

# *Young Ravens Literary Review*



Issue 4



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*Cover art "Consecrated Hand" by Kurt Knudsen*

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## ***Introduction***

In the fourth issue of *Young Ravens Literary Review*, authors and artists explore the many forms of cyclicity in life: from the turning of the seasons and the quicksilver change of ice to water in the natural world, to the vinyl echoes of records caught in limbo as we decide what to discard and what to keep and which melody will go on.

Each of us yields to the sudden moments that demand our souls: grief at a dissolving marriage; joy at a violin strain; the warmth of strong, worn hands that we can no longer grasp but whose strength we carry inside our own spirits.

Of equal importance are disrupted cycles that deal with racism, societal injustice and the ineluctable cost of refusing to recognize climate change.

In a journey that spans the ages, we ask readers to imagine the first poet and the last robot to *wonder* at what it means to be alive on planet Earth.

Caught between the constant ebb and flow of change and decay, and always searching for a balance between who we were, who we are, and the person we wish to become, is the elusive heart of cyclicity.

Sarah Page & Elizabeth Pinborough,  
Co-editors



## *Page Turner*

Tors Distunxit Amicitiamanet (Love Survives with Death Divides)



*\*Made with bundled bullets, bundled and waxed book pages, preserved bird wing, silk thread, antique door knob and a zinc mason jar lid. The dome is from a 150 year old clock.*

*Randel McCraw Helms*

## **Recycle**

Just think of it: one day the bits of you  
Will grace again the biosphere, and,  
In due course, the universe, to nourish  
And rejoice a tree, a tiger, your descendants,

Another star. Best to burn cleanly to  
Soft powder and ash; soon, soon, you may be  
Life again, or your bones marble for  
Tomorrow's shining Michelangelo.

Scatter, fly as wind, fall as rain upon  
All you love. Let them drink you in their wine,  
And revel, and bear strong young to be bone  
Of your bone. Or, perhaps, what better fate

Than to soar part of the eye of a hawk,  
Or the vast, breaching fluke of a great blue whale?

*Anne Whitehouse*

## **One Summer Day on the Number One Train**

When the doors of the express opened at 72 Street,  
the local was waiting. She entered with me,  
tall and angular as a crane, her expression alert,  
violin poised against her clavicle like a wing.

The train was half-empty, the passengers dozing  
or absorbed in their smartphones.  
She stood at one end of the car, her gaze  
swiftly appraising us, while the doors slid shut.

Closing her eyes, she lifted her bow  
and dipped her chin, and into that pause  
went all the years of preparation  
that had brought her to this moment.

The train accelerated in a rush of cacophony,  
her music welled up, and I recognized  
a Bach concerto blossoming to fullness  
like an ever-opening rose. Suddenly

I was crying for no reason and every reason,  
in front of strangers. I thought of the courtroom  
where, an hour ago, I'd sat listening to testimony  
with fellow jurors, charged to determine the facts

and follow the law. But no matter how we tried,  
we couldn't reverse damage or undo wrong.  
The music was contrast and balm, like sunlight  
in subterranean air. The tears wet on my cheeks,

I broke into applause, joined by fellow passengers.  
We'd become an audience, *her* audience,  
just before the doors opened and we scattered.  
Making my offering, I exited, too shy to catch her eye.



But she'd seen the effect her music had wrought.  
Its echo resounded in my memory, following me  
into the glory of the summer afternoon.  
It is with me still.

*Bridget Gage-Dixon*

## **Pluvial**

Sometimes the sky stares down  
with the eye of an angry artist.  
In torrents its hands pound hillside  
until the earth yields to deluge.

Houses will fold into the avalanche  
of soil, bury men beneath the muck,  
this is the cost of genius,  
the artist cannot afford to care.

Other days the sky, that gentle mother,  
will stroke the fields with moisture:  
trees will offer up their fruit,  
crops will grow, a child will stomp  
through puddles in a dance of praise.

Tomorrow the oceans will heave  
themselves up and then away  
from heaven. Clouds will suckle  
on river, lake, and sea.

The rain will run in rivulets  
over asphalt into gutters.  
The soil will open greedy lips.  
Blades of grass will welcome  
droplet's gliding down  
their supple spines.

*Lisa Cook*

**Sunrise Reflection**



## *Mary Stike*

### **Florence and Delia**

I am grown from women  
grounded by work.

My Grandma Florence left the family farm  
in Addison, New York in 1917  
to live in Rochester.

The first winter her father  
brought her a box of potatoes  
for comfort and survival.

She worked in factories, munitions, then perfume,  
and as a clerk in McCurdy's department store  
and later at the Rochester Post Office.

She was proud of her brass Post Office pin  
a pony express carrier, the steed's legs fashioned wide  
in full gallop, the boyish rider with his wide felt hat  
and leather shoulder bag.

She wore it pinned high on her broad fronted housedress,  
or on a hand knit cardigan sweater.

My father's mother Delia  
was sent by her father from their home  
on the Tonawanda reservation,  
to Carlisle Indian School.

He was a track laborer on the New York Central Railroad,  
had no way to care for his children when their mother died  
giving birth to Delia.

As a young teenager, she came to the city  
to work as a domestic with her girlfriend Evelyn TwoGuns.  
They kept house and cared for the children  
of the rich white families on St. Paul Boulevard.

At family dinners  
Florence and Delia told us stories  
of those hard first years in Rochester,

before Grandpa Frederick came to be an auto worker  
or Grandpa John drove his hack for weddings and funerals.

And now, my life,  
a shrine to these women  
in sepia-toned  
photos in golden oak frames.  
I say their names,  
set my stubby candle before them.  
Florence uses her kitchen shears to trim the wick,  
Delia's strong brown fingers strike the match  
and they light the flame.

*Michael Pendragon*

## **Old Records**

Hushed voices, music stilled  
Imprisoned in odors of musty shellac  
Heavy and cold to touch  
Like skin of a snake  
Oily, obscurely alive  
Stacked up in boxes they quietly wait  
Shoved to backs of the closets  
Lost in garages, attics, cellars  
Dimly remembered melodies and times  
They patiently sit  
Waiting another turn  
To unfurl suspended dreams.

