

# *Young Ravens Literary Review*



Issue 8  
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*Summer 2018*

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## *Introduction*

In a world in a constant state of flux, how do we find our center? It might be in the busy hum of the bee sipping a hard day's sweat from our skin, or even the gentle hiss of sprinklers.

Sometimes we lose the center as reality crashes into the circle of our being and overwhelms all we are. The accidental murder of another living creature, the agonizing loss of a cherished new child, life, death and change continually challenge our endurance.

At other times our center might take the form of a physical sanctuary, a memory, or the momentary chance for feet to reclaim a rainbow of shoes that once belonged to a beloved late mother.

Perhaps, in the end, the center lies in all the beautiful intangibles worth reaching for, worth marveling over even as we must, at length, let them go —

*Barbara A. Meier*

## **The Raven at Riley Creek**

The raven comes to school everyday at 1:15  
to peruse the pea gravel for kindergarten snacks:  
a pretzel bite here, granola crumbs there,  
goldfish that have never seen the sea.

He perches, because that's what passorines do.  
His raison eyes intent on prey.  
He's not come to learn or play.  
He comes to dine with the children.

He's the watchman on the baseball backstop,  
with his dark licorice wedge of a tail.  
Predator. Prophet. Performer.  
He is the mediator between work and play.

He knows cause and effect and when to forage.  
Cawing and croaking, convincing the children  
to spare him a "soupçon" which they surely wouldn't miss.  
Making promises with a wink and a shrug.

He's the trickster who's not always kind.  
I watch him as I do my recess duty.  
His shaggy sooty feathers ruffle in the wind.  
"Really, why are we here? I query him.

To work? To play? To dine on crumbs of numbers  
and letters? Predicting with data? Preying on funds,  
and performing on computer screens?  
There is no mediation for the children.

They are the fragments of a society  
let out to play before they mold away  
in crummy classrooms, with dirty floors  
and broken monkey bars.

The raven and I dine on such data as this-  
bonny eyes, cracker crumbs,  
and child hair to build a nest.

The wind rustles in the trees overhead,

you caw out your name as the bell rings,  
and glancing back to the empty playground

I see you hopping on your two feet.

You leave me with a wink, and a cracker in your beak.



*Meg Freer*

**Balance, Glacier Park**



## *Andrea Wolper*

### **Confluence**

And how did Philip Levine get in my head?  
And how is it that I opened the book to the page where he wrote exactly  
the words I've been struggling to find?  
About how every day I look at the mountain and how the mere act of seeing it, it...

—and you see, this is where Philip Levine succeeds, and I fail.

No matter that he was writing of the Diablos  
and I the Sangre de Cristos—  
Now, there's a funny confluence:  
The Devils and the Blood of Christ—

they are mountains, that's all  
neither demons nor saints  
they endure in their silence  
in their silence they endure  
they have watched the invaders  
who brought them their names  
come and go, come and stay,  
stood silent and sure above  
beauty and chaos  
beauty and chaos

These silent mountains!  
They just endure.  
They remain.  
*They don't care.*

And still I spend my brief time struggling, searching for a few significant words.



## *Andrea Wolper*

### **Needles**

My right hand wears a crown of thorns  
My left foot the headdress of a warrior  
I think of a picture I've seen,  
a Hopi figure; it isn't Kokopelli  
though there's flute music here –  
it's meant to be soothing.  
I prefer silence.

From my hands, feet, ears  
left calf, right arm,  
third eye, crown chakra –  
the needles go about their job  
rewiring, clearing, balancing,  
triggering images,  
waking dreams, memories.  
My freshman creative writing teacher  
A sudden flash of Ganesh  
The chlorine smell of my  
childhood pool, and me  
holding my breath, pushing down, down, down  
to touch the bottom with my hand

The last time I had acupuncture  
My father died, the same day

To my left, a woman snores  
under her blanket. It wakes  
her from her dreamy travels.  
She turns her head toward me  
and asks the time. Her eyes  
look like my grandmother's eyes.  
A man comes in and lies down  
on the table across the room.  
A slender woman coughs; she seems

