lullwater review

VOLUME XXIX



A JOURNAL FOR THE LITERARY ARTS

lullwater review

VOLUME XXIX

Editors-in-Chief: Emma Lazerson and Kelsey Perry

Managing Editor: Annika Polatsek

Treasurer: Rosa Kim

Head of Design: Emma Lazerson

Editorial Staff : Kalyani Allums, Kate Appel, Brooke Daly, Emma Dollar, Cosette Drook, Tori Jordan, Sarah Marzouk, Jackson Newbern, Connie Perez-Cruz, Meg Ruder, Amanda Wolf, and Adeline Yang

Faculty Advisor: Bruce Covey

Cover Art: Divine Creation I by Kendall Robinson

Submissions: emorylullwaterreview@gmail.com
Guidelines: emorylullwaterreview.com/submissions
Queries: lullwatermanagement@gmail.com
Find us at emorylullwaterreview.com

Lullwater Review (ISSN 1051-5968) is published once annually by Emory University. You can find us in the Poets & Writer's database, the *Index of American Periodical Verse*, the *American Humanities Index*, *Every Writer's Resource*, and *Duotrope*. We are also a member of the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses.

Subscriptions are available for $15 per year (institutions), $12 per year (individuals), or $10 for a single copy of either the current issue or one of our back issues. For subscriptions outside of the United States, add $8 per year. Please make all checks payable to Lullwater Review; email to Lullwater Review, P.O. Box 122036, Atlanta, GA, 30322.

Thanks to the students, faculty, and sta of Emory University for their support. Copyright © 2019 by Emory University. All rights reserved.

lullwater review

VOLUME XXIX

Editor's Essay | 4
POETRY
Nia June "One Summer Night at Skateworks: True Story" and "Baltimore Shit circa '84" | 6-9
Holly Day "Black and White"| 10
Johanne Boulat "The Scale of Things" | 11
Robert Tremmel "SOLSTICE" | 12
David Prather "Ode to August in the Northern Hemisphere" | 13
Ian Haight "Visiting Bulguk Temple"| 14
Barbara Daniels "Blue Diamond" | 15
Matt Heitland"Love on the Fox River Bridge," "Business Travel" and "What Does the Word 'Leche' Mean?" | 16-18
Michelle Morouse "Eating for taste" | 19
Judith Sornberger "Nights When You Come Back from the Dead" | 20
Hollie Dugas "Redefining Paradise" | 21
Chris Pollard "weeds" | 22
Rebecca Oet "Kids and/or Wind" | 23
Ken Anderson "SWEET PEAS" and "CONSTANTINE'S FOOT" | 24-25
Peter Kent "History Lesson" | 26
David Sapp "Atlantic" | 27
Paul Ilechko "Shagbark"| 28
Michael Lee Johnson "July 4th, 2020, Itasca, Illinois" | 29
Nathan Erwin "To an Organizer"| 30
Christina Petrides "Commencement" | 31
Seth Benton "After Pollock" | 32-33
William C. Blome "YOU AND JACKSON POLLLOCK"| 34
Daniel Edward Moore "Comfort"| 35
Samuel Prestridge "Long Beers After Settling In" | 36
Michael J. Galko "Camping in East Texas" | 37
Ivan Hobson "From Your Bedroom Window "| 38
Cameron Morse "The Other Side of the Wall" and "excerpt 10"| 39-40
ART
Esther Wen | 41
Mario Loprete | 42-43
Klaire Mason | 42
Kendall Robinson | 44-46
Bria Goeller | 47-48
Contributor's Notes | 49

Editor's Essay

Emma Lazerson

"Would you be interested in joining a literary magazine?" A tall girl in dark clothes asked me. Under the twilight of the quad, I had been searching for a literary magazine at the Emory Clubs and Activities Fair to no avail. I grasped the flier from her hands enthusiastically, practically jumping up and down as I answered her with a resounding "Yes!" The girl looked taken aback but smiled. "That's the most enthusiastic response I've gotten all night," she told me.

I joined a cavalcade of witty young women, feeling dim in the procession of curly-haired future doctors, boisterous poets, reserved geologists, and eloquent linguists. At a young nineteen, I had the aspirations to be worldly and cultured without any of the knowledge to qualify me as such. Yet, Mattie, the editor-in-chief, never made me feel small. Mattie had all the poise and talent I wish I had, but she never acted as such. Mattie always believed that I could assume this role. Her successors, Sara and Maya, trained me to take over, but I never expected my tenureship to begin during a global pandemic.

Emory University announced semester closures and evacuations on 11 March 2020. I, and my fellow editor-in-chief, Kelsey, assumed our responsibilities over Zoom—another aspect of life to go virtual. We had had plans for get-togethers with our staff, picnics in the park and late-night hangout sessions. We wanted to make the next issue of Lullwater Review as brave, candid, and varied as possible, while creating an environment for our staff to feel comfortable and friendly. Naturally, those plans were disrupted. Yet, literature is never great without adversity, and both our staff and contributors have shown tenacity and courage during this interminable year.

I cannot express enough my gratitude to our staff. In the midst of a pandemic, they all agreed to participate in summer sessions to help minimize the large number of submissions we still had to go through; they always arrived prepared and ready for discussion. Over the course of this incredibly difficult year, the staff has shown nothing shy of a Herculean effort to make this magazine as strong as it could be.

I must also thank our amazing contributors, without whom, we would not have a magazine. From the streets of Baltimore to the temples of South Korea, from a neonatal intensive care unit to an organized protest in Atrisco, your work has spanned generations and the globe to bring forth a thoughtful examination of the equal parts joy and sorrow found in everyday life. Thank you for helping us to create a magazine with so many diverse perspectives and voices.

Lastly, I must thank my editorial board. I want to raise a metaphorical glass to my co-editor-in-chief Kelsey Perry. An innumerable number of thanks would be insufficient to capture all that you have done for this magazine; thank you for co-hosting meetings and filling in the gaps when I don't know what to say; thank you for coming up with ideas to help the staff bond, even over Zoom; thank you for taking charge when I am unable. I could not ask for a better person to work with. To Annika Polatsek, our managing editor: I cannot imagine anyone being more qualified to be a future editor-in-chief. Rosa Kim is an extraordinary treasurer whose hard work allows for the printing of this magazine; Rosa, without you, I would be entirely lost. And I must thank Kate Appel, head of outreach: Lullwater Review would be largely unknown without you. To Bruce Covey, our faculty advisor: you are an integral part of making Lullwater great. And a final thank you to Emory University, for allowing me to have met such remarkable people.

