the clear pool below
where it would stay glistening for ever
feeling only the force of water.
All those secret wishes
revealing nothing
lying there
hoping.

Kate Falvey

In Their Element: All That Bright Dazzle

They really seemed to imagine that
the new snow
had been created,
with deliberate accuracy,
for all the glow and sparkle,
all the delicious intensity
of the cold shudder,
the brisk west-wind
flying bits of airy voices
through all that bright dazzle,
glimmering in drifts
of unworldly early garden.

Found in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Snow-Image: A Childish Miracle" from *The Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales* (1852).

Hamad Al-Rayes

The Invention of Language

Hour of copper, and a gust outflanks the clustered horde, tumbling down the plunderer's door
a grain—the signature of the sphere and sacrifice, baroque cartographies, the worm's almanac;

town of bones, and to the invaded skull the recollection that gives form to lightning, spellbinding
the disbanded nerves—until the wind bears itself, swift on the butterfly's wing, and voices a
name.

Hour of copper in the town of bones: sonorous this Spring, sonorous the spear-studded sun,
sonorous the skin that swims in light!

Daniel A. Rabuzzi

Dragons at Sunrise, Off Plum Island

Dragons, more rare than whales,
Swim in sun-rivers,
Whorling rubescence,
Light from afar.
Offshore wings flashing with light
From the morning,
Long shadows all the way back to the beach.
Light from the past
Flecked with fire.

We may never see their kind again.

Carl Scharwath

Abstract Flower



Damon Hubbs

Compote

Blackberries
vanilla, orange zest, cardamon
arrowroot to thicken

before
the transubstantiation
is the blackberry aware of
its reputation

the historical echoes
of long-separate incidents.

Berrying the bramble wall,
a summer ritual that cat claws
children's hands in red-black drupelets,
always reaching for the sun-fattened berries
atop the briar, torn and tangled
in the bramble-kite
higher and higher
until swept away.

Lucifer, when cast from heaven,
fell from the sky
onto a blackberry bush,
and now the archfiend
rides the hedges
on Michaelmas Day,
his face smeared
with the last of summer's blood.

Tricia Lloyd Waller

Just in Case

Because they always kept a bowl of mints
on the hall table between the Clarice Cliff
and the sand filled lighthouse—
“present from Alum Bay.”

Just in case the white horses came to call.
The smoky white, timid wild horses,
wave wet whose coats are fragranced
with sea lavender and tamarisk.

The silky stallions who taste of crescent moonbeams.
The pure bred semi-feral Camargue horses
whose hooves tip tap on their polished wooden floor
as they help themselves to the tiny polar white mints.

Johanna Haas

Doodlebug, doodlebug

As a child, my mother would take us to the Doodle Bug Caves.
The story said that if you called
“Doodlebug, doodlebug come and get your bread and butter,”
the doodlebugs would emerge from the rocks.
I never saw them,
but I never completely did not see them either.
Always, there remained the potential for doodlebugs
and therein lay the magic.

Meg Freer

Fly Away

On our stroll around the block,
you walk up to a house, return
to me and announce in words
that would sadden any mother,
Parsley doesn't live there anymore.
At your birth the doctor gave me
a plush baby bird, told me to hold
my girl gently but allow her to fly.
Your imaginary friend for years—
gone—and you, growing up.

Jared Rich

As Seasons Fade



Ethan Blakley

Coastal Collapse

Rain-made obsidian of asphalt pathways
Split by indecision and dotted yellow lines;
Serpentine, sanguine, and slow.

There lies beside, wooded bounds of deep-set green;
A million needle-skirted spires
Watching, waiting, and wed

To the mournful mountainside;
Seeped in a sullen cloud of low-hung humidity
That hides not only sight, but time as well.

How many minutes lost?
How many miles?

We carry on our wondering,
perhaps hoping to be hidden in the selfsame way.

Cameron Morse

New Snow

The sparkle of new snow stops
by mid morning. Sun
frowns, and the crystals that snatched
the light collapse into themselves.
In my dream I'm back in the debate
league with Zeuben, my best friend
from childhood. I have a sentimental
attachment to my old email account,
but the spambots have long since
discovered my secret garden. Alexey,
who taught me about the sparkle,
considers my fortune now
from Moscow, my not-so-lucky numbers.
Zeuben and I are psyched
about the tournament. The children we were
are no match for our genius.

Michael Keshigian

Morning Trek

He rarely has those nights
when he can sleep
deep beneath the comforter
and curl himself back into childhood
upon the twin bed next to his brother,
a life he can barely remember.
His parents have long departed
for that permanent slumber
in a room with no view,
touching hands forever
as they once did in the confines of privacy,
now distant and deaf to the whimper
of nightmares that occasionally
still startle him awake and make him restless
in the milk white light of dawn.
The trembling rays of sun
split the pines on a cool summer morn
then splinter his shaded bedroom
and on the days when calm abandons him,
he rises to walk.
It soothes him to see the giant pines
still asleep in their bark,
the dreamless vegetation, unscarred
by human steps, swaying in the early breeze
as the huge ball of fire ignites
the watery horizon with flames
that abruptly shatter the darkness
about the sleeping lake homes.
The loons have ceased lamenting.
Silently, he thanks the crystal spirit of summer
for the comforting yellow gift of morning.
Soon houses blink their shades open,
a motor roars across the lake and in the distance
a chimney raises its smoky arms skyward.
The forest absorbs night as light walks
the mulch paths toward day.
He turns homeward, listens to his own footsteps,
no longer in search of himself.