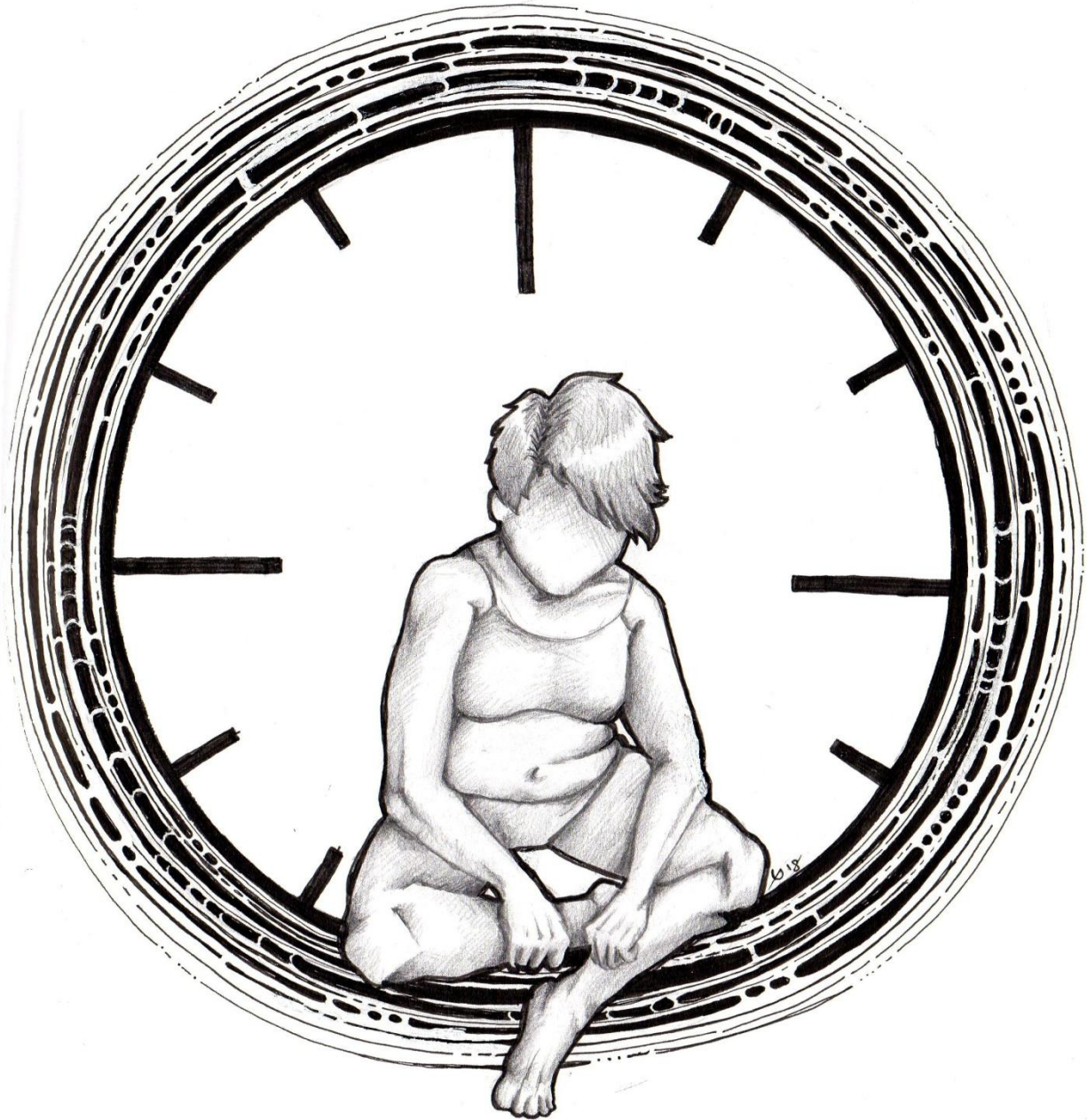
not quite bird, not quite bull,  
and reminds me of no one.  
The man waits patiently for the doctor.

We all want so much to be healed.

My right hand wears a crown of thorns  
My left foot the headdress of a warrior.

*Emily Warzeniak*

Patience



## *Emily Warzeniak*

### **Bread Broke**

Bread Broke  
It is penitence for the sinner  
To love themselves,  
And the body is easily broken,  
Distributed with holy wine  
And all the indulgence  
Of Salvation immemorial.  
And thus I prayed,  
I spoke,  
As the rise and fall of my chest  
mimicked the temperature,  
Break bread, girl.  
Break bread, girl.  
Blessings and prayer offered  
Over what had once been my seed.

I am but the grain of my fields,  
The chaff I tossed to the wind,  
I am the oil well,  
And ink runs in my blood.  
Give us this day our daily penitence,  
That we may suffocate in our regret forever.  
Eat this proverb as sustenance,  
As the bread, girl.  
Break your bones  
To free the breath inside.  
Grind the mill,  
The grain,  
Knead the temple,  
Snap open the stalk  
And inside the marrow lies,  
Inside the sap sweet,  
The bitter fiber resides there.  
Break bread, girl.