Gratefully,
Emma Lazerson
Lullwater Review Co-Editor-in-Chief 2019-2020

One Summer Night at Skateworks: True Story

Nia June

I. [cue Gucci Mane]

Back to the Traphouse is poking out:
a fat gut farting clouds of static,
fucking sheetrock
out of its fuchsia peels.

Our soft bones melt into
foothills of bass.
Stomachs: grease pot.
Skin: ginger bark; coffee beef.

(I mean, everybody is so-very-black
and loud and metallic like
Birth of the Cool.)

The 8th grade boys
are trading slices of slimy pepperoni
for seven seconds of fumbling
harp on a holy vulva.

(Their smiles: high-pitched.
Enough to serenade the stupid stomp
of every girl's heart.)

Us girls are by the pop machine:
pink props on four ruby wheels;
waiting to become glitter, finger-food,
a zenith of frenzy...anything.

Or maybe, we are trying to
skip seven miles on sapling ankles; too fast,
too grown, too hot in princess panties –
you know the kind with the satin ribbon bow?

(But, I mean, everybody bought their very first
box of pads yesterday, so, we are
for-real black women now anyway, right?)

II. [cue Chris Brown]

Take You Down is churning silk:
angel wings fluffing golden arm
6 lr

hairs into stalks of the living,
unraveling a shroud of wonder.

(Disco-ball: a dizzy Jupiter,
washing us over
in neon flame)

The 8th grade boys
do that smile and grab a fistful
of hip like finger-food
for hungry babies gone *man*.

(Their teeth: teeny moons
from a 1960-something sky
that Miles Davis held in his mouth.)

Us girls finally find our footing
on the heels of womanhood.
Couples skate is the closest we will come
to knowing how to fuck or love…anything.

(But, I mean most of us have survived more than
most adults and we are so-very-black, so, we were
never really children to anybody anyway, right?)

III. [cue Frankie Beverly and Maze – the last song]

Before I Let Go (1981) is playing piano
with clock hands as we slide out
the skating rink into a licorice sky.
The nightside: drooling us.

The 8th grade boys
play tackle and trickle down
the backbone of Security Blvd,
to somebody's motherless home.

Us girls follow their footpaths
and try to steady our hopscotch-hearts
and hide the poppies sprouting in our cheeks
and the boys tease and toss and talk sweet to us.

(And did you know that coffee bark skin,
against an aurora of red and blue lights,
looks like everybody's God?)

IV. [cue police sirens or a prayer]

(Where you knuckleheads going? Where you coming from?
What are y'all getting into tonight? Let me see some IDs!
Hey! Don't move! Don't you fucking move!)

Cops: a giant rubber sole
collapsing on an infant anthill.
We tuck away our underbellies
and do our best city-rat-scurry.

V. [cue God?]

The 8th grade *boys* snap and crumble on steel whips;
beat like *men*, like so-very-black men they have not yet become.
Us girls are forced to watch, like all the for-real black women before us.
I mean, we were never really children to anybody anyway, right?

Baltimore Shit circa '84

Nia June

Everybody is standing in line at the clinic
and like the immortal music of all days:
these motherfuckers refuse to die.
They have no glory. No teeth.
Pawned the last of their molars for *Kools* and candy rock.
But won't lay down their gums:
Say man, lemme hold a quarter? Naw, no pennies man. No pennies.
Say man, just need .65 for the number 8. Gotta get to the clinic.
Niggas see those wide, soft gums – like raw pig ass,
baby-boo fat, a motherfucker down real bad –
and:
fuck,
dig into the slums of their pay for a dime or two.
Here you go motherfucker. And aye man! Why don't you stay off that shit!

But they all have a why:
Whores with 2 A.M. skylines swelling in their pussies.
An under-broiled fetus floating in toilet water and mustard piss.
Candied blood drops. Half-pint dicks.
Fat lungs.
AIDS.
Vietnam. Bad numbers.
God. Rent. White man. Bitches.

'Cause everything want me in the mud, that's why. Listen,
say man, just need .65 for the number 8. Gotta get to the clinic.

Gotta get to the clinic.

And after the white coats at that clinic have lifted nut-sacks
and vacuumed baby mush into bags of pulp,
corner boys will call out – like a thousand church bells,
like the immortal music of all days –
the cure – finally – for a bruised, pus-filled fucking life:
Purple caps! Jelly beans! Hardball! Candy rock!
Come get it, ya junkie motherfuckers! And I ain't coutin' no pennies!

With bus fare and no teeth, they crawl into the boiling glass of glory.
And if they settle into the skins of gravel – at last –
It won't be for the death sentence they were just served at the clinic.
It will only be for this.
This shit is the only death these motherfuckers can't refuse.

Black and White

Holly Day

my body is too small to take your words anymore
scream myself awake to putrid memories of you
your anticipation festers inside of me

I am not your handpuppet, mister

last night I dreamed about your fingers on my flesh
the linoleum pattern of the laundryroom
I wish I wasn't as stupid as you think

The Scale of Things

Johanne Boulat

As the scale of things would have it
Women will martyr fishes, as many as it takes
To turn the tides
Inside out
The way that lovers metamorphose,
Spewing electric slivers in their wake,
Spooling away the lachrymose shivers,
Gasoline, spilled,

The wetness spreading
Between incandescent peninsulas

Leaving the megalopolis behind,
The light comes in stabs
Glints
Off of car hoods and roofs

A small plane hums between the islands, emerald greens and blues
My nostrils
Combed by kerosene
Inhale the stillness that is flight

I would prefer a Pacific death
If ever I should be

SOLSTICE

Robert Tremmel

We lean close
to the ice at the place
where the earth tilts
and the year turns.

Already we smell
the deep rotten ooze
of our own bodies
through the snow

the scent of slugs
and floodwater, all
mass burials, stink
of petals and fruit

rhododendron, lily
of the valley, sudden
lilac, apple, rose
blossom, imidacloprid

culprit, jet fuel breath
of a blind dragon washing
over us as if we
were bees and also
almost gone.