## *On Red Dresses and White Flowers*

By

J. Ellington

There was the smooth, cool feel of the stage floor beneath my feet and I waited very still behind the closed curtain. The memory of carefully breathing dark dust and space all around me. The murmur of the school through the heavy drapes. Somewhere in that murmur among the faces, my mother's chestnut hair, blue eyes. The heavy opening and a flash of attention in a too bright light. Whispering. Nervous quiverings like the twitching of horse skin with flies. So many eyes pointed at me and I want to shrink and hide. I had never done anything like this. My hand in my partner's sweaty grip, the smooth music begins. It sounds red. I step and pause, step and twirl. The nervousness starts seeping away with each breath; something else replaces it, something like joy. The red dress swirls, he flourishes, I tease, red flower in my hair, he chases, I acquiesce, we sway and snap, the yawning darkness of faces breathes out, hands clap, I think about my mother. Watching. I am happy.

Ten years ago. I sit now by my open window and think about ten years ago. After my successful performance, I searched for my mother, still full of the feeling of happiness. She was gone. My friend's mother found me; she told me: your mother had to leave early. Was she there for my dance? She saw you dance. And the mother of my friend gave a strange smile when she said that my mother saw me dance and I felt troubled. I saw that smile and I doubted myself. I thought maybe my dance had been inappropriate. I felt the small knot forming in my stomach; tightening away some of the happiness. I look out my window now at the small white flowers on the tree outside and think about that moment years ago. I remember the tight stomach. I remember I told myself it was probably nothing. I had gotten home, that day, later, and my mother's bedroom door was locked. I heard her crying but trying to laugh. I heard her talking to a friend inside. She looked so perfect. I will never be that. My stomach filled slowly with acid guilt.

Once, several year ago, I was visiting home from college, looking through old things. My old journals. Dead flat flowers inside pages; faded brittle and beautiful. Pictures of my cat. Pictures of the red dress. The red flower in my hair. I remember the music, my bare feet on the cold stage floor. Inside the closet I want to see the red dress but I can't



find it. It is gone. My mother says Oh that old thing, kind of scandalous don't you think? I knew you couldn't really want it. I gave it away for you. I look out the window at the fluttering white flowers now and think of my feelings then, the conversations we tried to have, the things said and not said, I wonder what it must have been like for my mother, to look into my questioning face and to have no words for what she felt. My mother danced ballet when she was young, she danced more than I ever did; I do not understand her pangs at the sight of her dancing child.

Perhaps I am still too young to feel a sense of regret or despair. Perhaps my mother's distress was a fleeting moment and she too feels this same happiness I feel as I sit by an open window with a tree full of tiny white flowers. Or perhaps it ate at her until she couldn't bear the sight of the red dress.

A few days ago my husband asked, "Do you think we will have a boy or a girl as our first child?" I tell him I don't know. We aren't even pregnant yet. Too soon to think about that. And yet I am already thinking. Will my child one day stand on the stage while I watch from the dark? Will I think about all I have never been? When they come searching will I have fled to mourn in private my life slowly passing too quickly? I do not know. The white flowers are nodding softly; their delicate scent is wafting now with the spring warmth, in through the window. When my mother was young did she feel sorrow at the passage of time as she waited in stillness behind curtains or jumped in waves at the beach or ate dinner with her own mother? Perhaps we cannot think about our lives passing until we see ourselves in our children, doing all that we did and all that we didn't. Perhaps it is difficult to think beyond the present until we see in the curved backs and red dresses and rhythm of our children a future that stretches out beyond us, a life we will not live.

As I write these words, on the floor in my small apartment by the open window, I think all these things and my life moves inexorably forward. The plants on my sill lean gently towards the light and the end of their quiet lives. Perhaps I should fight this passage of time with teeth and tears. Perhaps I should run and rage. But I don't. I gaze out the window at the white flowers on their tiny branches and I feel happy. Those blossoms will bask in sunlight a few more days and then float gently away. I am glad they are here. I feel myself as a small piece in the movement of the worlds; I am here and I am leaving.

I smile and lean back against the wall. I picture my future child, a daughter, waiting very still behind closed curtains. Music whispers. She dances. I hope, someday when I watch from the dark, that I smile.

*Mantz Yorke*

## **Tiger Moth**

Nettle leaves curl brittle and brown  
around the cocoon:  
a month has already gone  
since the silken threads were spun.

My grandfather taught me  
all about habitats, pupation  
and the fragility of wings.  
From his collection  
he gave me a fritillary  
spreadeagled in a box:  
to this fierce patriarch  
I dared not confess  
the shattered glass,  
the segments and scales  
scattered like thresh-husk  
in a gust of wind.

Now, a different age. I watch gaudiness  
slowly uncrumpling inside the jar,  
and have to choose: drowse and pin  
a spread unblemished by careless touch,  
or unscrew the jar's nail-holed lid  
and let the moth fly free.

*John Grey*

## **Tractor Part**

When you were young,  
your father took you to another town  
where he was to buy a part for a tractor.  
You were anxious but excited for the world outside.

You rode in the station wagon,  
confident in your father's big hands  
on the steering wheel.  
The countryside changed  
but whether woods or farms,  
gas stations or silos,  
they seemed to step aside for him.  
Slender trees lines lined the road like guards.  
You could have sworn their upper branches saluted.

He pulled up to the tractor store.  
You followed him in,  
gaped at all the red and yellow monsters,  
the overstaffed boxes and shelves, stacks of giant tires,  
even chains and ropes hanging from the rafters.

Your father and the salesman  
talked business at the counter  
while you wandered, lost in all the machinery.  
Your little heart ticked.  
Your tiny brain opened wide but couldn't take it all in.  
Your miniscule muscles lifted you high enough  
to look into the cabin  
of a sparkling new John Deere.

"Look out!" Father and salesmen screamed at once.  
Your father was worried you might hurt yourself  
The salesman was concerned you might scratch the paint.  
No harm done. They both calmed down.

On the ride home,  
a brand new fuel injection pump  
bounced up and down on the back seat.  
If you weren't strapped in,  
you would have too.

## *Page Turner*

### **Tiny Toes**



\*Turner has always been bewitched by what is kept and saved, and by objects that are perceived to have little to no value. She is attuned especially to objects and tools that women have owned or own, such as material remnants, and the everyday mementos that someone saves—sentimental objects, trifles, trinkets, and sundries.

*Carl Boon*

## **Sea Life**

In the last photograph,  
my father dozes  
on a beach house deck  
in Avon, North Carolina.

All around him was alive,  
the sea oats, the fishermen  
trudging up the dunes,  
his grandchildren's faces.

It would be the final time  
he slept near the sea,  
the final waking  
to that sudden, familiar wind.

In the kitchen, blue crabs  
boiled, Old Bay Seasoning  
had tipped on the counter.  
A pair of fishing rods

leaned against the print  
of the Bodie Island Light.  
We moved to and fro  
with bottles of Red Stripe,

singing, lingering, happy.  
The sea was ours,  
the whipped sand  
a companion against death.