Richard Hanus

Image 021



Anne Whitehouse

Bad Witch/Good Witch

“that inward eye which is the bliss of solitude”
Wordsworth, “The Daffodils”

Like a cascade of silken water,
my hair falls over the pool
of the dressing table mirror.
I search my own face,
wondering what I’d hoped to find.

Into the green thicket of the past,
I slip inside a fairy tale.
How my grandmother
pointed to the dying light
twinkling in the trees,
showing me the fairies
I believed in because I wanted to.

The first witch was my mother,
sowing dissension, hiding deceit,
plotting ways to set her children
against each other.
It was more than a game,
it was a compulsion.

We four sisters and a brother
consumed her poisoned love.
Every year she grew thinner,
teetering on high heels,
flapping her wings like a crow,
her back curved like a question mark.

Her life force fed a fire of trash—
igniting conflicts
passed down to children
like religious obligations.

I shriveled up and dug in,
a hard seed of resistance.
I never could relax my guard—
when I tried, I came to grief—
better not to be noticed,

best of all to leave.

I used to dream of the world
at the back of a mirror,
as if I could step into it, another Alice,
and the glass would part to take me in,
like dry water. There would be
an interior like a Dutch painting,
the light falling in one direction,
a woman sitting quietly, waiting.
She would look up and nod
when I passed, and let me go.

Johanna Haas

Burnt Offering

My cup of smoke spills, flowing over my hands,
over my arms, over my body, over my legs,
until it hits the ground forming a gray pool,
slithering around my feet like an ancient snake.

Does this make me a heroine in the mists of a dark, reaching mere,
or an unearthly creature forged in the heart of a gas-giant planet,
a goddess emerging from the Other realm across the hedge divide,
or just an aging woman communing with a cup of smoke?

Marie-Elizabeth Mali

No Such Thing as Away

My ex-husband remarried within a year.

*

For him love meant trust-falling backwards
into his beloved's arms. For me it meant leaping
hand-in hand face-forward off a cliff into the sea.

I kept dropping him, thinking he wanted
to swim. He kept breaking my leap,
thinking I wanted to be caught.

*

Some days the skins I've shed
call to me from the darkness
where they writhe like dug-up worms.
No such thing as away on this circled earth.

*

"Why love what you will lose?
There is nothing else to love."

*

I am tumbled sea-glass. I am a footprint
at the water's edge. I am the erasing
wave. I am a collage of broken shells.
I am dunes in a high wind. I am the wind.

*

Born with a half-rolled map for skin
and a museum for a heart,
I thought I got to the end, but found
a door and kept going. Each wall,
a window with a broken lock.

*

My heart is made of water.
My heart dances to salsa by itself.
My heart curls like a book left out
in the rain. My heart lies
on the bridge at night to watch
the stars. My heart forgets
to make the bed. My heart
built its nest on a cracked branch.

*

Standing in the water, toes wedged
between rocks, body swaying, I cry.
My paltry contribution of salt.
I swim under the full moon at high tide,
clatter of beach stones rolled by waves.

*

Some days my mind is like
a gull hanging onto
a sandwich too big
to swallow, beak clamped
on the monstrous bite
as it runs from other gulls
so as not to share.

*

Maybe we make our own luck.

*

My mouth is an empty birdcage, a tunnel
of hunger. My mouth does its own
dirty work. My mouth has a hard time
wrapping itself around No. My mouth
is a repository for memory. My mouth can
take down your mouth. It makes its own
weather. My mouth is a cave of joy.

*Couplet from the poem "From the Japanese" by Louise Gluck.

Allen Ashley

Bobcat

You had the magic early on
taking the baton from King Woody
as he lay in his hospital bed,
then marching with Martin
and cooing and crooning
with Joanie.

Thousands of miles from home
you turned electric
and they called you “Judas”.
You drowned them with your majestic
words and cross-cultural
sounds. Again and again.

Genius, innovator, inspiration –
many others echoed
or paid homage to your call.
Jimi turned your Biblical words
into a rage against the killing machine
of the Vietnam War.

You lost your magic
at some point when
the endless touring
fractured your voice
into little more than
speech patterns like spat
out cuss words.

Refusing the guitar,
standing behind a keyboard
as if you’re just another member
of the band.

Rearranging your love ballads
and your calls to arms
so that even the devotees
take half a song to recognise
the song they sort of recognise.

But you’re not just another member

of the band.

The burden of history becomes,
in another light,
a mountain of creativity.
Answers carried on the wind
if only we continue
to listen.

Kersten Christianson

Not Harry Houdini

but my Washington forester father could alter
ecology, topple grandmother forests to soil,
boil down the bones of old growth stands
to dust, forge lumber, plywood and pulp.

In tin pants, hard hat and calks, he could trek
into the weald, spot a cull in a stand, sense
its heartwood beat before the cut. He taught me
to count tree rings, to assign an age to living.

He couldn't revert milled Wahkiakum County
lumber back into natural timberland (Doug
fir, red cedar, Sitka spruce, western hemlock),
but he knew the value of a wildwood's marrow,

its cycle of growth, mortality, and cultivation.
He once showed me the magic trick of chasing
ground pepper on a water's surface into a pie
plate's rim with a dab of dish soap on the tip

of a wooden toothpick, tiny lumber. Sometimes
a star, others a mandala. He showed me the parlor
trick of education, the difference between a logger
and a forester. He showed me how to escape north.