Ode to August in the Northern Hemisphere

David B. Prather

Storm grass, morning rain hangs from stems.
Puddles begin a slow ascent from the driveway

back to the sky. Air dances off the street.
I keep secrets in layers of dust. I can't tell you why.

The garden bestows its bounty into my hands.
My skin stains and bruises. My back breaks.

All I have to carry is my soul,
but that is too heavy.

This town is a kiln. Every man, woman, and child comes out
splintered: icon, image, fetish, figurine.

The gates of Hell fracture.
My bones are finally warm.

Whisky burns late into the night,
and lightning flashes on the horizon.

If I were to be born, it would be now.
It would be early in the morning

when songbirds have nothing better to do.
If I were to start a life, it would be after

the rain had passed.
It would be humid. It would be steam
rising from the cracks of the earth.

Visiting Bulguk Temple

Ian Haight

I

bamboo leaf edges stippled in a skin-beige carp float slide over one another in water behind a bronze gold-polished Buddha statue petals hands of Quan Yin Bodhisattva clouds of a mountain blossoms

II

melting heat of spring water stomach ripples convulse in relaxation ease in front of you drip and oil of water smoothing skin lush as tropical leaves lips sponging hair gripped legs stand the water dripping alive in soft salt the steaming air floating arms groan of skin a splash rising to mirrors all the towels wet warm thrash of falling water

Blue Diamond

Barbara Daniels

Do you remember when we swam naked
close to the house where the old woman slept?
There was always a moon, mosquitos,

bullfrogs in the dark pond. Now I'm
shamed by my big red face. I look into
the middle distance at pink flowers

I can't name, a robin so young it's clueless,
parent jamming a struggling worm down
its beak. Tell me who you're married to now.

Does she sit with all the house lights on
or go up to bed before you? Do you still
fear sleep? Maybe you heard that

the Blue Diamond Diner on Pomona
disappeared, stony ground evened out.
We drove through hard rain that first

time we ate there, pails catching leaks
in the narrow aisle, fried eggs,
jukebox loaded with love songs.

We laughed as the rain deepened, then
slackened. The sun appeared, and we found
your red car marooned in a shining pool.

Love on the Fox River Bridge

Matt Heitland

He turned the volume up on the radio,
something slow. *Enjoy this.*
Once we're married these days are finished,
she smiled as she admired the disco ball on her finger.
He slid the seat back just enough
to still reach the pedals.
Crossing the Fox River Bridge
she raised her eyes, his head
lolled on the headrest.
Let me know...
before, she pleaded
as he thrust his feet to the floorboard
wedging his left foot beneath the brake.
Soaring through a collapsed retaining wall
they settled to a stop
halfway down a grove of live oaks.
When the first car came upon the wreckage
the tires were still spinning
to the sound of scattered birds
and a love song.

Buisness Travel

Matt Heitland

the supernova
in the hotel bar

begins with fingers
wading through re-circulated air.

the number of slam dancing angels
on the pinhead of 1980's

punk rock bravado
pales to the riot of atoms

sparked by the swish of her wrist
as she casually declines a Kamikaze.

when the nitrogen gangs up
the carbon dioxide

covers its eyes
beneath a tall top

and the oxygen bolts for the lobby
to hunt for security.

flinging his conference lanyard
over his shoulder

the greenskeeper leans in
bosoming her neck

in a Dewar's fog.
so with the stench of him

orbiting her personal space
she chucks her White Claw rocks

and the satisfying crack
of an ice cube striking veneers

makes the splash back
of hard seltzer plenty worth it.

the cad tumbles
to the floor
while a Violent Femmes tune
whimpers from a classic rock playlist

the plates of Pangea shifting
beneath him as the old world

groans with evolutionary ache
in the San Bernadino Doubletree.

What Does the Word 'Leche' Mean?

Matt Heitland

The somnambulant way the father
circles each plate with his washcloth
recalls cattle moving along a serpentine chute.
Or maybe he is honoring ceremony.
A parishioner marching for communion wine
before being stacked in the cupboard.

Adrift between slaughter and salvation,
a beep from his son's phone reels him
back into the kitchen. The beep,
an alert from a language learning app,
wondering what does the word "leche" mean?
causes the mother to fumble
books she'd been boxing.
Cocktail napkins marking the pages
where their son's interest faded.

Later, in the darkness of their son's bedroom,
where the curtain is held shut by a bag clip,
they trash the trinity of Pams in the nightstand.
    loraze,
            diaze,
                    tamaze...
And they will fold the bedsheet,
sweat stained and lighter than its burden,
careful not to touch
when they bring their hands together at the corners
as another alert pleads
    Practice now! We miss you.
they said, not nourishment. Dad was beyond that.

Eating for taste

Michelle Morouse

I opened Cook's Illustrated–butterscotch pudding, with real scotch.
I pushed brown sugar through a sieve, then the stirring.
My cousin took over.

I sunk into a chair, spoke of two guitars, strumming,
a bottle of Cutty Sark on the table, his booming baritone.

He slept through my next visit. I left
the cups of pudding in the hospice fridge.

Soon after that, he stopped eating.
Then he was gone.

I didn't ask the staff if he tasted the pudding. Who could ask
that trivial question after seeing them lined up to pray
when he was borne out?

Nights When You Come Back from the Dead

Judith Sornberger

Last night
you said let's go

to our spot beside the river

(a place I remembered though

I'd never been there in real life)

to swim and maybe

make love beneath the cottonwoods.

Of course,

I always say yes,

at first, to whatever you ask.

Then the air
grows still

as your heart that awful afternoon—

and I know there's somewhere else

I need to be.

Redefining Paradise

Hollie Dugas

I want to buy
a hat at a local flea
market big enough to share
in this too hot city, rest under it
like a slice of home on the balcony
of our apartment under the pines where
a family of hummingbirds piece together their
own haven. I know you'd come back to haunt me
if either of us got left behind. You are the echo to be
hollowed from my lungs when I am dead, scooped like butter from the bottom of a bucket. I am not like any god; I wouldn't sacrifice you for a single thing. I want you to brave this world—step under the lip of the brim, revel in our paradise, dance to keep your feet from burning.