Plate of earth,  
Salt of the form,  
Form of the mountains,  
Girl,  
Never forget  
The power in your movements,  
The solid gold of your fluids,  
That blood,  
The sun,  
The wind of your whisper,  
They all pulse for you.  
Those failures,  
These flaws,  
Build your empire.  
They are steps,  
And stones in your surface,  
Climb.  
Build.  
Lift.  
Be.  
Begin again as if you are new,  
Everything they told you never to be,  
To look for,  
To see.  
Grace  
Is not always perfect in execution,  
Mercy  
Is not always kind,  
Holiness  
Is not always clean.



*Parul Gupta*

**Dusk till Dawn**





*Robert Beveridge*

## **Holding Your Hand**

In the rose-garden  
behind your house  
I hold your hand.

On the trellis before us  
roses intertwined  
keep the light out.

It is warm in here,  
and deep, so I can  
not see you

but I know you are here  
by the pressure of your hand  
and the scent of your perfume.

## *Chris Stolle*

### **Waysides**

Stack books  
vertically  
to suffocate them.

Use square bottles  
to bend light  
toward photosynthesis.

Turn Dali and Picasso  
counterclockwise  
to unlock their meaning.

Gaze downward  
to find what stars  
have left behind.

Remember to follow  
these words  
to the letter.

*Maria Pascualy*

**Pushing Through**



# Tumbling Through the Afterlife

*By*

*Daanish Jamal*

Whenever I'm overwhelmed, I flick a switch in my head, and the world transforms before me. Instead of seeing an attractive receptionist with the reflection of a computer screen in her brown eyes, what I see are colorful distinct molecules. Trillions of brilliant, vibrating beads. They are dynamic, electric, with all sorts of little rivers and exchanges. I look at my hands and see these beads evolving, constantly replenishing according to a biological rhythm I can't quite explain. When I see this, I remember that I am indistinguishable from my surroundings. I am exactly where I am supposed to be.

"He's ready for you." The receptionist stands up and directs me towards an empty conference room. She flashes a distracted smile, as if she's preoccupied with the contents of the page open on her computer. The offices of this Silicon Valley venture capital firm have recently been remodeled. It looks elegant, yet the sleek curves and wood panels still manage to hint at the company's history.

I try not to get nervous. The logos of their most successful companies line the walls. They look like hieroglyphs, telling the story of technology's last fifty years. This is my final interview at a prestigious firm I never expected I would have the chance to work at. I take some deep breaths and stare out the window at Highway 280. I

know some twenty-five miles south, there are three grandparents sitting in our house in Cupertino, waiting to hear from me. My grandfather, Ba, is probably wearing some retro Reebok sneakers, pacing up and down the block with his arms folded behind his back. His wife, Nani, is probably dressed in a *kameez shalwar*, already drinking her third cup of chai, watching her husband through the kitchen window, and reciting a prayer under her breath. My other grandmother, Amma, is much older than the other two. She's probably making fun of them both, laughing to herself because she knows we have no control over what happens in this life.

The door opens, and Alan Ericsson walks in. He looks shorter in real life than he does in his interviews, but he's wearing the same iconic round glasses. He extends his hand.

"Hi, I'm Alan. I've been looking forward to meeting you, Hakim." Already I like him more than the partners I've met at the other firms. It only takes a second to know.

I think back to my last interview. In a San Francisco high rise, one partner asked me a brainteaser, "there are five pirates looking to split one-hundred gold coins..." At first I thought he was kidding, but I managed to answer the question. Even still, I didn't get the job.

We go through the pleasantries. Alan asks me who I am, where I grew up, where I went to school, why I studied biology. Cupertino, Columbia, because I wanted to be like my high school teacher who I admire.

I ask him why he works in venture capital. He looks away and thinks about it. I like that he cares to be thoughtful.

“Same reason you studied biology. Someone I admire told me it’s a good idea. I guess we all just want to be respected by the people we respect.”

He asks me what investment areas I’m most interested in. I tell him about the intersection of computer science and biology. I tell him about how “we have the technology to precisely edit genes so our children don’t inherit our diseases...”

This is the easy part for me. This is what I’ve rehearsed, and it calms me down to hear so many words come out of my mouth. “...we can use computational drug discovery to stop aging if we...”

Alan nods along. He is only vaguely intrigued by the content of my speech, which makes me talk faster. I continue through to the grand finale, “and so we can use adaptive therapies to cure illnesses before we even show symptoms.”

He covers his mouth with his fist and pinches his thick eyebrows together. Then he nods his head again. “That all makes sense, Hakim. We’re spending more time looking for opportunities in these areas...” Every time he says my name, I feel my shoulders relax a shade more. He shifts in his seat and picks another direction. He seems to be searching for something.