Meg Freer

Greenhouse



Kyle Singh

A New Fawn

In its first year, it was laid to rest
The earth blessed it with its final ritual

Rights granted by the angels of the underground—
millipede, woodlice, fungi, all ready to greet her
to return her into dust borrowed from the sky,
a trail of light, and the arched valley of water.

On her spots still filled with heat were patterns of shadow—
The mystery of loss

I walked to her to place one hand on her mane
Where the foxes had laid their prey around her
My other hand on the fallen trunk of an oak
That took some 400 years to fall
I felt the pulse on my hand still alive

Small white flowers rose tall in the grove ahead—
A new fawn

In its first year, it was lifted from slumber
The earth blessed it with its final ritual

Shari Lawrence Pfleeger

Hope Deferred

“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.”
Proverbs 13:12

Hope, that thing with feathers, doesn't stop. Our
deferred dreams may dry like raisins, but hope
makes aspiration and yearning moist. In
the mystical night air, the lopsided
heart, thick clutch of muscle, is mute, silent,
sick and does not call out, “I want, I want.”
But then a stranger's voice echoes, rising
when close. It is your own tongue. Unlatch from
the hurricane, turn toward your dreams, unlock
desire. Never independent, desire
comes from who you are. who you want to be.
It is on this bridge between starshine and clay,
A tree explodes with fruit every new spring
of life: Come taste what the world has to offer.

*With gratitude to Langston Hughes, Walt Whitman, Rita Dove, Lucille Clifton and Camille Dungy.

Kersten Christianson

Raven Fluffed



***G*Timothy Gordon**

Under Stars

I keep forgetting how it is under stars,
except on off-nights standing beneath pitch-black
long before dawn, forgetting how to know them,
just hoarding memory, child wonder, unlettered joy,
their faint candlelit canopy comforting bobcat,
coyote, foxfire desert, Grace Village deathbed infirm,
homebound and homeless, convict and freeman,
even me, how I felt as a kid on peppery-hot,
starlit summer nights when a cool fresh breath
flowed through me before I deserved its care
or comfort, before feeling uncommon light
in darkness, what's left to deathless Daystar
to dream by.

Anne Whitehouse

Lost and Found

The lost jewelry turned up
cradled in a seashell
on my dresser
along with paper clips,
a state quarter,
and a push pin.

At first I thought
its delicate silver dangles
were the mangled ends
of a paper clip
and I almost tossed it.

When I realized
I held my earring's
missing twin
that twice, months apart,
I'd turned the blue case
inside out for
and never found,
I felt a surge
of pure happiness
for the restored set:
no burden at all
on fragile earlobes,
my lovely, loopy,
frail fronds of silver
swinging between
soft hair, smooth skin.

Damon Hubbs

The Toy Chest

This much we know is true

or so the story goes
that when the fairy-wand turned up
it wasn't cloaked in the watchful eye of an owl-faced tree
deep in the Hercynian forest,
or hidden in the heart of a fox-earth
scattered with five-petaled lilacs
and freshly churned butter.

It hadn't been lost like a set of spare keys
under the doormat of a Highland brownie stone,
beside an offering of milk and bread

nor did the woman on the Red Line
mistake it for an umbrella and tuck it under her wing
on a rainy day in Boston.

It wasn't discovered in a bouquet of Arum lilies
by a local nurseryman fearful of harbingers,
or threaded into a garland of milkmaid flowers
or traded for a bracelet with a silver bird clasp.

When it was found, at last, the fairy-wand
had been cast aside, waywardly
buried at the bottom of an old toy chest
amongst a bestiary of once-familiar animals,
wooden blocks, broken teacups, an old rag doll
with red thread tied around its throat,
and a white horse, its mane unfurling like a gilded tapestry,
searching for its spiral horn.

Ridiculous Rituals: Reasons, Rules, and a Rationale

By

Wendy K. Mages

I look up. My niece, Nora, is coming down the stairs wearing her pajamas inside-out and backwards. Nora's in middle school. I'm staying with her while her parents are out of town.

"What's with the pajamas?" I ask.

"If we wear our pajamas inside out and backwards, it'll snow and, when we wake up the next morning, we'll have a snow day."

"Really?" I ask with more than a bit of sarcasm.

"All my friends are doing it."

It seems, according to her friends, and the Internet, you can also increase the probability of a snow day if you sleep with a spoon under your pillow, run around the dining room table five times before you go to sleep, or flush an ice cube down the toilet. Who knew? Nora and her friends diligently perform these ridiculous rituals (typically the night before a big test). Perhaps I'm a skeptic, but I'm not surprised that they have yet to see a snow day.

A few days later, I'm on campus sitting in my office preparing for the two grad school classes I have to teach that evening, when the phone rings. The nurse at Nora's school tells me Nora's sick and needs to be picked up. I feel a rising sense of panic, unsure if I will have time to get Nora home and return to campus to teach my classes.

I do a quick calculation and, if all goes well, I can pick her up at school, drop her off at home, and still make it back in time to teach, which means I don't have to cancel class. I'm a recent hire. As a new faculty member, I'm not sure about all of the protocols and forms for canceling a class and notifying students. I do know, however, that my boss will not be pleased if I have to cancel class at the last minute and he'll be particularly peeved if students complain about the lack of advanced notice. Everyone is always giving lip service to the myth of work-life balance, but the "requests" of a demanding boss—and the unspoken threat of losing your job—put a thumb on that mythological scale. Typically, I work long hours and take on projects that leave little time for the "life" part of the equation. But this is different. Nora needs me and I need to be there for her.