Weeds

Chris Pollard

like a good and dutiful son
he helped his aged mother with her gardening

ruthlessly pulling any and all weeds he
like a good and dutiful son
allowed his aged mother to define as weeds

despite any misgivings
he might be feeling.

Kids and/or Wind

Rebecca Oet

I am afraid of the wind, that honey smothered child who howls, grabby-hands at small leaves and my dry hair. Shivers trees, that brat.

A red-shirted man on a passing basketball court tosses and misses. His shirt ripples, looks like a puddle in a storm.

I step in a dirty puddle-pool, too shallow to reflect sky. No fishes, no bugs, band-aids and dust clouds wriggle through small mountains of mud.

The clouds are slow shift today, crawling behind the snapping trees and sharp birds cutting through the sky. They look like submarines, or animals stooping low to drink.

A herd of bright kids cross a street, blinking in and out of light, like the sun is shaking dust out of its single eye. They skip through the rising heat, kick small pebbles.

Am I shaking, or is the wind just tugging at my elbow? It wants to tear me from this sidewalk, to skip me like a pebble along the concrete. This wind doesn't love me, it just wants to play with me.

SWEET PEAS

Ken Anderson

Sprawled
on a spread, I bathed
in the sun
bordering the sweet peas. They stood
on their toes, stretching
to their tips
for what would tan them green. A rainbow
of flowers
appeared
one morning
as if a band
of elves, surprised
by light, assumed their magic shapes. I gaze
at colors, think
of you, and know —my loves— the loss
of garden bounties beautiful
and meek. My daughters, you are sweet peas now—
one zaffer freaked
with purple, one shell-pink washed
with white. The delicate stems, the modest petals
approach the grace, the sheer ballet,
of flowering girls. How lovingly
they cling
to the rough-hewn fence, climbing
only
the random ways
they are left to.

CONSTANTINE'S FOOT

Ken Anderson

A giant statue has lost a foot, hobbles
though time
like an amputee
from an ancient battle—
a big bare foot cadaver white
in the bright courtyard
of the Palazzo dei Conservatori.

The only other severed foot
I've seen
stood
in the fridge
in the morgue
of Bloomington Hospital. I lay a stillborn
next to it, a small wax cherub wrapped
like a gift, not wrapped enough
for the pregnant couple standing there
when the elevator stopped.

There we all were: the five
of us. They started
to step
in, froze, and the doors zipped up the silence
like a bag.

But this Roman foot was not
like the blue one, a marble fragment streaked
with stains. What appealing curves— the pear
of the heel, the crescent moons
of the well-trimmed nails,
and the little toe hiding shyly
behind his friend. Light and shadow etched its plaited sinews,
the botched surgery just
above the ankle.

I can only imagine the imperial colossus
that stood
on it. I snapped a shot
for a friend
with a fetish
for such.

History Lesson

Peter Kent

When the Elder Pliny watched Vesuvius uncork
after centuries of model citizenship, he sailed
immediately into its mindless contempt.

Urged on by the scholar's enduring motivation—
curiosity—he imagined himself able to navigate
the labyrinth of ash and flaming pumice

in pursuit of knowledge. But, in so doing found
mortality's arrow loosed instead. Pliny lay helpless
on a sail on the shore at Stabiae, his eyes filmed
to the same dulled glass as a fish, lungs useless

as gills. The lanterns of language and reason dimmed
irretrievably. Nothing more than another victim
of presumption that his existence should be spared—

surprised that a mountain's animus couldn't be explored
without consequence. All he'd learned of natural processes
disposed of without prejudice by a minor planet's molten turmoil.

Atlantic

David Sapp

Flying over it makes no impression, an abstraction as if the atmosphere between is mountains, canyons, and savannas. Twice I confronted the Atlantic, awed by its chaotic power, its vast, terrifying breadth; the uncertainty of surface; creatures' teeth and tentacles grabbing hold and pulling me into its depth.

I grew up landlocked between seas of corn and wheat; fished for bass and bluegill and speared frogs in inconsequential ponds, in rowboats rather than ships; and canoed in narrow, muddy rivers. On what we called a lake, the strand was a constant reassurance.

The first time, I was a nervous little boy on a trip to the Virginia coast and Jamestown. (I found it astonishing that, after surviving their voyage, these settlers chose to remain near the horror they endured.) Despite a seawall of boulders taller than my flotsam and gripping my father's hand, he between the abyss and me, I was certain I'd be swallowed up, my tiny body disappearing more than usual, a negligible morsel for sharks.

(Now living not five minutes from Erie, I rarely visit its shore save a lulling ferry ride to Put-In-Bay once a year for lunch and put-put golf. It is enough knowing this unpredictable plain looms, persistent against my horizon.)

This time, nearly sixty, vacationing in Maine, I encounter that familiar frigid wind, the flavor of brine on the air, the collision of continent and ocean. Since I was six, the waves wore away its fringe a bit more, yet the Atlantic remains an intimidation. I sustain my distance, wary of the tide and feign disinterest in its edge lapping at my feet.

Shagbark

Paul Ilechko

I remember the shagbark hickory --
it seems that everyone remembers them
well -- there were parades of them

peeling and shedding
their tattered molt in that exact
place where we would later dissolve

into a brief incidence of sunlight
that penetrated the glorious canopy
  we stood there sharp edged

in sudden gold sharp as a knife
that mysteriously appears in all
its threatening inevitability and we knew

beyond any possibility of doubt
that a knife that invades your history
a knife so swiftly entered into evidence

must surely be wielded
                and already
we could visualize the bubbling crimson
beginning to seep from a ragged cut

where tendons are severed and ribs
are chipped with blunting force
as the frenzy increases skin peeling

like bark in the impossible blackness
of shadow cast by the hickories
that will wait in their silent agony

across the length of decades
motionless above the stained and rotten
piles of forgotten skin.