“When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?”

This question surprises me, but I think it’s a good one. I would usually say



something clever, like architect or detective, but I already know Alan wouldn't care for that.

"It didn't matter that much to me what I would do. I just wanted to be like my grandfather. Not his career just in the way that he's kind and patient and respected. More than that, he's secure in himself, and I think completely at peace. I guess it's less about being like him, and more about feeling like him."

Hours later, I retell this moment to my three grandparents in the backyard of our home.

"And then I told him, I want to be like Ba." My grandfather's lips parted to reveal a wolfish grin underneath his bushy mustache. His teeth are yellow, from all the *paan* he has chewed over the years. Still, they are happy teeth.

Nani is rocking back and forth in her seat. She's looking to her husband's face for reassurance that I said the right things in the interview. She sees his smile, but still isn't sure, so she asks me, "But are you sure that was a good answer? Maybe you should have said you've always wanted to be in business."

Her fear annoys me, and I've spent my whole young life trying to expel whatever piece of it I inherited. This one time though, I have the perfect answer.

"I know it was the right thing to say because when I finished the interview he said, 'Hakim, we'd love to have you come work with us...'"

My grandfather leaps up in his chair, "*Arrey!*"

Nani gives me a hug while praying over my shoulder. Amma, stands nearby and congratulates herself, "Of course they gave you a job, you are my grandson."

...

Ba wakes up at dawn, when the first light spills through his window and rests on his eyelids. He opens his eyes, sits up in bed, and scans the Bay Area mountains through his window. He's had this same morning ritual since he was a boy in Pakistan when he would wake up before his brothers and sisters and gaze at the snowy northern mountains. In the room next door, I am awake too. It turns out there is a genetic basis to our circadian rhythms.

Ba washes his face and puts on an orange wooly sweater that Nani knit for him. He and I each have about fifteen of them in different colors and stitching. He then laces up his old Reeboks, slips out of the house, and begins his walk around the neighborhood.

To me, these morning walks are part of the natural cycle of the Earth itself. The day doesn't start until Ba starts walking, like the Greek god who drives the sun chariot across the sky each day.

Meanwhile, Nani wakes up a half hour later and offers her morning prayers. She goes to the kitchen, boils water for our morning chai, and begins to plan for dinner. She keeps her eye on the window for Ba's return.

Ami is still asleep, drooling a little but laughing, even in her sleep.

I sit at the kitchen table, rifling through presentations of startups looking for their first institutional round of financing. I do my best work here, at this table, cocooned in the decades old routines of my family.

In my first few weeks at Walker Ericsson, I have already reviewed over a hundred companies, and I feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume of analysis I have to complete. Every product is unique, and I don't know how to thoroughly evaluate a new small molecule drug, a clinical data sharing platform, a gene editing company, and a supercharged MRI all in the same day. Worst of all, if I don't think we should invest, I have to reach out to the CEOs of the companies and tell them why. I worry about how they must look at me, an inexperienced twenty-six year old telling them their business is not worth our time.

Ba says, "You don't know what they think. Be honest and direct. All you have is your reputation." He reminds me that this is how he developed a successful real estate business, by being utterly forthright.

I take a deep breath and look at the glass of water in front of me. I see vibrant hydrogen bonds holding together each molecule, and electrons dancing between atoms. I am exactly where I'm supposed to be.

Over dinner, I can't help but tell my grandparents about the most ambitious companies. One evening, between bites of fresh naan and okra, I try to shock them.

"You know I met a company today that wants to upload brains onto a

computer.”

Nani, “Heh?”

Amma, “*Kya bol raha hai?*” What is he saying?

“The company wants to put your brain into a computer.”

“Why my brain?”

“No not you, anyone’s brain. Onto a computer, so you can live forever.”

Ba, “What’s the point of having children then?”

Nani, “How do they do that?”

“Well, they have to pump chemicals into your brain and kill you.”

“Oh, okay. *Chalo...*”

...

I sponsor many companies like this, much less absurd but all looking to address diseases, particularly neurological ones. After one such meeting, Alan shakes his head and says, “Silicon Valley wants to live forever.”

“Is that a bad thing?”

“Well, if you’re dying of brain disease, that means you’re not dying from HIV, malaria, or tuberculosis. Neurological diseases and cancer are a rich country’s problem. Anyway, there’s too much risk in Alzheimer’s companies. Find me something else.”

That’s bluntness I’m sure Ba would appreciate.

I want to tell him that I’m curious about the brain because I everyday I see how

age can warp its functions. Amma is forgetting things. Not just the occasional place or name. She forgets whole days. Our routines have to adapt. Mostly Nani's.