Once I get her home, I can count on a friend to come over and take care of her until I get back from class. Nonetheless, I'm conflicted. It just doesn't feel right to abandon Nora and leave her with someone else when she's sick and may need me. And what if her condition worsens while I'm heading back to work or while I'm in class? I realize if I want this "rescue mission" to succeed, I have no time to contemplate all of the "what ifs"; I have to get on the road as quickly as possible.

Although I'm in a hurry, skipping a pit stop before hitting the road is not an option. I dash down the hall to the ladies room. As luck would have it, the toilet won't flush! Then the water in the sink barely dribbles out. It's clear something's broken, but I have a sick kid to worry about. I use a paper towel to remove the soap residue still on my hands and run back to my office, grab my coat, and head for the elevator.

Suddenly, a loud alarm squawks twice. Then, over an intercom I didn't even know we had, a disembodied voice announces, "There has been a water main break. There has been a water main break."

As the voice on the intercom reverberates down the hall, the alarm squawks again and the message repeats. I understand the words echoing in the halls, but what exactly does the message mean? We all know what to do when there's a fire, but what are you supposed to do when there's a water main break?

As I pass security on my way to the front door, I mention the problem with the bathroom (which I'm now starting to realize is probably related to the water main break), and ask, "What are we supposed to do about the water main break? Do we need to evacuate the building, like when there's a fire alarm?"

"At this point, we just sit tight. If they can fix the break, we do nothing. If they can't fix it, we may have to close the building and cancel evening classes."

"What are the chances classes will be canceled?"

"Don't know yet. We're waiting to hear how long it'll take to fix the water main. I guess it depends on how bad the break is."

Perhaps he reads the concern on my face, because he hands me his direct dial number on a sticky note. "Feel free to call for updates," he says, offering a sympathetic smile. I take the sticky note and head out to my car.

When I arrive at Nora's school, I'm told I have to wait for the nurse to bring her downstairs. I quickly pull out my phone and call the number on the sticky note.

"We're still waiting," he tells me.

When Nora arrives, pale and a looking a bit green, we get into my car and head home. On the way, I tell her about the water main break and that I'm hoping classes will be cancelled, so I can stay home to make sure she's okay. We realize at this moment, we don't need a snow day; we need a water-main-break day. Unfortunately, we don't know any water-main-break rituals. But we're resourceful.

We begin to review the snow-day rituals. Most involve doing something before you go to sleep, wearing something to sleep, or sleeping with something under your pillow. We have no time for

sleep. But the “ice-cube-in-the-toilet” ritual seems strangely apropos. After all, the water main break prevented the toilet from flushing. But I’m a practical person, and a bit of a skeptic. So, when we get home, I don’t head to the freezer for an ice cube. Instead, I call the security desk for an update.

“Still waiting,” he tells me.

Despite or perhaps because of her queasiness, Nora wants to try the ritual.

“Why not?” I say smiling wryly. “What do we have to lose?”

Nora, with a sudden burst of energy, rushes to get the ice cube from the freezer and we head upstairs to the bathroom giggling as we go. It seems less than ceremonial to simply drop the ice cube in the toilet and flush. We decide we need a few magic words, just to make sure there’s no confusion about whether we want a snow day or a water-main-break day. We come up with some impromptu abracadabra wishing-words, solemnly drop the ice cube into the toilet, and flush. For a brief moment we believe in the magic of incantations, in frog princes, unicorns, and fairy queens. We look at each other, standing like sentries gazing into the depths of an enchanted cistern. Again we giggle. The sound resonates on the hard surfaces. The glossy ceramic tile and porcelain toilet bowl amplify our laughter, the vibrations magnifying our hopes, apprehensions, and wildly fanciful expectations. We head back downstairs.

Even before I reach the bottom of the staircase, I catch sight of the clock. Like Cinderella at the ball, the late hour abruptly heralds of the constraints of my circumstances. With each strike of the clock, hope fades, just as Cinderella’s enchanted coach and all of her finery vanish at the stroke of midnight. I take a deep breath to calm my worries and again begin to calculate. To make it back to campus in late-afternoon traffic, I’ll have to leave within the next 3 minutes. As I place my coat and purse by the door, so I can leave as soon as our friend arrives to care for Nora, I notice the sticky note stuck to the cuff of my coat. I pull it off and decide to call the security desk one last time before heading out.

Much to the dismay of many school children, it turns out that the ice-cube-in-the-toilet ritual may not pass the tried-and-true test, if you need a snow day. But, if someday you happen to have a health emergency and a water-main break on the same afternoon, Nora and I can attest, it works like a charm.

Meg Freer

Neon Orange Cat



Ursula O'Reilly

Magic Found

I found a golden coin one day,
Where no one ever goes.
Down in the wood, the fairy wood,
Beneath a silver moon.
I gazed upon my treasure,
Foretoken of good luck.
Turned for home enchanted,
At magic I had found.

That night I dreamed of fairy folk,
Of goblins, and of elves.
Down in the wood, the fairy wood,
all dancing in a round.
They sang of magic found and lost,
Lost and found again.
I held onto my golden coin,
And danced along with them.