July 4th, 2020, Itasca, Illinois

At Hamilton Lakes

Michael Lee Johnson

Stone carved dreams for men
past and gone, freedom fighters
blow past wind and storms.
Patriotism scared, etched in the face of cave walls.
There are no cemeteries here for the old,
vacancies for the new.
Americans incubate chunks
of patriotism over the few centuries,
a calling into the wild, a yellow fork stabs me.
Today happiness is a holiday.
Rest in peace warriors, freedom fighters,
those who simply made a mistake.
I gaze out my window to Hamilton Lakes
half-drunk with sparkling wine,
seeing lightning strikes ends,
sparklers, buckets full of fire.
Light up the dark sky, firecrackers.
Filmmakers, old rock players, fume-filled skies,
butts of dragonflies.
Patriotism shakes, rocks, jerks
across my eye's freedom locked
in chains, stone-carved dreams.

**This year, 2020, due to COVID-19 I watch fireworks off my condo balcony alone, share darkness alone, share bangers in the open sky.*

To an Organizer

Atrisco, Nuevo México

Nathan Erwin

Jaime, we walk this land you're about to buy in cash:
all your paycheck and your Mazda Miata
that you have to lock & unlock by hand.
We pass the cistern where Comanche warriors
cooled arrowheads, today, a storehouse for Juniper berries.
You are Atrisco, community land grant of 1692.
You are the mountains.

The metals in the soil smoke hemp & listen
to our machismo poems. My calf grazes some sage by the path.
A tick finds its way into my navel. As the learning moon
flashes on your unholstered .380, we pace the fire
of nuclear apocalypse: Los Alamos, plutonium fields,
the clear-eyed gloveless grip that gave Jerry cancer.
Today, to you, an activist is someone who runs through your town on fire.

To you, stopping the strip mining of the Zuni Salt Lake
was all in a day's work, as they say.
Or you say, through gritted teeth beside Atrisco's acequias––
the veins of your people, the old flow.
Jaime, *aqui en Aztlan.* May the creator-god, water-mother, bless
you & bring you a steady hand. You've grown your hair long for
war. Hair-fire & pine, play your Navajo flute & sip Peyote water

dreams of *tú personas, tú padre, tú poemas*.
I've been told there is the veil & then there are true things:
mushroom cloud poems, legislation poems, cancer poems,
victory poems, & the poem you read as your brother's
eulogy. Tomorrow, you will build a room for the sun
& bury some ash, blue corn, *un poco de pan en el cielo*
for your ancestors.

Not a penny to my name as I walk down this mountain pass.
They say you never lose, but this is a new serpent
long past the place of emergence. Millennium man, tie your hair back.
Barclays is coming for your home, to steal your Atrisco,
your land grant, you heir. When the Isleta loses a son,
the land goes back to the pueblo. Who owns the land?
These sidewinder banking motherfuckers try and try and try.

The corn story is this story. The developers have always been coming. For
Caesar, for Dolores Huerta, for Saint Kateri who you wrote this play for
before she was even born. For your poems, *para tú maize, frijoles y chili. Amen.*

Viva, viva la tierra, amen, amen. Come from inside to cut their knees.
Organize the cosmos, mold a million people, then disappear back into the
Manzano mountains. Mystic man, watch out for the black SUV in your
rearview. The moon learns from you now. For earth, soil, & liberty.

Commencement

Christine Petrides

A dirty mattress leans into the weeds
where a buxom cut-out blonde hoists a frothy mug,
and mismatched kitchenware lies by the peeling carport door.
What the old house expelled with its most recent youthful occupants
awaits belated county trucks or trespassing scavengers.

After Pollock

Seth Benton

August 2016
Standing in the shade
of a silver maple
in Jackson Pollock
and Lee Krasner's backyard
I feel almost homesick.
Something familiar
in the slope of lawn
yielding to the rich
marsh grasses beneath a blue sky,
a heron lifting from the deeper
blue of Accabonac Creek
sculpting its way toward the sea.

Escaping the city's
relentless temptations
they arrived here just after
the Second World War.
Embracing the slower pace
of a salt tide and shifting sand
they feasted on days of light
and space to work in.
Their fisherman's cottage
still breaths the marsh.

We step inside the studio barn
over a solitary spot of red
like a premonition of blood.
The floorboards pulse with paint,
black and white dominate the scattered
yellows, blues, orange, green,
Pollock's ghost locked
in an endless painted
dance we walk across in slippers.

August 1956
A wind off the ocean
carries a hint of fall
across the Island. Quiet
house at dawn, white walls,
gathered shells carefully placed,
intimacy of a bedroom.
She wakes alone on the edge
of grief and possibility,
her tired face staring out
from the bathroom mirror.
The porcelain sink with a copper
water stain is cool to the touch.
Towels folded, red and green.

Not born of any rib
you shaped the man,
guiding his rise to a height
not reached before,
but like Phaethon's ride
his fall was fated. Who
could hold for long
such burning reins?
Cover up his floor
bled in paint that will survive,
fling your own oils
Lee Krasner
what is there but to make?

YOU AND JACKSON POLLOCK

William C. Blome

You *can* be (though I guess you don't *have* to be)
indisputably laid back on those orchards of his
and going nowhere, and still I'm getting a hard-on
picturing you zipping across the hush he found
in his storm-fast Mercury convertible (the model
with nude and cherub librarians hogging leather
bucket seats), and oh then the ending smack-up,
and only poor Pollock's fluids sprayed hither,
fanned yon, and drizzled parsimoniously 'round
old, old apple trees (which I myself gotta doubt
ever really benefited from such nourishment).

Comfort

Daniel Edward Moore

the one-eyed dog forgot
where the bone was buried.
Is there anything more disturbing
than making earth your getaway car
& not knowing how to drive?

At least money resting in peace
behind steel vaults in Midwest towns
guarded by tellers with accents of corn
shucked in lipstick fields,

does not lose interest when creation conspires
to end its life in a trailer park
hanging from clouds of aluminum rust,
that sounds like a voice on the evening news
reciting from Daddy's bible.

Long Beers After Settling In: A Bird Bath for the New House

For Jay

Samuel Prestridge

A fall-fat robin waits on its rim,
framed by trees I can name, shrubs I can't.
I catch his eye. Casually, we
bow and drink,
bow and drink,
bow and drink,
an homage to she who argued, chose,
bought, lugged, placed, and filled it. My part is
saying *You're welcome* at every
blessed sip he takes, I take, he takes.