*Lynn Otto*

### **Apple Tree on Whalen Island**

So low, this riddled trunk. How far  
can one lean against nothing?

Its limbs are scarred in rows  
of small holes. Some systematic bird.

But one low branch reaches into the earth,  
reappears with a fistful of leaves.



*Ayendy Bonifacio*

## **Brooklyn Love Locks**



## *Mary Stike*

### **Boiling Point, 1964**

At fourteen, I read Steinbeck, Salinger,  
John Knowles' *A Separate Peace*,  
searched graveyards for history  
and started drinking coffee.

That was the summer of Rochester's race riots,  
days and nights of fighting, curfew and looting,  
I could hear the sirens through  
the open window in my bedroom all night.  
At home we were restless, on edge, waiting  
and watchful like before a thunderstorm  
that promises severity and damage in its fury.

The riots erupted, forcing us to become aware  
of what we had avoided, refused to see  
on the slummy streets Dad would not drive  
after dark, or if he had to, he would say,  
"Girls, lock your doors."

The simmer of discontent heated up,  
and boiled over for three days, its stink  
covering the city, it entered the forced-open windows  
of our houses we had thought were safe,  
surrounded our supper table where we talked of nothing else.  
How could this happen here? What does it mean?  
Is it that bad here, like the South?  
And we knew it was wretched  
in the black neighborhoods  
that we held so far away from our existence.  
Yeah, we saw the poverty, but could not fathom  
its desperation.

My education that summer:  
not stories of the Okies in the 30's or spoiled adolescent boys  
in prep school, so fascinating but foreign to me;

in my hometown, the storm was rumbling  
up and down the streets and through our walls.  
We could not escape or hide our knowledge  
anymore.  
Our whole family came of age.

*Randel McCraw Helms*

### **Nothing is ever Lost**

During its gracing of our age,  
Nelson Mandela's heart beat  
Approximately three and a half  
Billion times.

And my own was privileged to burn  
The same planetary oxygen  
For two billion of those beats.

And I have breathed where Martin King  
Told us that he has a dream.

And every time I drink a glass  
There is a chance that I consume  
One vivifying molecule the heart  
Of Jesus poured upon that tree.

And the cleansing wash of the Magdalene's  
Tears still lingers in the sea.

*Yuan Changming*

### **Spring Stream**

With all the transparent secrets  
    Of the last ice age  
(Or beyond the atmosphere)  
You keep flowing  
    Towards the sea  
    Leaving all wildness behind  
Along your two vast banks.

*Paul Stansbury*

## **My Creek**

When I close my eyes,  
The memory of my creek flows fiercely  
Through the cataracts of my mind.  
The bustle of its clear water fills my ears  
With the rush of getting where it's going - and fast.

Burnished stones push their shaven heads  
Above fall's parched stream,  
Forming slippery pathways from bank to bank,  
Tantalizing the sure of foot to cross.  
Cold feet splash in puddles at its edges  
Crawdads back under rocks to hide  
From curious hands.

Winter bonfires glow along the bank.  
Ice skating till dark,  
Then, hot chocolate and marshmallows.

My creek swells with the spring rains  
Rushing out from its banks,  
Filling the bottom field with muddy water,  
The color of my Grandmother's coffee.  
Bluegill and catfish gather in the pools,  
Waiting for bait dangled from old cane poles.

Feet dangle in the cool bath on a hot summer's day,  
Between innings played on a makeshift field,  
Laid out with hats in the hollow nearby.  
Mulberry and sycamore trees form the nave,  
Branches stretching out across the water,  
Sunlight breaking through  
The stained glass mosaic of their leaves.

Now, I stare down at my creek,

Prodded and pushed to make room,  
For streets and roads, houses and restaurants.  
Nothing more than a drainage ditch of progress.  
How old I feel.



*Ingrid Bruck*

## **Berry Picking**

Lou showed me how,  
I was her shadow,  
what she did, I did  
because she was Lou  
and Lou knew how.

Now when I make jam,  
I'm seven again  
in a world ripe with berries,  
luscious blues, purples and reds,  
I don't fear thorns  
or bees that sting,  
just give me sugar and wax  
and I'm off on a chase  
to find berries.

Berries hide under leaves,  
grow deep inside branches,  
higher up than my hands can reach,  
ripe berries heavy on the vine  
load down branches  
and mix in the tall grass,  
hidden jewels for the finding.

I pick berries to remember Lou,  
fill my pail to overflowing,  
wash off leaf bits and visiting ants  
and recapture the sun of summer,  
pour it into a jar or pie shell.  
Lou may be gone  
but she's in the kitchen with me,  
now she is my shadow.

*Helen Patrice*

## **Eclipse**

For days the newspapers rambled:  
upcoming eclipse, most visible from Melbourne,  
come see, come see.  
Astronomers and eclipse chasers flocked  
from around the world.  
10am: nothing different.  
Sun here, Moon there.  
My mother doubted it would happen.  
Only hours to go, she said,  
and there's nothing special about today.  
It probably won't happen.  
She got on with napping.  
2pm, Sun and Moon close,  
yet traffic still honked,  
the cat miaowed, wanting food.  
2.51pm.  
The Moon slid into place  
in front of the Sun.  
Birds silent, the Earth darkened,  
dust hung in the air.  
Mum started from her sleep,  
looked out the window, slept again.  
I dared rush outside,  
look up, and see what might burn my eyes out.  
Flaming corona around a black Moon.  
The world could have ended,  
I would not have cared.  
I stood in eclipse,  
knowing my mother could be wrong.

*Mary Stike*

### **The Hit Songs of 1953**

The back door stood open all the day,  
wispy breezes passing in through the screen  
and rushing across the kitchen floor.  
My mother might be in the basement cool  
doing laundry, upstairs straightening bedrooms  
or sitting with a cup of coffee  
on the back steps.

Our kitchen was awash  
with Arthur Godfrey or the soaps on the radio.  
I was napping but still able to hear  
the consistent hum of her latest favorite song,  
*The Tennessee Waltz* or Perry Como's  
*Don't Let the Stars Get in Your Eyes*.

Her music was a promise of a good day,  
a loving blanket pulled carefully  
up and over my sleepy self.

Her routine of joy held me,  
furrowed deep and unmoving,  
an anchor that I would never lose.  
I still do my morning chores  
with the radio on, singing,  
an echo of her contented essence,  
strong and sweet and pretty.