I had Amma tested, and it turns out she is a carrier of the APOE4 allele, which is a risk marker for Alzheimer's. I have it too.

...

There is always drama to our weekly investment team meetings. Before one of the meetings, I sit alone at the long conference table with James Walker, the other senior partner. He's an imposing, heavysset Texan with long slicked back grey hair. We are both quiet, waiting for the others to file in. I play with a groove in the table and think about how I spend too much of my day indoors.

"Hakim, have you ever heard of Jim Mattis?"

I have. I feel uneasy veering into politics. Everyone at our firm is careful to remain outwardly apolitical. He continues,

"He has this quote that I think is just perfect, 'be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet.'"

He smirks and before I have a chance to respond, the other team members file in laughing about some joke made in the hallway.

The ten of us work through a list of twenty companies to decide which ones to pass on, which ones to invest in, and which ones to investigate further. Each one has a sponsor, and all of them have nine skeptics. There's a careful dance to these meetings.

You want to advocate without looking like you've lost objectivity. You want to argue against the sponsor, without making an enemy. Some people just take the side of whatever they think Walker or Ericsson want to hear. And of course there is frequent use of the venture capital tropes which can kill any deal.

"This feels like more of an interesting technology than a company."

"This guy seems like a great founder, but I don't think he's an entrepreneur."

"It seems like a good company, but is this a space where we can really add value?"

"But how big can this really get? Feels like a couple hundred millions dollars, not a billion."

By the end of the four hour session, only a few companies survive. The room is humid and overheated. Sometimes I think I can see steam rising from people's heads, as the whirring gears inside slow to a rest.

...

A year passes like this, in a stream of breakfasts and meetings and evening chai's with my family, and then one morning, Ba doesn't come home from his walk.

Nani knows before anyone else. She claims it is the same supernatural fluttering she felt when my parents passed. The 'good-bye' whispers of an untethered soul, or whatever. I indulge her because part of me wants to believe it too.

The morning he dies, I am reading at the kitchen table. He always arrives within



the same three or four minute window, like clockwork. Four minutes past his expected arrival, Nani is already worried. Fifteen minutes later, I go out looking for him, and find him face down on the sidewalk near the beginning of his circuit.

“He had a heart attack just like his father did, and his younger brother. And all this time I was worried about brain disease.”

Alan and I are on a bench in the middle of the nature path that loops around our Sand Hill road office.

“I’m sorry to hear that Hakim.” he says quietly to his feet. “How high is your cholesterol?”

I glance self-consciously at my belly. It annoys me that the story of losing the most important person in my life is intellectually interesting to him, a case study in inherited heart disease.

But it turns out I have a mutation in my PCSK9 gene that leads to high cholesterol. Ba must have had it too, and it was easily curable. Much simpler than brain disease, only a few faulty letters amongst billions in our genetic code.

Between fits of crying in my room, I emerge to find Nani covered in a shawl, praying in the living room. She is on her knees, rocking back and forth, counting her beads in a hypnotic trance. The first few days after, Amma prays with her. I avoid speaking to her. Her faulty memory makes me feel like I am losing two people at once.

Amma takes over tasks around house, like cooking dinner or washing Nani’s

clothes. The little things help restore equilibrium in our family. Slowly, too slowly, we begin to adopt new symbiotic routines.

One night, we are quietly eating dinner, and Amma can tell Nani is upset, but can't remember why.

"What's wrong? Did something happen?"

"Yes, Amma."

"What happened?"

Nani and I share a look. Nani says, "I miss my husband."

Amma tries to understand. Then she has a solution. She grabs my neck, "Why? He's sitting right here."

She laughs an honest, wheezing laugh. I hope she is being funny but know she is going mad.

The next morning I wake up at dawn. I sit up in bed and look for the first light crashing over the mountains. I splash water on my face, slip on a sweater, and lace up my shoes. I pass Nani in the living room, rocking back and forth in prayer. She squints at me, confused, when I pass. I see green, red, and blue vibrating proteins. I am exactly where I'm supposed to be.

I step out into the morning darkness, ready to steer the Sun across the sky.

## Roberta Senechal de la Roche

### The Red Shoes

At sundown  
if no one is watching,  
I wear my dead  
mother's little shoes  
red patent leather, gilt  
buckles, audacious  
heels pristine,  
intact.

When I look down  
she is here again  
just now, elegant  
in winter's crystal rooms,  
program clenched  
in black-gloved hands,  
impeccable  
someone at her elbow,  
transparent, guiding her  
to the door that opens up  
behind the stage.

Light does not escape from her  
closet full of shoes,  
like an opaque rainbow  
in the dark, waiting  
for someone else to dance.