Camping in East Texas

Michael J. Galko

The stars- indifferent-
like county assessors.
A smell of roses
and resin on the breeze.

The murmuring brook
tells me you have sinned,
a testimony supported
by the owl's lonely call

and the train's sad whistle.
Three founts
of timeless noise
impeach you-

ever since
you preached infatuation
over love.
Underneath us,

the salamanders
are mingling
in their muds,
quite deaf to all debate.

From Your Bedroom Window

Ivan Hobson

When the midnights became hot enough
to bring home the smell of the tobacco fields
people would drag race down your street—

Double shadows of horsepower
rattling your bedroom window.
We used to wait for it,

for those few seconds
when we could peek through curtains
and feel like stars were blazing their paths.

A child's wish on a rural street: to see
winning and losing, what Detroit was building—
these outskirts as the center of something.

The Other Side of the Wall

Cameron Morse

In triage, the fetal heart monitor seismographing
my son's heartrate pushes out a page
so long it folds in on itself, so long
it flops onto the floor, heartbeat-scarred,

jagged as a fissure splitting open some parking lot
in Tōhoku. By 6:57 a.m. Lili and I hear the grind and whirr
of construction resuming on the other side of the wall
of our labor room. Out the window, a crane

pirouettes above the parking lot to the thunderclap
of dump trucks. For nine months, our boy
has been off-limits, fenced off, heard and felt
but held on the other side of the wall.

excerpt 10

Cameron Morse

When you try to attain something, your mind starts to wander about somewhere else. When you do not try to attain anything, you have your own body and mind right here.

When I'm rocking
Omi in my arms, I close
my eyes and let my
self be lost in the rhythm
of my hand on her
back, patting, the swing
of her in my hammock
of my arm crook, my
muscle and blood heat.

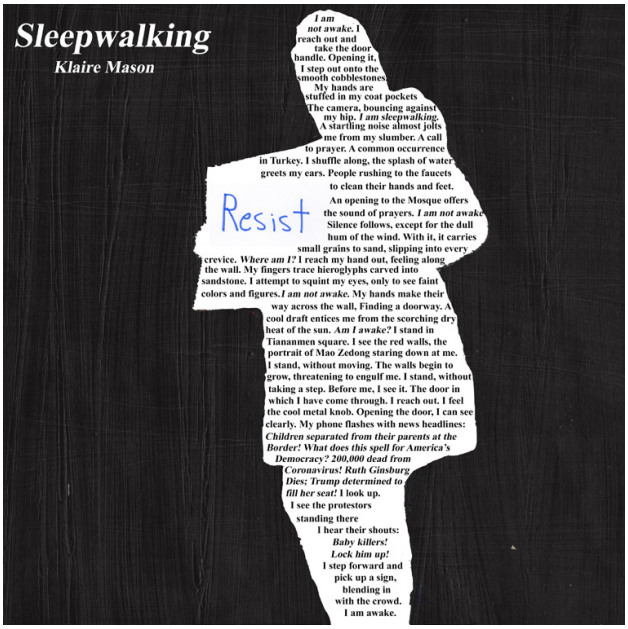
Time lost. The body's
ache dissipates,
the pressure. I forget
to peek down
at her. She forgets to
peek up at me.



Esther Wen



Mario Loprete



Klaire Mason



Mario Loprete



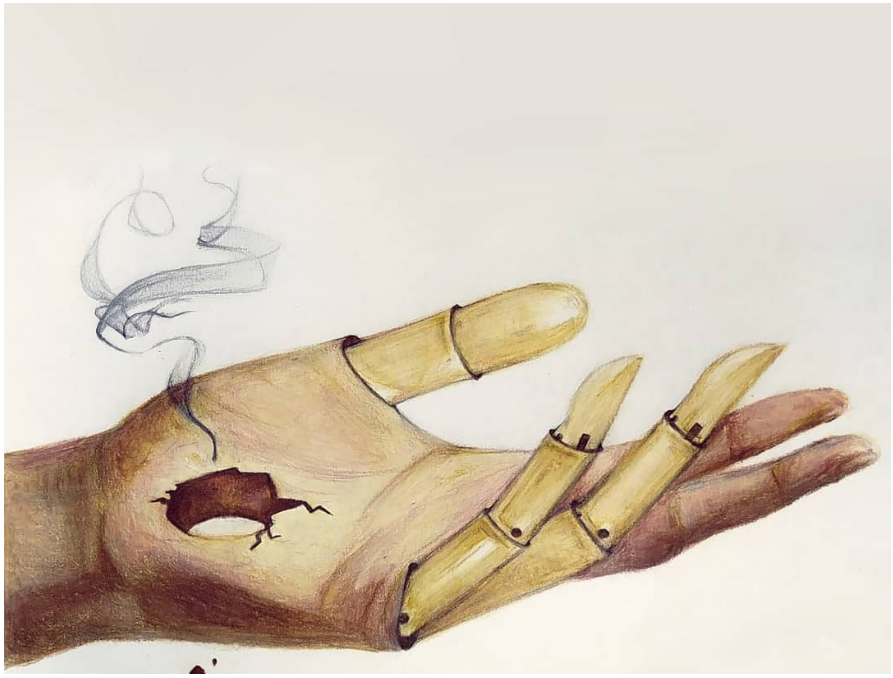
Kendall Robinson



Kendall Robinson



Kendall Robinson



Bria Goeller



Bria Goeller

contributors

Ken Anderson: his novel *Someone Bought the House on the Island* was a finalist in the Independent Publisher Book Awards. A stage adaptation won the Saints and Sinners Playwriting Contest and premiered May 2, 2008, at the Marigny Theater in New Orleans. An operatic version premiered June 16, 2009, at the First Existentialist Congregation in Atlanta. His novel *Sea Change: An Example of the Pleasure Principle* was a finalist for the Ferro-Grumley Award.

Seth Benton lives in Williamsburg, Virginia. His poems have recently appeared in *Sheepshead Review*, *Willard & Maple, Saltfront*, and *Pinyon*.

William C. Blome writes poetry and short fiction. He lives wedged between Baltimore and Washington, DC, and he once swiped a master's degree from the Johns Hopkins University Writing Seminars. His work has seen the light of day in such fine little mags as *Poetry London, PRISM International, Fleas on the Dog, Fiction Southeast, Roanoke Review,* and *The California Quarterly*.