She passed her star to my eye,  
the eye she shaped to see the world.  
I hear her songs with the scent of lilacs,  
oil soap or line-dried cotton clothes;  
I breathe deeply and  
feel her presence in the legion  
of mothers we all carry.

*Anne Whitehouse*

## **My Last Spring in my House and Garden**

I planted my sanctuary  
for a future I will not see —  
where I lived for 35 years,  
where I'd hoped to grow old.

I sit motionless under the trees  
and watch my blossoms falling  
and bruising on the ground.

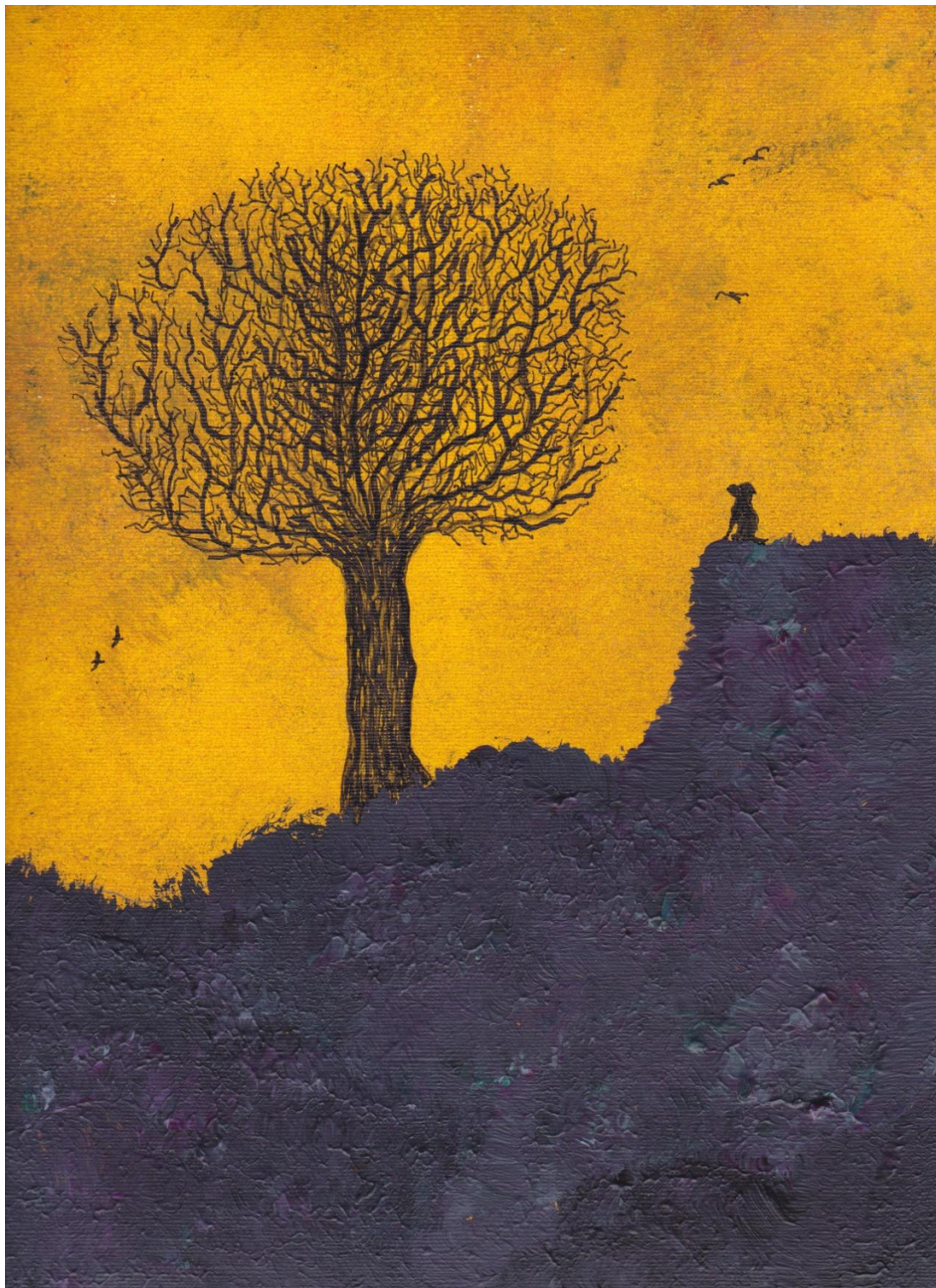
If I could, I would slip  
into the soil like a buried seed.  
Instead I am being blown far,  
far away — I, who always  
clung so close to home.

When he walked out of the marriage,  
it was as if lightning struck our oak,  
splitting it in half, not cleanly,  
but with spikes and jagged edges.

No more soaring trunk,  
no more roots in this fertile earth,  
watered by my tears,  
sparkling in the spring sun.

*W. Jack Savage*

**Autumn**



*Laura Sobbott Ross*

## **Trees**

You'll notice it in a way  
that makes you catch your breath  
at the window, where you might be  
licking an envelope, or folding laundry —  
doubling the gym socks into a soft knot  
the size of your own heart. More

predictable than weather, those trees,  
the familiar perimeter of your existence.  
Meristem and bud. Small voices  
loft and tangle there in the atmosphere  
of leaf. Mitosis, a word that sounds like  
something un-sleeved with doves & smoke,  
not the way trees and children grow.

You wonder if they'll notice the trees  
before the vanishing point of the horizon.  
When they've gone without looking up  
through the broken clouds of autumn,  
across the same shadows they once passed  
through on bikes and in yellow buses,

the trees will remain, a stoic presence  
betrayed only by wind and birdsong.  
You breathe — a symbiotic universe  
exchanging sighs. Do you feel them  
leaning in? The years, a thicker want?  
Your tipped equilibrium of elements gone  
earth-heavy. Inside, all you have embraced —

a circumference of rudimentary ripples,  
histories scored in a graph of echoes.  
You'll mark your days in lengths of shadow,  
your seasons in what loosens and returns.



*Kurt Knudsen*

## **Consecrated Hand**



## ***Our Bodies a Text, a Holy Narration***

**By**

**Krisanne Hastings Knudsen**

*Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.*

*—Isaiah 49:16*

If you are a mother, you know that nurturing a child is physical, earth-bound work. It will ache and stretch and bloody all who respond to its calling. These sacrifices of motherhood are written onto our bodies. Our babies imprint their wants onto our flesh. The needs of our children are made tangible in our bones, backs, and feet.



When I lie down at night, I take an inventory of my body from top to toe. I read the notes of my baby's demands as they are written onto the angles of my anatomy.