Meekha Roper

The Night

The night has deep undertones; layers of satin; velvety dark-chocolatey lushness that calls for a devouring. A deep yearning stirs within her; the night beckons the deepest shadows of unbidden desires. An echoless silence fills her lungs, as breathless she waits. Her heart no longer a functional organ, instead a mosaic of butterflies; she is poised. On the brink of an illusory, momentous moment of profound, irrevocable change. The night was decadent tonight, deeper than the ocean black; but then, so was she. Unfurled, she was endless petals of a fragrant rose.

Anne Whitehouse

Dancing in Water

for Eiko and Koma

A frame of driftwood
in the current's ebb and flow—
clinging to the frame,
the dancers, stiff as driftwood,
curve slowly into stones
while water runs over
their stilled forms.

In time they come alive,
are rippling reeds,
swaying stem and buried root,
variously wind, tree,
flower, naked breath
that swells behind
the push to give birth.

The dancers are in the river,
the dance is in the river,
the dance is the river.

From outside in I found this story:
she almost died,
and he brought her back to life.

Dried leaves, discarded and scattered—
let them go; new ones will grow.
A cricket perched on a twig,
graceful and humorous
at the close.

Carl Scharwath

Dreaming



Fabrice Poussin

Communion

Silence of winter skies upon a furnace
alone on the edge of ultimate danger
the universe their only companion
invades their pores to the depth of souls.

The old crater spreads to the horizon
infamous caldera with the power of meteors
all is quiet within the brisk air
eyes closed they extends their arms in an embrace.

They may be destroyed in this moment
as they commune with the infinite
free from the crowds' expected images
all burdens of a world below vanished.

It is a peaceful hour long as eternity
inside this imagined timeless realm
tomorrow they too will be gone
smiling among the snowy peaks.

Ethan Blakley

The Lay of the Fisherman

An image: a house above the sea.
Not so grand as anything, but in
it lived a fisherman
who had only two possessions: a boat,
and a finely cared for violin
passed down from his father;

as it had been for generations, father
to son, again and again, in cottage above the sea.
And at each new handler of the violin,
a story of ancient magics that lied within
the music— designed to calm the sea; a boat
to reach its heart; and the skills of a fisherman

to play. So the life of a fisherman
was taught to each son by his father:
to master the craft of boat
and water; become master of the sea,
“For she is a wily one”. And in
each lesson, a bit about the violin.

As it is, to play the violin,
one must have a gentle touch that fishermen
so rarely ever own. For in
all the years of learning from his father
how to tame the sea,
his hands became roughened, more fitting for boat,

and rope, and sail. But as it were, the boat
became his craft, as well as violin,
and he, a rare musician who played upon the sea
the music of the fisherman.
It was a lively tune his father
used to play. Of course, in

Nature, storms arise in

time. And seeing roiling sea below, he took his boat
out on the waves, prepared, as his father
was before, with only a violin
against the raging storm. Fisherman,
he plays his song; attempts to calm the sea.

Peycho Kanev

The World & Mirror

They say that before entering a river
to bathe, the poet Ikkyu collected
all the lice from his head and put them on
a rock on the shore so that they do not drown.

* * *

The sun shines angrily, the tit sings,
in the distance blue clouds glide
over the green mountain.
The world happens in spite of the world.

* * *

The clouds rise in a cloudless sky.
Calmness and clarity,
time is barely audible
on the edge of the horizon.
Who winds the clock of the world?
There are things you shouldn't think about,
nor to speak of.
Light has never been a metaphor.

* * *

The agony of the devoured animal,
Shopenhauer said, is always far greater
than the pleasure of the devourer.

* * *

Novel—

A cigarette which, once lit,
sighs

* * *

Between the heart of a newborn
and the heart of a dying man,
there is a huge empty space

that must be filled with a pulse.

* * *

At the end of the day
the unused hours go to the trash bin
and someone whose time is coming
to an end
finds them and uses them to survive
until the next day.

Carl Scharwath

Panacea



Adrienne Stevenson and Marie-Andree Auclair

Skipping Stones

You lie on a sandy beach: the sand is sun-warm
pricks your skin with finely ground glass specks
that the lake has not yet licked smooth
while worn-flat pebbles remember the granite mountain
that looms over your lonely shore.

Our smooth stones, each fitting the heart of our palms
trace low arcs above the water
touch and rebound until their energy is spent.
Then one of us sacrifices the next stone
to the god of placid waters.

You sit, arms akimbo, fingers idle, attentive
to clouds and birds, the patterns of flight
and wind, the peaceful motion of branches and leaves
that draws you to its breath, to yours
and you feel yourself taking root like grass and trees.

That is what we do, throw our poems on the page
of a common lake, what sinks quickly is culled
what uncoils its energy in many rebounds stays,
a blended poem for our venture, another bird in the sky.