Johanne Boulat was born in French-speaking Switzerland, where she lives again now, but she spent 21 of her 30 years in California. She received her Bachelor of Science in Animal Biology from the University of California, Davis in 2012. In 2018, she completed her master's degree in English Literature at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. She currently teaches English and science at a local elementary school and dedicates her free time to her three "R"s: running, reading, and writing. Five of her poems were previously published: "Wisp" on everywritersresource.com, "Waves and a Bicycle" in the 12th issue of "Five 2 One" Magazine, "Feathers" and "If the Sky Caved into Me" in the thirteenth issue of "Barking Sycamores," and "In the Mirror" in the third issue of "Every Pigeon."

Barbara Daniels's *Talk to the Lioness* was published by Casa de Cinco Hermanas Press in 2020. Her poetry has appeared in *Prairie Schooner, Mid-American Review,* and elsewhere. Barbara Daniels received a 2020 fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Holly Day's poetry has recently appeared in *Plainsongs, The Long Islander,* and *The Nashwaak Review.* Her newest poetry collections are *In This Place*, *She Is Her Own* (Vegetarian Alcoholic Press), *A Wall to Protect Your Eyes* (Pski's Porch Publishing), *Folios of Dried Flowers and Pressed Birds* (Cyberwit.net), *Where We Went Wrong* (Clare Songbirds Publishing), *Into the Cracks* (Golden Antelope Press), and *Cross Referencing a Book of Summer* (Silver Bow Publishing).

Hollie Dugas lives and teaches in New Mexico. Her work has been selected to be included in *Barrow Street, Reed Magazine, Crab Creek Review, Pembroke, Salamander, Poet Lore, Watershed Review, Whiskey Island, Chiron Review, Louisiana Literature*, and *CALYX*. Hollie has been a finalist twice for the Peseroff Prize at *Breakwater Review*, Greg Grummer Poetry Prize at *Phoebe*, Fugue's Annual Contest, and has received Honorable Mention in *Broad River Review*. Additionally, "A Woman's Confession #5,162" was selected as the winner of Western Humanities Review Mountain West Writers' Contest (2017). She is currently a member on the editorial board for Off the Coast.

Nathan Erwin is a rural poet, educator, community mediator, and researcher at the School of International Service, American University. With a family tree rooted in the North and South, Alabama moonshiners and Vermont dairy farmers, Erwin grew up in the hills of Newark Valley, New York. Nathan Erwin works as a poetry editor for *Folio and Barrelhouse Magazine*. His poetry has appeared in a number of print and online publications, including *Redactions, Counterclock, Wordgatherings, Breadcrumbs, Sonic Boom,* and *Line Rider Press*. His book *Hemp and Farm Justice* (Mandel-Vilar Press) is forthcoming Fall 2020.

Michael J. Galko is a scientist and poet who lives and works in Houston, TX. He has been a juried poet of the Houston Poetry Fest three of the last four years and is a 2019 Pushcart Award nominee. In the past

year he has had poems published or accepted for publication at *Burningword Literary Journal, Gargoyle, Paterson Literary Review, Gulf Coast, Sonic Boom, Right Hand Pointing,* and *Broadkill Review*, among other journals.

An artist, designer, and creator. **Bria Goeller** believes in the power of storytelling to encourage vulnerability and empathy. They maintain their own art practice, teach, and design unique and sustainable ways of communicating through creative content - like graphics, portraits, custom art, films, websites, logos, and branding. They are the founder of 3214 ART & DESIGN CO. and work alongside local artists and organizations to advance social movements through the communicative arts in their communities.

Ian Haight's collection of poetry, *Celadon*, won Unicorn Press' First Book Prize. He is the editor of Zen Questions and Answers from Korea, and with T'ae-yong Hŏ, he is the co-translator of *Borderland Roads: Selected Poems of Kyun Hŏ* and *Magnolia and Lotus: Selected Poems of Hyesim*—finalist for ALTA's Stryk Prize—all from White Pine Press. Other awards include Ninth Letter's Literary Award in Translation, and grants from the Daesan Foundation, the Korea Literary Translation Institute, and the Baroboin Buddhist Foundation. For more information please visit ianhaight.com.

Matt Heitland lives in San Diego with his wife, Rose. His poems have appeared in *Coal City Review*, *Cold Mountain Review, Plainsongs* and others. Despite his logic steering him toward despair, he remains hopeful.

Ivan Hobson is a multigenerational machinist who works at an industrial shipyard in Alameda Ca. Along with this, he teaches one English class per semester at Diablo Valley College. Ivan's poetry has been published in numerous places, including the *North American Review, The South Dakota Review, The Midwest Quarterly*, and *The Poetry Foundation's American Life in Poetry.*

Paul Ilechko is the author of the chapbooks "Bartok in Winter" (Flutter Press) and "Graph of Life" (Finishing Line Press). His work has appeared in a variety of journals, including *Juxtaprose, As It Ought To Be, Cathexis Northwest Press, Inklette* and *Pithead Chapel*. He lives with his partner in Lambertville, NJ.

Peter Kent is a poet based in Boston, Massachusetts. His poems have appeared in *Cimarron Review, New Millennium Writings, Cagibi, The Opiate* and other journals.

Michael Lee Johnson lived ten years in Canada, Vietnam era. Today he is a poet in Itasca, DuPage County, Illinois, published in 1078 small press magazines in 39 countries; 210 YouTube poetry videos. He has been nominated for 2 Pushcart Prize awards poetry 2015/1 Best of the Net 2016/2 Best of the Net 2017, 2 Best of the Net 2018. He is Editor-in-chief of 3 poetry anthologies, *Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze*, *Dandelion in a Vase of Roses*, and *Warrior with Wings: The Best in Contemporary Poetry*. Do not forget to consider me for Best of the Net or Pushcart nomination!