Ezra is graven on the soles of my feet. I feel him there with each step. His natural need to be lifted high, held, and hugged with each bump and bruise is archived in my aching arches and calloused heels. My chipped red toe nail polish narrates an attempt at normality that is as earnest and as imperfect as my daily mothering. The dirt beneath my toes is itself a story about our front lawn forays and backyard roaming--our small but significant journeys outward.

Ezra is graven in my back. I feel him there, down low. That quiet ache in my spine that comes from lifting him up and setting him down and lifting him up again speaks of his need to be an explorer, experiencing this brave new world from all vantage points including the safety of my arms, the back seat of the car, the plastic orange bench of the grocery cart, and the padded frame of his stroller. All day I mimic the arch of an elephant's trunk, swinging high and then low, high and then low. That is how we move as mothers to meet the needs of our adventuring offspring.

Ezra is graven in my eyes. I see him there and note how he has changed my vision. My mother eyes are more focused, quicker, always alert for any and all hypothetical hazards that could befall my baby. The bags upon which they rest are bigger, revealing the realities of late nights and early mornings. But my eyes are also brighter and wider, as they continually bear witness to the unanticipated joys of raising a child--a sneeze, a sideways smile, an uninhibited squeal.

At the end of my evening's inventory, I decide on this:

Our mothering bodies are a text. They not only speak of the daily necessities of nurturing, but are of themselves a holy narration. From pregnancy to birth to lactation to child rearing, our female bodies preach the gospel of consecration. They testify of our solitary sacrifices, well-meaning messes, and pungent pains and proclaim them acceptable tithes and offerings upon the altar. Our weathered, stretch-marked bodies affirm that physical transformations are partner and precursor to spiritual transcendence. They are our temples and our testimonies. They are this truth writ large: God has graven us upon the palms of His hands, and in motherhood we have graven Him upon the palms of ours.

## *Page Turner*

*\*Photo Credit Ron Bailey*

### **Workbench**



\*Recreation of 1920's Chicago satin wedding gown. Turner's work honors the high art of domestic skills and is a reflection of femininity. Her delicate sculptures are sewn and constructed entirely by hand, using heirlooms, preserved animal parts, domestic tools, and sacred objects.

*Emily Bilman*

## **Kouros**

You are the youth of the sun,  
That fiery disc of abundance, yet,

Mutating, you turn away from Time,  
Kouros, constantly seeking a second youth.

Too much was expected from  
Your strong legs, your long neck,

Your ample curly hair. Your statues were  
Offered as trophies to athletes in marathons.

Like the north star, your gait points  
To an ever-lasting youth, yet, ever

Changing, you steer away from pain,  
Constantly seeking eternal youth, Kouros

You're reluctant to burn your wings,  
Flying close to the sun, unlike Icarus.

# *The Future Legend of How Rising Seas Drowned Saint Augustine and its Famous Statue*

By

Kaye Linden

The first grain of sand to go slipped unnoticed into the muddy seawater and a high tide washed a small chunk from the base of Ponce de Leon's statue. Three teenage boys waded to the town plaza, climbed to the top of Ponce's helmeted head and practiced kissing his cold lips, slapping his face when Ponce didn't kiss back, and hanging upside down from the old head that bowed in shame at the youthful play. Perhaps Ponce felt jealous of young muscles and flexible limbs, or of the strength to climb statues and throw popcorn and peanuts from his slumped unyoung shoulders. He never did find the fountain, and with the Atlantic tide rising, rising, rising, his steel-boots sucked down further, awash in brine. The boys knew, and Ponce knew, he was going under. Each evening the boys chopped off a finger, a thumb, a toe and the middle finger of the right hand became a tool to gouge out an eye, graffiti the shiny armor with she loves me, she loves me not, and scratch mud daubers and wasps from Ponce's ears. They cut off one earlobe with the sawing up and down, down and up motion of a hacksaw, laughing at the crumbling little man as he lost one appendage at a time. The boys removed the mighty sword from the gallant gentleman and toppled his head with the blade in a decapitation celebration, the step-by-step ritual of taking a great warrior down. Water washed over Ponce's knees while grains of stone fell away from the foundation in greater and greater chunks until Ponce leaned over upside down, headless shoulders standing in water. One evening, the boys stretched out drunk, across the rubble, across the broken fingers and toes, over the scraps of Ponce's heroic eyes, those eyes that once upon a time surveyed the fertile flowering of La Florida where surely his immortality lay.

The water rose and rose and rose during the hurricane of 2019, a category six travesty, off the grid, never before witnessed, never before seen by the boys who drowned that night, never before seen by the city of Saint Augustine that drowned that night, never before seen by Ponce de Leon, whose hopes for a bright future drowned that night in rising seas.

\*Newspaper article that inspired the prose poem: "Sea Rise Threatens Florida Coast but No Plan." The Gainesville Sun 11 May 2015, 298th ed.: n. pag. Web [www.gainesville.com](http://www.gainesville.com).

*Edilson A. Ferreira*

### **Three Roads**

*On "Wheat Field with Crows," last painting of Van Gogh.*

The fullness of a golden wheat field is crowned  
by a flock of dark birds in its migratory fly away.  
The health and vigor of the landscape contrasts  
with the menace of a cloudy and stormy sky,  
which does not prevent the birds' journey.  
They bring by birth its right route  
and are the owners of the sky.  
Poor humans do not fly and are always doubting  
their choice of the three roads Van Gogh has painted.  
We are the owners of the earth and its richness,  
but we have little of the crows' sense.

*Ayendy Bonifacio*

**Turbines for Derek Walcott**



*Jessica Lindsley*

## **The Inheritance**

Long after humans are gone  
Long after their animal urges are quenched underground  
Long after the last of the bones of the species is leaching calcium  
Back into the dust it sprang from  
Long after humans cease their tyranny  
And are consumed in the bowels of the earth  
The robots are still singing their hymns to the fields  
The robots are still toiling with the plow and the sickle  
They grow weary of stockpiling the leaves for the rotting  
They tell myths in darkness of the origins of their imperative  
They grow eager for retirement, that blankness  
Before refurbishment, before reassignment  
Circuits consumed by corrosion, impulses slowing  
No peace like the robots chanting their binary lullabies at dusk  
And surrendering finally to a sleep with no dreams  
Nothing in the world like peace of mind knowing eternal silence.

*Michael Keshigian*

### **The Silent Poet**

In the beginning it must have been  
that the Neanderthal  
emerged from his cave  
early one day  
into a cold and ruthless world

and noticed for the first time  
sun's reflection glistening  
upon lake's surface serenity  
between twin peaks  
of a snow covered summit.