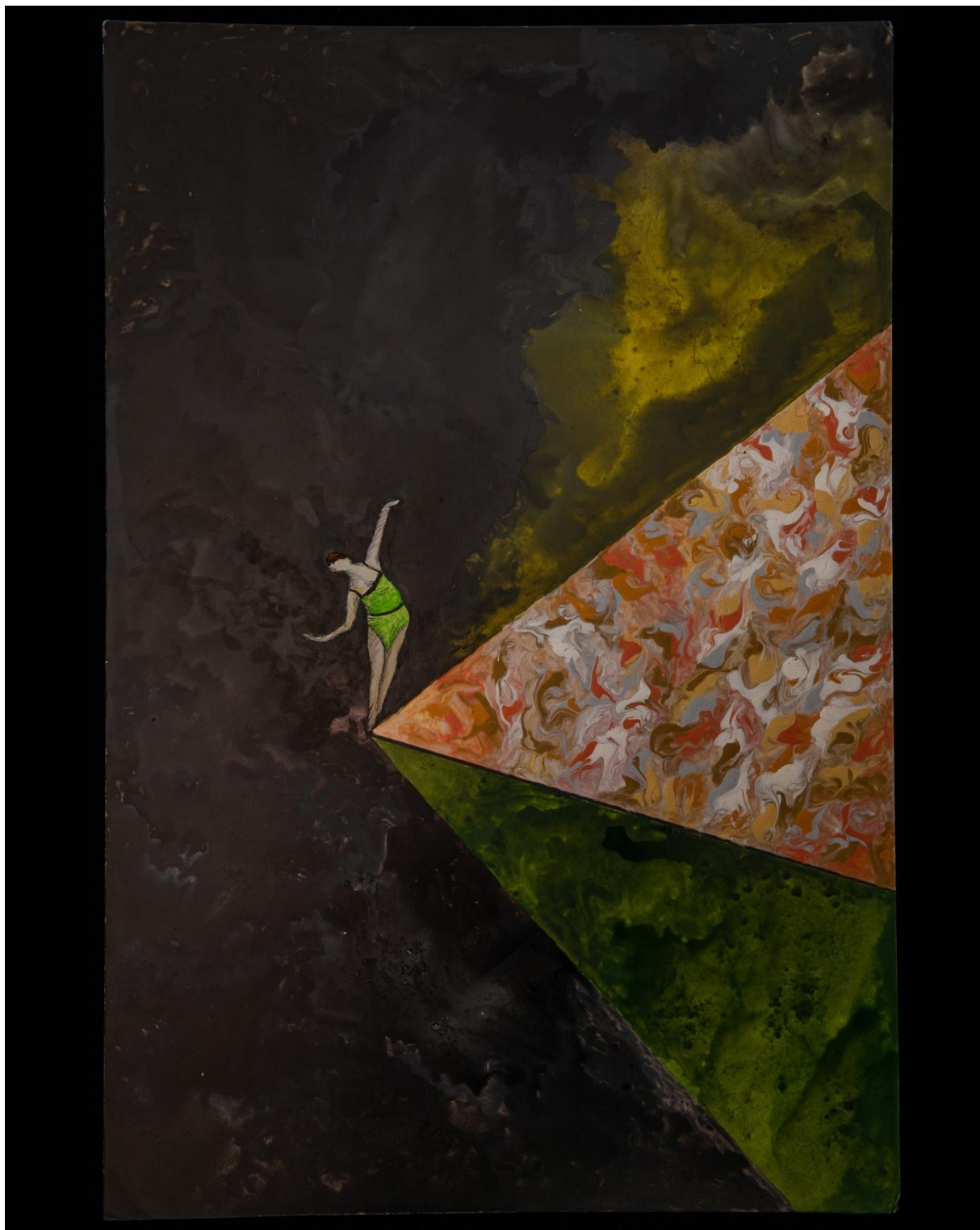
Lynn White

Raindrops

Just a raindrop
falling,
falling,
falling into wetness.
You see it falling,
a silvery teardrop
splatters
into a defusing circle
then disappears
into wetness,
becomes invisible
as if by magic.

Richard Hanus

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Contributor Biographies

Allen Ashley

Allen Ashley is the founder of the advanced science fiction and fantasy group Clockhouse London Writers. His work has recently been published in the anthologies “No More Heroes” (PS Publishing, 2021), “Infectious Hope” (IFWG, 2021) and “Vital Signals” (NewCon Press, 2022) as well as online at “Sein und Werden,” “Mono,” and “the World of Myth.”

www.allenashley.com

Hamad Al-Rayes

Hamad Al-Rayes is a writer and translator from Bahrain, currently residing in New Orleans. His research, short stories, and poems have been published in a number of Arabic and English imprints, including *ANTIGRAVITY* (forthcoming), *Mizna*, *Translation Review*, and *Michigan Quarterly Review*. He is currently co-editing a special issue of *Middle East Literatures*, focused on modern Arabic poetry.

Marie-Andree Auclair and Adrienne Stevenson

Marie-Andree Auclair and Adrienne Stevenson are Ottawa, Canada poets/writers who met ten years ago at workshops run by the Ottawa Public Library. Since then, they are been supporting each other's writing and meeting regularly other poets. Both are extensively published, in Canada, the USA, UK, Europe and Australia. Adrienne won first and third place in the *Poets' Pathway: Lampman Challenge* in 2018. *In/Words* published Marie-Andree's first chapbook “Contrails.” Besides their active interest in gardening (Adrienne) and traveling (Marie-Andree), they have been procrastinating playing the flute and the piano. Writing collaboratively was a great experience.

Ethan Blakley

Ethan Blakley is a fourth-year student at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Oklahoma. He is undertaking a B.A in Interdisciplinary Studies with focuses on English, Education, and History and expects to graduate this May. Afterwards, he intends to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing—but not before taking some time for himself. His work has previously been published in the *Westview Journal* of Western Oklahoma.

Kersten Christianson

Kersten Christianson is a poet and English teacher from Sitka, Alaska. She is the author of *Curating the House of Nostalgia* (Sheila-Na-Gig, 2020), *What Caught Raven's Eye* (Petroglyph Press, 2018), and *Something Yet to Be Named* (Kelsay Books, 2017). She is also the poetry editor for *Alaska Women Speak*. Kersten enjoys road trips, bookstores, and smooth ink pens.