Nia June is a Baltimore native, performer, author, filmmaker, educator, and dancer. Specializing in spoken-word, June has been the featured performer and guest speaker at events throughout the east coast. When June is not performing, she is teaching Dance and Creative Writing to youth in the DMV tri-state area. June's debut film, A Black Girl's Country featured in film festivals in Baltimore, MD, Washington D.C., Houston, TX, and Savannah, GA. In May 2020, June graduated from Towson University, where she was awarded a full scholarship for 'Excellence in Poetry.' June's most recent project is a collaborative collection of poetry and photography with local cinematographer, Kirby Griffin. Their book, *Paper Trails of the Undying,* is an illustration of Baltimore's tenacious beauty.

Mario Loprete is, a graduate of Accademia of Belle Arti, Catanzaro. His work focuses on research and documentation of the world of hip hop. This philosophy of life now is no longer relegated to just U.S.. boundaries, but rather it can be found at any latitude. He uses concrete as the support for his new works, as he finds a link between his project and hip hop. The Internet has cleared all geographical boundaries,

and concrete is a material created by the ancient Romans, but today it is modern and contemporary.

At just 18-years-old, **Klaire Mason** is an avid traveler who has explored 36 countries.Traveling since the age of two, she finds inspiration in small glimmers she has experienced throughout the world. She not only uses these glimmers to write poetry but also children's books.

Daniel Edward Moore lives in Washington on Whidbey Island. His poems are forthcoming in *The Cape Rock, Kestrel,Nebo Literary Journal, Main Street Rag, Nixes Mate Review, Blue River Review, Verdad Magazine, Impossible Archetype* and *Sheila-Na-Gig*. He is the author of the chapbook "Boys "(Duck Lake Books) and 'Waxing the Dents,' is full length collection is from Brick Road Poetry Press.

Michelle Morouse's work has appeared previously in *Lullwater Review*. In addition, her work has appeared recently in *Necessary Fiction, Wigleaf, Peregrine, Passager, The MacGuffin, Pembroke Magazine*, and *Passages North.* She is a Detroit area pediatrician and she serves on the board of Detroit Working Writers.

Cameron Morse was diagnosed with a glioblastoma in 2014. With a 14.6 month life expectancy, he entered the Creative Writing Program at the University of Missouri--Kansas City and, in 2018, graduated with an M.F.A. His poems have been published in numerous magazines, including *New Letters, Bridge Eight, Portland Review* and *South Dakota Review.* His first poetry collection, *Fall Risk*, won Glass Lyre Press's 2018 Best Book Award. His latest is *Terminal Destination* (Spartan Press, 2019). He lives with his wife Lili and son Theodore in Blue Springs, Missouri, where he serves as poetry editor for *Harbor Review.*

Rebecca Oet (Solon, Ohio) is the winner of two silver medals in the National Scholastic Writing Awards, the River of Words Youth Poetry Grand Prize, the VOYA Magazine's Teen Poetry Contest, and the Young Poets Network Short Poems challenge. Her work appears in *Constellations, Abstract Magazine, Dunes Review, Grub Street, Qwerty, Columbia College Literary Review, Silk Road, The McNeese Review, Healing Muse, Tears in the Fence, Forge, Rosebud,* and many others. Rebecca has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize 2019 and Best American Poetry 2019 Anthologies.

Christina E. Petrides is an expatriate American living and working on Jeju Island, Republic of Korea. Her first book for children, *Blueberry Man*, was issued in June 2020 by Tchaikovsky Family Books. Her poetry for adults has been published in a score of periodicals over the last 2 years. Her second children's book, *Grisha: A Russian Cat,* is due out in 2021.

Chris Pollard lives in Ottawa with family and cats, works in a grocery and is at an age where he can now safely say he has been writing for decades and the math will bear him out.

David B. Prather is the author of *We Were Birds* (Main Street Rag Publishing). His work has appeared in several print and online journals, including *Prairie Schooner, Colorado Review, Seneca Review, Poet Lore, Potomac Review, The Literary Review, Psaltery & Lyre,* and many others. He studied acting at the National Shakespeare Conservatory in New York, and he studied writing at Warren Wilson College. He lives in Parkersburg, WV.

Samuel Prestridge lives in Athens, Georgia. He studies early 20th century ragtime and blues guitar techniques, and at low points in his life, he plays in bars under an assumed name. His first book *A Pebble's Worth of Riot, a Dog's Job of Work* is currently seeking publication. He has a number of dogs, all of whom are godless.

Kendall Robinson is a professional Portrait Artist based in Atlanta, Georgia. She is currently a Junior at Howard University pursuing a BFA with a concentration in Painting. Robinson works with oil paints and enjoys implementing hyper-realistic techniques within her work. Some of her biggest art inspirations are Kehinde Wiley and Mike Dargas because of their technique and composition. Along with completing over

30 artworks, she has exhibited in the Howard University Student Art Exhibition, as well as on 251 Florida Ave NW in Washington, DC through the DC Clean Rivers Site Beautification Project. Robinson hopes to inspire other young artists to follow their dreams and continue to make the world a beautiful place.

David Sapp, writer, artist and professor, lives along the southern shore of Lake Erie in North America. A Pushcart nominee, he was awarded an Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence grant and an Akron Soul Train fellowship for poetry. His poems appear widely in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. His publications include articles in the *Journal of Creative Behavio*r; chapbooks *Close to Home* and *Two Buddha*; and a novel, *Flying Over Erie*.

Judith Sornberger's poetry collection *Angel Chimes: Poems of Advent and Christmas* was published by Shanti Arts Publications in November 2020. She is the author of three other full-length poetry collections—*I Call to You from Time* (Wipf & Stock, 2019), *Practicing the World* (CavanKerry, 2018) and *Open Heart* (Calyx Books)—and five chapbooks. Her prose memoir *The Accidental Pilgrim: Finding God and His Mother in Tuscany* is from Shanti Arts. She is a professor emerita of Mansfield University of PA where she taught English and created the Women's Studies Program. Her website is at www.judithsornberger.net. She lives on the side of a mountain outside Wellsboro, PA.

Robert Tremmel lives and writes in Ankeny, Iowa. Recently, he's published in *Stoneboat, The Sun, Comstock Review, Poet Lore, Chariton Review, Briar Cliff Review,* and others. He's also published three collections and a Chapbook titled *There is a Naked Man*. His most recent collection is *The Records of Kosho the Toad*, from Bottom Dog Press.

Esther Wen is a senior at Emory University, studying nursing.