

SPRING/SUMMER '16



POETRY

SUGAR HOUSE REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT POETRY MAGAZINE

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HOMECOMING

I come back to sit at the kitchen window.
From there, nothing changes.
The curtains whiten in the sunlight.
The fruit trees dream in the still air.
The dog's bark rings to a rhythm
That beats on the pane and falls away.
The glass bluebird on the windowsill
Projects a tiny swimming pool on the white wall.
The grass grows longer, or shorter, or not at all.

Two young girls try to ride the dog, who's getting old. The old woman claps her hands,
Then reaches on tiptoes for an apricot.
His bald spot sunburned, his house slippers muddy,
The old man points to me and laughs.
I tap on the window. They look away.
They know I'm watching.

The sun stays high and warm. It flashes off the old man's glasses, Giving birth to a light that fades, Or a sentence that trails off.

Perhaps not changing is their way Of sending for me. Perhaps this is why I left. So they would always be here.

EMILY AS THE RAIN REFUSES TO SLOW

Our reply was in contest & allowance

& with each handful of her, I became

suspect of Ohio's perversion.

EMILY AS LIGHTNING WITHOUT THE PROXIMITY OF WATER

I am willing to be lied to in regards to Emily,

but away from our home near the creek bed

& away from our vacation spot near the ocean,

Emily says she was on a train once crossing the country

& the lightning became secretly enamored with her train car.

She says was in North Dakota & she almost left with

the lightning.
I believe her
& I do not trust

North Dakota or lightning anymore.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RED

Thinking of: his most favorite Kool-Aid flavor.
Raw meat of swine and cattle.
Underside of flesh come to light.
Wine partaken in, of Jesus's body,
a grape of saccharine mercy
and a grape of wrath.

The tint of Mississippi earth,

as the boy recalls it from childhood visits, for what were called family reunions, but actually, the more strongly he considers them, now a grown man and carpenter of allusion, were explanations for the unique stain of backwoods dust—the way they came together like evidences in support of a theory: Exhibit A, Exhibit B and so on, weaving tale of why they left that humbling, though it birthed them. The boy knows not long ago, if it's changed at all, love was believed to be a crime if shared between black folks like bottles of sweet. necessary moonshine, and there is no metaphor that does justice for that, only blood letting slowly into the soil over hundreds of years—from the ends of whips, busted lips, and ropes—all of it going dry, scarring the land and its bounty until it epitomizes the landscape painting of a murder, mockingbirds and all. Even the ants are tainted, not black like the ones the boy finds up North during the summer, mobbing freeze pops that have fallen to their blessing—no, the ones down South are flakes of Cajun seasoning: fire ants. The first didn't leave a burn, but soon they climbed him, some thousand nipping flames, from foot to ankle to leg, burning the crucifix of his black boy Baptist body from the base up, they, the smallest of life, conditioned toward violence by their bastard baptism. The boy washed them away with water and the scraping of fingernails, but the imagery had set in psyche, taught a lesson he'd understand later on, when MJ, Pip and the Bulls were painting the town red, on top of the world, but especially when the Bulls weren't winning anything and the town was still being painted red anyway; among the conscious folk, a question of how kids could cleave, butcher one another, the boy counted among that gang, and the answer accessible if folk traced their roots from their unraveling like a twist of hair: Chicago was due north when they tried to leave all their ghosts behind but the holy one—yet the stain had already set in, as teeth do, with permanence and a wound of familiar dye.

SOME DAY MY PAIN WILL SIGN A LEASE

I do not want to be the best at any one thing if it means I have to prove myself over and over to anyone with the price of admission. That is what I am willing to admit to you. Do not think

I came to this decision based on a whim, or that some dark evil is forcing me to conform like a freshman member of Congress in a budget vote. I am my own man in this, and there is little else

about which I feel so strongly. My heart can take so much more than yours, or so I've heard from your parents. They told me everything. I know why you wear a vacancy sign while you sleep.

SOME DAY PLASTIC SURGERY WILL HAVE ITS OWN THEME PARK

I grew up near the mountains dreaming of the ocean much like, I would think, claustrophobics projecting their hopes on the infinite of the cosmos—

all that emptiness representing an absence of hands closing around their throats like serial killers building mannequin forests to worship.

I was an adult the first time I saw the swell of waves. The seamless line between ocean and shore became a snare-wire, catching my feet.

PESCADERO

I thought I wanted an Eastern mind, a void emptied out of meaning and sequence and emphasis, but this river coming down for miles from the mountains never empties entirely into the sea.

We are walking towards—what I don't know, something you want me to see.

An egret wades the reedy edges. His yellow eye peers a long time at a shadow. I'm fishing too, casting lines how far into knowing? We cannot keep as we are.

I want, I think, to be one of the fishermen, leaving as we arrive. They are carrying out a long boat, a thing of craft and labor, seams and joints perfectly fitted, smoothed out and sealed up in layers of varnish like coats of amber, the blond wood gleaming gold.

In a dream of a time when I was barely awake, I have heard them stealthy in black light before dawn, stirring the current, whispering, sounds that carry over water: boat knock, fish rise.

To want and to want and not to have.

Water winks a widening ring. A marsh hawk wheels over us—the white patch on its back unmistakable—head up, the heavy wings beating. Has it noticed white cloud as it rises and rises? The ocean's not far, just over the dunes. It breathes like a shell. Everything I know is tidal, temporary. If this is the day. If this is the last day. Will I ever want to know what I want to say?