*Wendy Schmidt*

**Breath**



## *Kevin Casey*

### **Sweat Bee**

On a warm day after a night of rain,  
    you buzz along toward lunch, bucking up  
  
next winter's firewood, cutting through air  
    mist-heavy and thick with chainsaw exhaust  
  
and the smell of sap. Among the stabbing itch  
    of deer flies that knot themselves in your hair  
  
like burs, a sweat bee in its viridian vest  
    you nearly crushed against your arm, as it paused  
  
for a brackish sip. With need of neither sting  
    nor welt, it drinks a toast to another year  
    with the nectar of your morning's efforts.

## *Constantin Preda*

### **Mass Migration**

No one expects a plague.  
I didn't while driving  
State Road 41 long after sunset  
My tires suddenly crushing  
A civilization underneath.  
In the headlights,  
Through the drizzle  
And the fog  
Thousands of them  
Leaping from one side  
To the other.  
Like driving over bubble wrap  
I can't believe my destruction  
Crushing the spines  
Of so many – I must stop.  
I get out,  
Am surrounded  
My car idling  
My heart thumping  
How will I get out  
Of this mess?  
Frogs everywhere  
From the past into the future  
All jumping  
From some pond  
To some lake.  
They must have been born  
In the woods  
Off the roadside  
In a body of muck and water.  
Sperm shaped tadpoles  
Stretched like children  
Into sweaters too tight  
Pushing their limbs



From their own bodies  
Sprouting webbed feet  
Excited to use them  
Only to be met with  
My tires.  
The trail behind me:  
Smashed corpses  
Trampled by the living  
Onward toward the darkness  
Like all of us.  
Plagues are like that.  
One moment  
My life is speeding toward home  
As they tried to do the same.  
I ended so many of them.  
My heart sinks.  
Where can I go?  
At my feet  
Frogs thrust over  
And around my shoes.  
Tiny green souls  
the sizes of a child's sock  
black eyes peering forward  
I can almost see  
my own reflection.  
What message is this  
That God sends me  
In this humidity  
And pain?  
I want to stop  
The movements of the world.  
I want to create safe passage  
To stop the murder  
Of so many innocent lives.  
But I can't.  
I too  
Have committed atrocity.  
I wanted to get home.  
And so did they.

*Suzanne S. Rancourt*

## **Tuning Up**

Wild turkeys and woodcocks assembled  
as a cluck of claves

Partridge paradiddle their wings  
drummed up the earth of dust among greening princess pine  
downed birch, and goldthread

A fourth generation of blue jays blared their genetically awkward call  
more like an adolescent male  
singing an indecisive string of notes  
in the key of cracks, yodel, and warble

We've all shared this space  
long enough to recognize each other  
long enough for returning hummingbirds  
to sit still in the cherry tree watching, listening  
while I pray

We listen to one another even when everyone goes silent  
for the solo of hawks who wait for me  
to place fingers in my mouth and call back

*Gwendolyn Joyce Mintz*

**Untitled #33**



## *Judith Kelly Quaempts*

### **Back Porch Musings**

Geraniums, canary vine, hanging verbena, lacy parrot and purple pansies. Crickets sing in the tall grass, birch leaves tremble, the sycamore breathes, and honeybees drone over a water bowl. A morning that recalls childhood summers. Not yet too warm, ghosts of clouds in Fra Angelico skies, the hiss of sprinklers from the next yard, light breeze, the sun on my shoulders.

From a distant garden, wind chimes.

*Meg Freer*

**Growing from the Heart**



*Jeff Burt*

**Linnaea**

Twinflower, a fragile  
pink bloom in Nordic forests of fir,

you came slipping, nipples and navel  
tender from turmoil, propelled

in your mother's breathy burst of triumph,  
rippled scalp and cheeks near pink,

umbilical cord your tendril  
stretching from dawn to dark.

Having run love's gauntlet  
into light you were

wheeled and poked,  
scored and scoured,

needled, weighed,  
needled, poked,

measured, scored,  
gooed, cooed,

printed, splinted,  
tapped and wrapped.

Then, true to your name,  
belying the ten hours

of torture you had endured,  
you lay pink and peaceful

on my chest, your cotton-capped  
head against my beard,

and as the petals of a flower  
fold slowly upon the heart of the blossom

as the light leaves the air  
so your eyelids closed.