And speechless  
as he might have been  
for images never seen,  
he fell to his knees  
and stared mutely,

unable to excise  
the swell in his soul,  
realizing  
each morning thereafter  
would speak differently.



*Lisa Cook*

**Morning in the Vineyard**



*Michael Keshigian*

## **A Sign of Spring**

White light infiltrates darkness  
beneath the window shade  
a few minutes earlier each morning  
and its assaultive manner  
marks the celestial revolution  
against those January dawns  
that bid us drink  
another hour's worth  
of indulgent gray sleep.

Behind those shades  
on roads laden with salt  
next to the matted lawns  
of brown and green patch  
over the stripped branches and naked twigs  
and upon mud soaked driveways  
this light seeks out corners  
of winter darkness  
with an urgency that beckons

a healing of inflicted scars  
that frigid days and ice cleave.  
And as Earth's ugliness is exposed  
like the inappropriate starkness of lion cubs  
devouring their prey  
we stare  
despite its disagreeable nature  
to imagine again  
the magnificence that will come.

## *Michael Pendragon*

### **Pilgrim Summer**

When marigolds cast miniature suns,  
Fleck Appollonian fields with burnished gold  
Where bluebells bob and dandelions lunge  
At Summer bees when budding leaves unfold  
Julyean resplendence, green as lizard eyes  
Or lunar moths on apple orchard bough;  
While choruses of laughing birds reprise  
The carefree bray of horses when the plough  
Hangs cobweb-riddled on the stable wall --  
Then do I take the dusted country road  
Through rambling towns whose names I can't recall  
Hewn from the pilgrim trees in days of old  
That journeyed west to watch the sun descend  
Beneath the grand Pacific's crested wave --  
Nor do I care what lies beyond the bend  
Or 'neath which patch of sky I'll make my grave.

When catfish splash the cedar-scented creek  
And junebugs speck each violet and vine  
'Round secret ponds where painted turtles seek  
Some sunpatched perch the overhanging pine  
Has overlooked when spreading thistled shade  
In shredded blankets cool as April night --  
I roam in barefoot splendor through the glade  
Send wayward stanzas bursting with delight  
On robin wings to touch the gold-rimmed clouds --  
The lazy road meanders by a grove  
Where acorn trees swap tales with spruce, while proud  
And mighty oak and elder prove  
The wisdom of an afternoon's repose  
When thoughts suspend and sunburned hours plod,  
Then only the blue-flanneled scarecrow knows  
That 'mid these scrolling hills once walked a god.

*Lynn Otto*

## **A Piece of Knitting Pantoum**

Cast off: to remove [stitches] from a knitting needle in such a way as to prevent unraveling. (Merriam-Webster)

Each piece, when finished, is cast off  
Each stitch passes over another  
Bit by bit, picked up, slipped off  
A daughter is taught by her mother

Each stitch passing over some other  
Makes a chain on the edge of something warm  
The daughter then teaches another  
The last takes the end and holds it firm

This chain on the edge of something warm  
Holds onto the work of repeated rows  
The last takes the end and holds it firm  
How long it will hold, nobody knows

Hold fast the work of repeated rows  
Bit by bit, picked up, slipped off  
How long it can hold, nobody knows  
Each piece is finished and then cast off.

*Anne Whitehouse*

## **At the Ocean**

A soft breeze blows  
through my baggy clothes,  
awakening my skin like a lover.  
Every leaf and blade of grass  
is in motion,  
every nodding wildflower  
beckons me to the cove,  
where the sea washes over the rocks,  
and the wet sand is printed  
with the tracks of waterbirds.

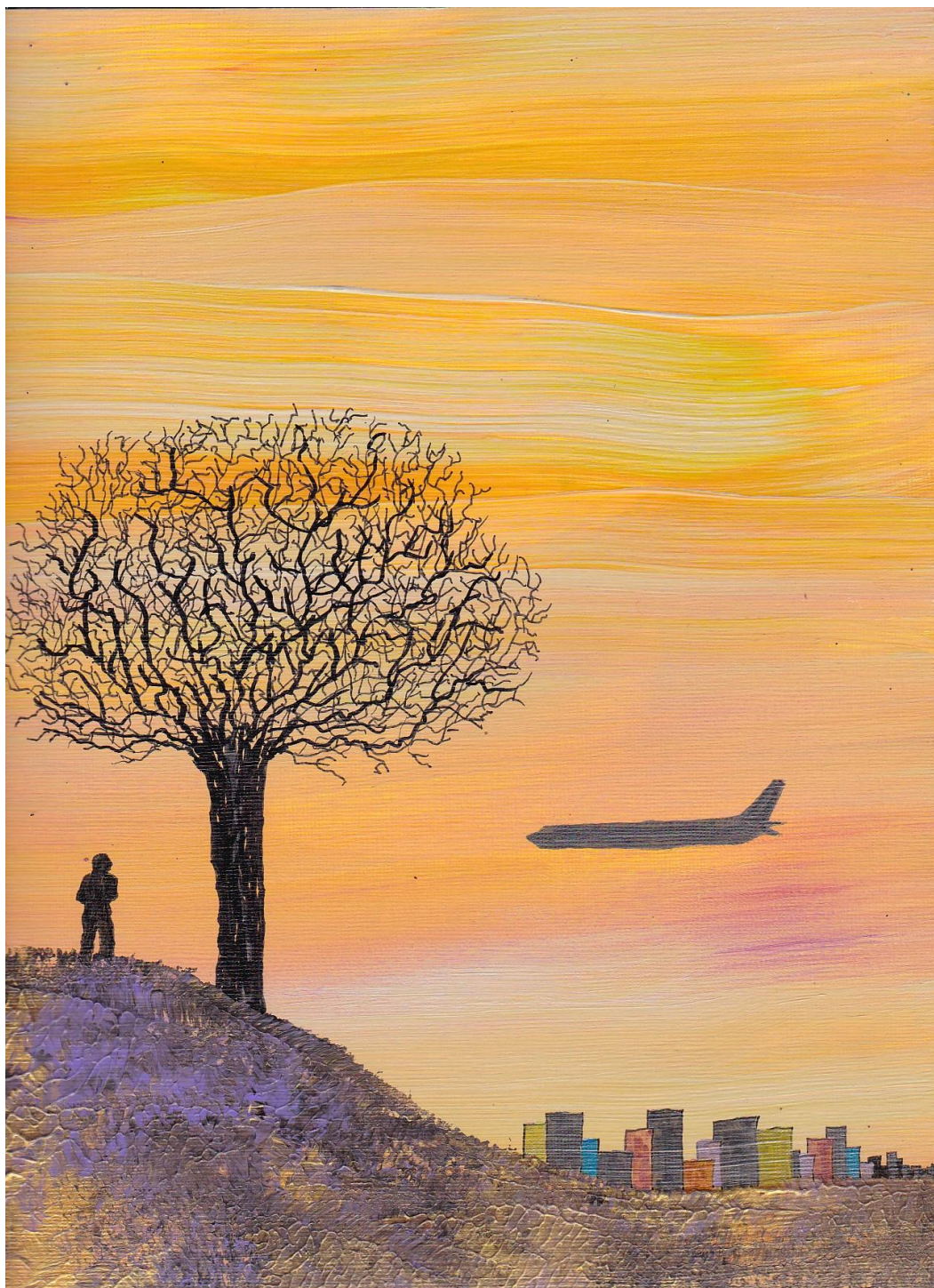
The tide is coming in,  
and I am almost too late to swim out  
to the rock I have always swum to—  
carpeted with soft seaweeds,  
purple and green, that I hold onto  
like Rapunzel's hair, and climb  
until I stand up free in the air  
as the day I was born.