Kate Falvey

Kate Falvey's work has been published in many journals and anthologies; in a full-length collection, *The Language of Little Girls* (David Robert Books); and in two chapbooks, *What the*

Sea Washes Up (Dancing Girl Press) and *Morning Constitutional in Sunhat and Bolero* (Green Fuse Poetic Arts). She co-founded (with Monique Ferrell) and edited the *2 Bridges Review*, published through City Tech (City University of New York) where she teaches, and is an associate editor for the *Bellevue Literary Review*.

Michael Keshigian

Michael Keshigian is the author of 14 poetry collections his latest, *What To Do With Intangibles*, published by Cyberwit.net. Most recent poems have appeared in *Muddy River Review*, *Bluepepper*, *Smoky Quartz*, *San Pedro River Review*, and *Tipton Poetry Journal*. Published in numerous national and international journals, he has appeared as feature writer in twenty publications with 7 Pushcart Prize and 2 Best Of The Net nominations.

Meg Freer

Meg Freer grew up in Montana and lives in Ontario, where she works as an editor and teaches piano. She has co-authored a chapbook, *Serve the Sorrowing World with Joy* (Woodpecker Lane Press, 2020). Her photos, poetry and prose have been published in anthologies and journals such as *The Sunlight Press*, *Young Ravens Literary Review*, *Eastern Iowa Review*, *Sequestrum* and *Ruminate*.

GTimothy Gordon

DREAM WIND was published 2020 (Spirit-of-the-Ram P), while *EVERYTHING SPEAKING CHINESE* received RIVERSTONE P (AZ) Poetry Prize. Work has appeared in *AGNI*, *American Literary R*, *Cincinnati PR*, *Kansas Q*, *Louisville R*, *Mississippi R*, *New York Q*, *Phoebe*, *RHINO*, *Sonora R*, *Texas Observer*, among others. Recognitions include NEA & NEH Fellowships, residencies, & three Pushcart nominations. *EMPTY HEAVEN/EMPTY EARTH*, will be published 2022. Gordon divides lives between Eurasia and the deep shadows of the Desert Southwest Organ Mountains.

Johanna Haas

Johanna Haas lives in a small cottage somewhere in the sweaty middle of the United States. Three lazy lions guard her. A garden of verdant weeds, that she attempts to control, surrounds the home. She used to be a university professor who taught environmental studies. But she broke, and now writes from home. She has had fiction published in *Bewildering Stories*, and has short work to be anthologized in *42 Words* and *Where the Wind Blows*.

Richard Hanus

Had four kids but now just three. Zen and Love.

Damon Hubbs

Damon Hubbs lives in a small town in Massachusetts. He graduated with a BA in World Literature from Bradford College. When not writing, Damon can be found growing microgreens, divining the flight pattern of birds, and ambling the beaches and forests of New England with his

wife and two children. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Book of Matches*, *The Chamber Magazine*, and *Eunoia Review*.

Peycho Kanev

Peycho Kanev is the author of 10 poetry collections and three chapbooks, published in the USA and Europe. His poems have appeared in many literary magazines, such as: *Rattle*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Evergreen Review*, *Front Porch Review*, *Hawaii Review*, *Barrow Street*, *Sheepshead Review*, *Off the Coast*, *The Adirondack Review*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *The Cleveland Review* and many others. His new book of poetry titled *A Fake Memoir* was published in 2022 by Cyberwit.

Wendy K. Mages

Wendy K. Mages, a Professor at Mercy College, is a storyteller and educator who earned a master's and a doctoral degree in Human Development and Psychology at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a master's degree in Theatre at Northwestern University. Her research focuses on the effect of the arts on learning and development. As a compliment to her research, she performs original stories at storytelling events and festivals in the United States and abroad. Some of her stories appear in *The Journal of Stories in Science* and *Potato Soup Journal*. A triptych of her poems appears in *Scenario*.

Marie-Elizabeth Mali

As a Relationship Alchemist and TEDx Speaker, Marie-Elizabeth Mali shows individuals and couples how to deepen love and connection in their relationships. Drawing on her Master's degree in Chinese Medicine and over 20 years of client work, she teaches people how to be authentic instead of shrinking themselves to fit in. She also has an MFA in poetry from Sarah Lawrence College and is the author of one book of poetry, *Steady, My Gaze* (Tebot Bach, 2011) and co-editor with Annie Finch of the anthology, *Villanelles* (Everyman's Library Pocket Poets, 2012). Her relationship work has been featured in Thrive Global, SWAAY, and *Forbes* and her poems have appeared in *Poet Lore*, *RATTLE*, and *Tiferet*.

Sharon Wright Mitchell

Sharon Wright Mitchell is a neurodivergent teacher, and poet. She has been published in *Independent Variable*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, and *The Wild Word*, among others. She is a Georgia native, where she enjoys hiking the Appalachian foothills. For poetry and adventures, follow her on Instagram: @apoetseyeview

Cameron Morse

Cameron Morse is Senior Reviews editor at *Harbor Review* and the author of eight collections of poetry. His first collection, *Fall Risk*, won Glass Lyre Press's 2018 Best Book Award. His latest is *The Thing Is* (Briar Creek Press, 2021). He holds an MFA from the University of Kansas City-Missouri and lives in Independence, Missouri, with his wife Lili and (soon, three) children. For more information, check out his [Facebook page](#) or [website](#).