## *Michael Keshigian*

### **What to do with Intangibles**

Early morning, snow teases  
the outstretched branches of birch  
with help from the wind.  
It is cold, but inside the stove's warmth  
cradles the recliner in the lamplight  
where he reads poems.  
His fingers, thick and calloused,  
flip pages enthusiastically.  
He notices the shape of his nails,  
much like his father's,  
no moons rising.  
And like his father had done,  
it's time to contemplate departure.  
One day, the stove unlit, will dispense  
the damp aroma of creosote,  
the book will lie closed  
upon the arm of the recliner.  
One day, a relative will enter  
and acknowledge  
that the house is empty,  
no warmth, no breath, no poetry,  
an indentation upon the seat  
next to the book.  
The change will go unnoticed  
by the snow, wind, ice, and  
those few crows meandering  
for morsels upon the buried landscape.  
He returns to reading,  
the words delight him.  
What would become of these joys,  
he wonders.  
Someone should take them.



## *Ray Ball*

### **Levitation**

Sometimes when I am having  
a very, very good run,  
when my feet glide along  
the shaded path  
barely touching,  
it is almost as if  
I'm having  
an ecstatic vision.  
The miles are  
invisible,  
miraculous.  
My breath a liturgy  
of prayer. When I  
hit the downhill,  
it will be as if I flew  
like Saint Joseph of Cupertino.

*Jesse White*

streetlampdancer



## ***Contributor Biographies***

### **Ray Ball**

Ray Ball grew up in Oklahoma and Texas and received her PhD in History from Ohio State. She is currently a history professor based in Anchorage, Alaska. When not in the classroom or the archives, she enjoys running marathons and drinking bitter beverages. She is the author of two history books and her creative work has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *Breadcrumbs Mag*, *L'Éphémère Review*, and *The Cabinet of Heed*. She tweets [@ProfessorBall](https://twitter.com/ProfessorBall)

### **Robert Beveridge**

Robert Beveridge makes noise ([xterminal.bandcamp.com](http://xterminal.bandcamp.com)) and writes poetry in Akron, OH. Recent/upcoming appearances in *The Literary Yard*, *Big Windows*, and *Locust*, among others.

### **Jeff Burt**

Jeff Burt lives in Santa Cruz County, California, with his wife and a July abundance of plums. He works in mental health. He has work in *The Monarch Review*, *LitBreak*, *Spry*, *Rabid Oak*, *NatureWriting*, and won the 2017 *Cold Mountain Review* Poetry Prize.

### **Kevin Casey**

Kevin Casey is the author of *Ways to Make a Halo* (Aldrich Press, 2018) and *American Lotus*, winner of the 2017 Kithara Prize (Glass Lyre Press, 2018). *And Waking...* was published by Bottom Dog Press in 2016. His poems have appeared in *Rust+Moth*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Connotation Press*, *Pretty Owl Poetry*, and Ted Kooser's syndicated column 'American Life in Poetry.' For more, visit [andwaking.com](http://andwaking.com).

### **Meg Freer**

Meg Freer grew up in Missoula, Montana and now lives in Kingston, Ontario. She has worked as an editor and currently teaches piano and music history. She enjoys being outdoors year-round, playing the piano and running. Her award-winning poems and photos have been published in various journals and chapbook anthologies.

### **Parul Gupta**

Parul Gupta is a physicist with a keen interest in sketching since childhood. Gupta loves to make black and white artworks after developing color blindness over the years.

Though, at times, Gupta make attempts at color paintings as well. Black and white is so pure and free of any prejudice. Gupta's main area of focus is making life like portraits with pencil and charcoal. Gupta has made almost a hundred and fifty portraits till date. Sketching is Gupta's passion for life.

### **Daanish Jamal**

Daanish Jamal works as a venture capital investor in San Francisco. Jamal is a recent graduate of Georgetown University (BSBA Finance) and was an Annabelle Bonner prize winner for fiction writing.

### **Michael Keshigian**

Michael Keshigian, from New Hampshire, had his twelfth poetry collection, *Into The Light*, released in April, 2017 by Flutter Press. He has been published in numerous national and international journals including *Oyez Review*, *Red River Review*, *Sierra Nevada College Review*, *Oklahoma Review*, *Chiron Review* and has appeared as feature writer in over a twenty publications with 6 Pushcart Prize and 2 Best Of The Net nominations. ([michaelkeshigian.com](http://michaelkeshigian.com))

### **Barbara A. Meier**

Barbara A. Meier teaches kindergarten in Gold Beach, OR, where she continually frets over how to get five-year-olds to start a sentence with an uppercase letter, end with a period, and make sense. In her spare time, she looks for agates, petrified wood, and fossils on the beautiful Southern Oregon beaches. She has been published in *The Poeming Pigeon*, *Cacti Fur*, *Highland Park Poetry*, and *Poetry Pacific*.

<https://basicallybarbmeier.wordpress.com/>

### **Gwendolyn Joyce Mintz**

Gwendolyn Joyce Mintz is a writer and photographer.