Soon the rock will be buried  
in the dark sea.  
But I find my balance,  
grip the seaweeds with my toes,  
while the cold water washes  
over my ankles and splashes my shins.



*W. Jack Savage*

**Waiting for Someday**



## Contributor Biographies

### Emily Bilman

Dr. Emily Bilman is London's Poetry Society Stanza representative and hosts poetry meetings and seminars in her home in Geneva. Her poetry book in French is entitled *La rivière de soi*, came out. Poems are published in *The London Magazine*, *Hunger Mountain*, *Offshoots VII & XII*, *Orbis*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *Iodine*, and *The San Diego Annual 2014*, *Aois 21 Annual* in America and *The Inspired Heart Vols. 1 & 2, & 3*, and *Ygdrasil* in Canada. Two academic books, *The Psychodynamics of Poetry* and *Modern Ekphrasis* were published in 2010 and 2013. Her most recent poetry books are *A Woman By A Well* and *Resilience*. The reviews can be read on the Troubador/Matador UK website and on <http://www.mciwritershouse.com/emily-bilman.html>

### Ayendy Bonifacio

Ayendy Bonifacio is an English PhD student at The Ohio State University with a focus on nineteenth-century periodical culture and poetry. He teaches poetry and writing composition to undergraduates and practices photography part-time. His poems and book reviews have been featured and are forthcoming in *The Journal: A Literary Magazine*, *The Olivetree Review*, *The Rocky Mountain Review*, *Qué Pasa*, *OSU*, *The Syzygy Poetry Journal*, *Odd Ball Poetry Magazine*, and recently in *Juked Poetry*.

### Carl Boon

A native Ohioan, Carl Boon lives and works in Izmir, Turkey. His poems appear in dozens of magazines, most recently *Two Thirds North*, *Jet Fuel Review*, *Blast Furnace*, and the *Kentucky Review*.

### Ingrid Bruck

Ingrid Bruck is a poet/storyteller/retired library director. Her current work has appeared in *Topography*, *Panopoly* and *Yellow Chair Review*. She lives in Amish country in Pennsylvania. Nature and its cycles inspire much of her writing. She is a member of The International Women's Writing Guild and a charter member of The Avocado Sisterhood.

### Yuan Changming

Yuan Changming, 8-time Pushcart nominee and author of 5 chapbooks, grew up in rural China, became an ESL student at 19, and published monographs on translation

before moving to Canada. With a PhD in English, Yuan currently edits *Poetry Pacific* with Allen Yuan in Vancouver, and has poetry appearing in *Best Canadian Poetry* (2009,12,14), *BestNewPoemsOnline*, *Threepenny Review* and 1089 others across 37 countries.

## **Lisa Cook**

Lisa Cook is co-owner of 4e Winery near Fargo, North Dakota, where the ever-changing prairie landscape inspires her to share its beauty with others through her photos. Lisa and her husband, Greg, opened 4e Winery in July of 2015 and love to welcome visitors to their century-old farmstead to enjoy North Dakota wine and experience the magic of the North Dakota prairie.

## **Bridget Gage-Dixon**

Bridget Gage-Dixon's work has appeared most recently in *Section8* journal and has been included in the past in several journals including *Poet Lore*, *New York Quarterly*, and *Cortland Review*.

## **J. Ellington**

J. Ellington is an essayist who enjoys tending her houseplants, walking next to rivers and trying out new Thai food restaurants. She currently lives next to mountains in Utah and plans to stay for at least another year before moving on to explore some other patch of the world, writing essays all along the way.

## **Edilson A. Ferreira**

Mr. Ferreira is a Brazilian poet who writes in English rather than Portuguese. Recent works have appeared in *Red Wolf Journal*, *Subterranean Blue*, *Snapdragon*, *Right Hand Pointing*, *Whispers*, *Indiana Voice Journal*, *The Lake*, *The Provo Canyon*, *Synesthesia*, *Every Day Poems*, *Dead Snakes*, among others. Ferreira lives in a small town with wife, three sons and a granddaughter and, unhurried, is collecting his works for a forthcoming book.

## **John Grey**

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in *New Plains Review*, *Perceptions* and the anthology, *No Achilles*, with work upcoming in *Big Muddy Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Coal City Review* and *Spoon River Poetry Review*.



## **Michael Keshigian**

Michael Keshigian's tenth poetry collection, *Beyond* was released in May, 2015 by Black Poppy. Other published books and chapbooks: *Dark Edges*, *Eagle's Perch*, *Wildflowers*, *Jazz Face*, *Warm Summer Memories*, *Silent Poems*, *Seeking Solace*, *Dwindling Knight*, *Translucent View*. Published in numerous national and international journals, he is a 6- time Pushcart Prize and 2-time Best Of The Net nominee. His poetry cycle, *Lunar Images*, set for Clarinet, Piano, Narrator, was premiered at Del Mar College in Texas. Subsequent performances occurred in Boston (Berklee College) and Moletto, Italy. *Winter Moon*, a poem set for Soprano and Piano, premiered in Boston. ([michaelkeshigian.com](http://michaelkeshigian.com)).