Ursula O'Reilly

Ursula O'Reilly lives in County Cavan, Ireland, and enjoys writing poetry and fiction. Her other interests include painting, and reading. Ursula has had her work published online and in numerous magazines including *Poetry Plus magazine*, *Lothlorien Poetry Journal*, *Otherwise Engaged Literature and Arts Journal*, *Woman's Way magazine*, *Vita Brevis Poetry Press*, and by *Earlyworks Press*.

Shari Lawrence Pfleeger

Shari Lawrence Pfleeger's poems reflect both natural and constructed worlds, often describing interactions with family and friends. Her essays on poetry appear regularly in *Blue House Journal*, and her poems have been published in *District Lines*, *Thimble Literary*, *Blue House Journal*, *Green Light* and *Paper Dragon*, and in four anthologies of Yorkshire poetry. Her prize-winning collection of Yorkshire sonnets was launched in Britain 2021 at the Fourth Ripon Poetry Festival. Shari is on the board of Alice James Books (alicejamesbooks.org), a press committed to producing, promoting, and distributing poetry that engages the public on important social issues. She lives, writes and rides her bicycle in Washington, DC.

Fabrice Poussin

Fabrice Poussin teaches French and English at Shorter University. Author of novels and poetry, his work has appeared in *Kestrel*, *Symposium*, *The Chimes*, and many other magazines. His photography has been published in *The Front Porch Review*, the *San Pedro River Review* as well as other publications.

Daniel A. Rabuzzi

Daniel A. Rabuzzi has had two novels, five short stories and ten poems published since 2006 (see www.danielarabuzzi.com). He lived eight years in Norway, Germany and France. He has degrees in the study of folklore and mythology, international relations, and modern European history. He lives in New York City with his artistic partner & spouse, the woodcarver Deborah A. Mills (<http://www.deborahmillswoodcarving.com>), and the requisite cat.

Jared Rich

Jared Rich is an amateur poet and landscape photographer with a minimal and moody style, he's had works featured in the *Eunoia Review*, *Free Lit Magazine*, the *Covidiums Haiku Collection*, as well as a collaborative anthology titled *Offerings* with co-authors Beth Greene and Jack Freedman.

Meekha Roper

Meekha is an amateur poet, a new wife and step mother to three beautiful girls. She thrives in chaos, loves deeply and uses writing as her one and only lifeline and escape. She works as a business analyst and takes pride in her 9 to 5 desk job. Despite her outward show of confidence, it has taken a lot for her to submit one of her poems to an external publication. Fearful of rejection; doubtful of acceptance this submission is an act of courage.

Carl Scharwath

Carl Scharwath has appeared globally with 70+ journals selecting his photography or art. Carl has published three poetry books and his latest book *Playground of Destiny* features poetry, short stories and photography (Impspired Press) He also has two photography books published by Praxis in Africa. His photography was exhibited in the Mount Dora Center for The Arts and The Leesburg Center for the Arts galleries. Carl was the art editor for *Minute Magazine* (4 years). He is a competitive runner, and a 2nd degree black-belt in Taekwondo.

Kyle Singh

Kyle Singh is a graduate student at Dartmouth College studying creative writing. He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and currently resides in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Mitchell Untch

Mitchell Untch is an emerging writer. Partial publications include *Beloit Poetry Journal*; *Poet Lore*; *North American Review*; *Confrontation*; *Nimrod Intl*; *Natural Bridge*; *Owen Wister*; *Solo Novo*; *Knockout*; *Baltimore Review*; *Lake Effect*; *The Catamaran Reader*; *Grey Sparrow*; *Illuminations*; *Tusculum Review*; *Telluride Institute*, *West Trade Review*, among others. Two Time Pushcart Nominee.

Tricia Lloyd Waller

Tricia Lloyd Waller loves story and volunteers with early years readers at her local library. She has recently had work published in *The World of Myth*, *Little Lilac Press* and *The Poet*.

Lynn White

Lynn White lives in north Wales. Her work is influenced by issues of social justice and events, places and people she has known or imagined. She is especially interested in exploring the boundaries of dream, fantasy and reality. She was shortlisted in the Theatre Cloud 'War Poetry for Today' competition and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and a Rhysling Award. Her poetry has appeared in many publications including: Apogee, Firewords, Capsule Stories, Gyroscope Review and So It Goes. Find Lynn at:

<https://lynnwhitepoetry.blogspot.com> <https://www.facebook.com/Lynn-White-Poetry-1603675983213077/>

Anne Whitehouse

Anne Whitehouse's poetry collections include [*Blessings and Curses*](#), [*The Refrain*](#), [*Meteor Shower*](#), and, most recently, [*Outside from the Inside*](#) (Dos Madres Press, 2020). Ethel Zine and Micro Press published [*Surrealist Muse*](#), her poem about Leonora Carrington, last year, and, recently, her poem, [*Escaping Lee Miller*](#), as hand-stitched chapbooks. She is also the author of a novel, *Fall Love*, and has been publishing essays about [*Edgar Allan Poe*](#).

Cynthia Yatchman

Cynthia Yatchman is a Seattle based artist and art instructor, she works primarily on paintings, prints and collages. Her art is housed in numerous public and private collections and has been shown national and extensively in the Northwest, including shows at Seattle University, Seattle Pacific University, Shoreline Community College, the Tacoma and Seattle Convention Centers and the Pacific Science Center. She is a member of the Seattle Print Art Association and COCA (Center of Contemporary Art).