### **Maria Pascualy**

Maria Pascualy lives in a little white house in Tacoma, Washington. She walks and takes photographs. She has been published in *Smeuse*, *Minute Magazine* and *Blue Hour Review*.

### **Constantin Preda**

Constantin Preda is a Los Angeles transplant originally from Long Island. He has published poetry in *The Amherst Review*, *The Connecticut River Review*, and *Poetry International*. He loves photography and is often found taking portraits of strangers

with interesting faces. He lives with his dogs Clover and Sandy who he likes to think of as his biggest fans, but they probably just hang around for the dog treats.

### **Judith Kelly Quaempts**

Judith Kelly Quaempts lives and writes in rural eastern Oregon. Her work has been published online and in print, most recently in *Windfall*, *Poetry Box*, and *Crafty Poet II*.

### **Suzanne S. Rancourt**

Ms. Rancourt is a multi-modal artist of Abenaki/Huron decent. She has work appearing in *Tupelo Press Native Voices Anthology*, *Bright Hill Press 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Anthology*, *Dawnland Voices 2.0 #4*, *Northern New England Review*, *Bear Review*, *Three Drops Press*, *Snapdragon Journal*, *mgversion2>datura*, *Sirsee*, *Slipstream*, *Collections of Poetry and Prose* issues *War*, and *Empowerment*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Ginosko*, *Journal of Military Experience*, *Cimarron Review*, *Callaloo*, numerous anthologies, translations, and text books. Her book, *Billboard in the Clouds* was the winner of the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas First Book Award. Her book, *murmurs at the gate*, is scheduled for release May 2019, Unsolicited Press. Ms. Rancourt is a veteran.

### **Wendy Schmidt**

Wendy Schmidt has been writing short stories, essays and poetry for the last ten years. Pieces have been published in *Verse Wisconsin*, *Chicago Literati*, *City Lake Poets*, *Literary Hatchet*, *Moon Magazine*, *Rebelle Society* and a number of other poetry and fiction anthologies. You can read one of her stories, *The Curse Now Lifted*, in the award winning Anthology, *Shifts*.

### **Roberta Senechal de la Roche**

Roberta Senechal de la Roche is an historian, sociologist, and poet of Micmac and French Canadian descent, and was born in western Maine. She now lives in the woods outside of Charlottesville, Virginia near the Blue Ridge Mountains. She graduated from the University of Southern Maine and the University of Virginia, and is Professor of History at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. Her poems have appeared in the *Colorado Review*; *Vallum*; *Glass: A Journal of Poetry*; *Fredericksburg Literary and Art Review*; *Yemassee*, and *Cold Mountain Review*, among others. Her chapbook, *Blind Flowers*, won the 2016 Arcadia Press Chapbook Prize, and her latest chapbook, *Winter Light*, will be published in 2018 by David Robert Press – who also will publish her first full-length volume, *Going Fast*, in 2019.

## **Chris Stolle**

Christopher Stolle's writing has appeared most recently in *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *Flying Island*, *Edify Fiction*, *Contour*, *The New Southern Fugitives*, *The Gambler*, *Gravel*, *The Light Ekphrastic*, *Sheephead Review*, and *Plath Poetry Project*. He works as an acquisitions and development editor for Penguin Random House, and he lives in Richmond, Indiana.

## **Emily Warzeniak**

Emily Warzeniak is an artist, poet, and scientist currently attempting to survive the unforgiving climes of the New Mexican desert.

## **Jesse White**

Jesse White is an expressionistic artist, poet, teacher and spiritual leader. She currently serves as the Arts & Spirituality Coordinator at Pendle Hill (a Quaker spiritual education center), a Teaching Artist for Artwell (where she teaches children poetry), and the Director of Pigeon Arts (a cathartic art-making organization serving Greater Philadelphia, PA). Jesse's paintings, altered books, and photography have been exhibited throughout Pennsylvania and North Carolina, and in London, England and Medellín, Columbia. Her poetry has been included in several publications including *The Apiary* (online), *Quaker Life* and *The Lighthouse*. For more information, please visit [www.pigeon-arts.com](http://www.pigeon-arts.com).

## **Andrea Wolper**

Widely known as a singer and songwriter working in jazz, improvisation, and experimental music, Andrea Wolper is also a writer whose published work includes journalism, poetry, and two non-fiction books (Routledge; Watson-Guptill). In her *Cento* project she combines poetry and texts with composed and improvised music in a variety of musical settings both conventional and unconventional. One of her original songs, "Nevermore," was inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven"! [www.andreawolper.com](http://www.andreawolper.com)