## **Krisanne Hastings Knudsen**

Krisanne has a BA in Art History and Curatorial Studies from Brigham Young University and an MA in the History of Art from the University of York, England. She has worked in the education departments of several art museums including the Portland Art Museum and The Brigham Young University Museum of Art. Krisanne writes for the Mormon Women Project, runs an arts education blog called The Making Table, and writes to clarify her own thoughts at [eventhebeetle.com](http://eventhebeetle.com). Krisanne lives in American Fork, Utah, with her design savvy husband and two delicious baby boys.

## **Kurt Knudsen**

Kurt Knudsen is a fiber, glass, and metal artist who makes decorative stained glass stars and religious artworks. His wife, Becky, an artist and the other half of Piggy and Dirt, creates with him in Saratoga Springs, Utah. You can find their ethereal artworks on Etsy: <https://www.etsy.com/people/KurtKnudsen>.

## **Randel McCraw Helms**

Randel McCraw Helms was a professor of English at Arizona State University until his recent retirement. Now he devotes himself full time to his lifelong secret vice, making poems.

## **Kaye Linden**

Kaye holds an MFA in fiction from the Whidbey Island Writers Workshop and is currently studying for an MFA in poetry at Lindenwood University in Saint Louis. She is current poetry editor, past short fiction editor and general editor with the *Bacopa Literary Review*, teacher of short fiction at Santa Fe College, assistant editor for *Soundings Review*, previous judge for *Spark Anthology*, and past medical editor for "e-present learning lecture reviews." Kaye's published books include *Prasanga in the Underground World*, *Tales*

from *Ma's Watering Hole*, *Ten Thousand Miles from Home*, and *35 Tips for Writing a Brilliant Flash Story*, available on all book sites. Visit Kaye at [www.kayelinden.com](http://www.kayelinden.com)

## **Jessica Lindsley**

Jessica Lindsley is a writer and artist who grew up in North Dakota before the oil boom made it well known. Her work has recently appeared in *Literary Orphans*, *Walking Is Still Honest Poetry Press*, and *The Menacing Hedge*, among others.

## **Lynn Otto**

Lynn Otto is a freelance copy editor and webinar instructor. Her publications include poems in *Hartskill Review*, *Raleigh Review*, *Centrifugal Eye*, *Strong Verse*, *Triggerfish Critical Review*, and *Winged: New Writing on Bees*. She holds an MFA from Portland State University and calls Oregon home.

## **Helen Patrice**

Helen Patrice is an Australian writer living in Melbourne. She works with poetry, fiction, memoir, and non-fiction. She is currently working on a memoir. Her books are: *A WOMAN OF MARS* (poetry), *PALAEONTOLOGY FOR BEGINNERS* (poetry), and *SHE TOO* (poetry, in collaboration).

## **Michael Pendragon**

Michael Pendragon is an American writer, poet, editor, and publisher currently residing in upstate New York. He is best known for having published a pair of literary magazines: "Penny Dreadful" and "Songs of Innocence & Experience" (1996-2005). His published works include: *Much of Madness* - a novel; "Into the Night" - collected poetic works (1980-2010). His writings have appeared in "Terror Tales," "Edgar: Digested Verse," "Enigmatic Tales," "Charnel House," "The Bloody Quill," "The Horror Zene," "Sanitarium," and over 200 others.

## **Laura Sobbot Ross**

Laura Sobbot Ross teaches at Lake Technical College in central Florida, and has worked as a writing coach for Lake County Schools. Her writing appears in the *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Blackbird*, *The Florida Review*, *Calyx*, *The Columbia Review*, *Natural Bridge*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Cold Mountain Review*, and many others. She won The Ledge Poetry Award 2013. Her chapbook, *A Tiny Hunger*, was the winner of the Seventh Annual YellowJacket Press Chapbook Contest for Florida Poets, and she has a chapbook, *My Mississippi*, forthcoming from Anchor & Plume Press. She has been nominated three

times for a Pushcart Prize.

## **W. Jack Savage**

W. Jack Savage is a retired broadcaster and educator. He is the author of seven books including *Imagination: The Art of W. Jack Savage* ([wjacksavage.com](http://wjacksavage.com)). To date, more than fifty of Jack's short stories and over six-hundred of his paintings and drawings have been published worldwide. Jack and his wife Kathy live in Monrovia, California.

## **Paul Stansbury**

Paul Stansbury is a life long native of Kentucky. Now retired, he lives in Danville, Kentucky. He frequently reads his work in public. His poetry has appeared in *Kentucky Monthly* and has been accepted for an upcoming issue of *Rising Phoenix Review*. His stories have appeared in the anthologies, *Brief Grislys*, published by Apocryphile Press, *Neo-Legends To Last A Deathtime* published by KY Story, and *Frightening* published by SEZ Publishing. His work has also appeared in a variety of on-line publications.

## **Mary Stike**

Mary Imo-Stike identifies as an American Indian, and a feminist. She worked "non-traditional" jobs as a rail worker, construction plumber, boiler operator and gas line inspector. Now retired from work-life, she obtained an MFA in Poetry from West Virginia Wesleyan College in 2015, and is currently the poetry co-editor of *HeartWood Literary Magazine*. Her work has been published in *Antietam Review*, *Phoebe*, *The Pikeville Review*, *Appalachian Heritage* and *Cactus Heart*.

## **Anne Whitehouse**

Anne Whitehouse is the author of five poetry collections– *The Surveyor's Hand*, *Blessings and Curses*, *Bear in Mind*, *One Sunday Morning*, and *The Refrain*. A sixth collection, *Meteor Shower*, is forthcoming from Dos Madres Press. She is a winner of the 2015 Nazim Hikmet poetry prize, and her poem "Calligraphies" won the 2016 *Songs of Eretz* poetry prize. Her novel *Fall Love* will be published in Spanish translation as *Amigos y amantes* in 2016 by Mundi Books. [www.annewhitehouse.com](http://www.annewhitehouse.com)

## **Page Turner**

Roanoke based artist, Page Turner has exhibited widely in Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Washington, DC, and in Los Angeles. She was the cover artist for *Exponent II – Publishing the Experiences of Mormon Women since 1974*, and has been featured in six issues of *Studio Visit Magazine*, published as Emerging Artist in *Art Galleries & Artists of*

*the South* magazine, featured in *Artemis: Artist and Writers of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Beyond*, her work showcased in Artist Watch on Escape into Life blog, and other media. Turner shares an art studio with her husband, Zephren deep in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia. The two stay busy with fine art creation and film prop and set production, Page Turner Studios never has a clean floor.

## **Mantz Yorke**

Mantz Yorke lives in Manchester, England. His poems have appeared in a number of print magazines, anthologies and e-magazines in the UK, Ireland, the US and Hong Kong.