Soft, soft, our footfall. Everything is so far: my camera at the root of the tree where I left it, and you, walking ahead of me, silent and still as a pond into which everything sinks.

FROM THE GORE OF THE FOREST (PART 2)

1.

Fast forward to the part where the protagonist boy is the emperor of everything, so high-status he's permitted to shuffle along the byways in sagging corduroy,

low slung, he's heard enough of this, seen enough, starry retina, the thunderous silence of the deaf, long-distance memories return to his forefront,

try to peel back the ear, the old peal & tumult & blunt force trauma kick at a darker door, but once you get used to violence, you become a cluster

of nerves with nothing to process, you don't give a shit about your far-flung regions, no colonies or states will conspire to chip at your outskirts of your empire,

& when a cloud splits open & releases its first tentative drops, you'll fail to notice the moment when the music stops.

2..

A midnight rain shower erases the snow, the rabbit under the dun corona of the dead sunflower

munches seeds, husks & roughage, all my friends are morons, including you, all your friends are idiots, including me, the snow recoils, the rabbit also, I touch the moon's

face & a pittance of tides & tithes jangles in its coffers, the dead corona likewise offers

a meager fraction of the whole of a sun, too matte to gather the starlight, the rabbit I love, I see has a starlit gloss in its eye, see how it writhes,

it loves me so much, for richer or poorer, that my every movement leaves it stricken with horror. 3.

Like a dozen hellions harnessed into one harvest moon of a mouth, the color of the wind turned green for the meanness in it, you said a bear's in a bear-trap

I said impossible & realized I know nothing about anguish, I know the jaws are meant to be sharp but this sound would shatter bone & pierce flesh

the call from around the lake lows, we're nowhere near cattle country but it's like a cow getting hit, split into two halves by a train, we are nowhere near a train, I flex my calves

& taste the drip of blood on my knuckle, you, or the wind, or a shadow threatens to knock me clear out, the sky's in a state of shock, I nearly swoon, my knees buckle,

you worry the mewling will bring scavengers, predators, our palms leak blood & sweat, I place my hand in yours.

4.

Looking at a dog fence & nascent orchard, blightresistant rootstock with myriad fruits, blood-red oranges, bone-white

peaches, I sense myself sinking into a solitary period, one in which the clouds' shapes offer not so much images as taunts:

the cloud-shape that haunts me most is the one that looks—I swear exactly like a loosely cohesive

mass of water vapor, & means I now have to behave like an adult, devoid of wonder, forever.

When I die my blood will likewise blanch. I tried to pick the fruit, but broke the branch.

THIS IS A CONVERSATION FOR THE MOTEL POOL

Warm beer in water bottles, lawn chair slats grill-marking our backs. The chain-link fence. An adult playpen, you called it.
Have you noticed the neon sign twitches like it did in Kentucky, in Tennessee?

Vacancy-y-y-y— itching like an addict to get people in here. Stand on the diving board and you can see another motel pool across the street, the leaves of the palm tree painted in the shallow end graying. Our pool has a big yellow smiley face

that looks stoned in the surface ripples. Listen to me:
I've already known you in all these places.
Cheap, stay-a-day places like Pelican Bay, Rico.
Slow, wholegrain ones. Timeshare ones. Branson.
Aledo. All of our roads have shredded like tires,

rubber strips blown across other people's highways. Our beaches have paved over too.

Every down-the-block girl with a dollhouse grows up to win a double oven, a dog with invisible fence. Tiny dumbbells to go walking with.

You go home and winterize the sprinklers.I am one of the dangerous ones. Or I want to be...The ones that tempt like darkened hallways.The gray-eyed sister; the owner of the Probe all week at 2B, with the wolfess vanity plate;

not the child thumb-sucking at the brochure rack, but his mother who asked to use the reception phone and stretched the cord out the door to smoke. That bursting-at-the-seams look of her: Belly spilled over jeans, a half-moon drunk

and fallen over on its back. That dad left the yellow floaties again. All day I've watched them inch toward the deep end, collect dead bugs, stray grass blades. Take on water. Sway a little this way, a little that way.

IN HER OVEN'S GLOOM

Cake batter bubbles. She watches it creep up the glass pan. She listens to the washer's dull swish. Bits of instant coffee in the bottom of her mug won't dissolve. There's cat hair on the floor, matted thick as felt. Last night her unborn

children visited again, their faces marbleround, glazed like the tchotchkes in her neighbor's cobwebbed windowsills. They tiptoed into the spare room like benign tumors or the moles hiding between her shoulder blades.

Then they were in the closet, among shoeboxes of macaroni valentines, oboe reeds, Polaroids of plaid skirts all named Jenny. The wedding dress she'll excavate one day: Eight yards of lace, a coffee-stained doily. Three yards of tulle, a cathedral-length dreadlock.

She thought that baking would distract her. *Frost me. Eat me*, the batter seems to hiss as it gels, breeds identical eggy pores. Nothing else but cake becomes itself so perfectly: Sliced, bit into, smeared on a napkin, irrevocably cake. Today she'll know

she's already heard all the songs she loves, rediscovered the foods she wouldn't touch when she was a kid. The freckles on her knees are always in the same order, and lemon detergent never leaves her fingers. It's so cold in Nebraska. She's turned her back on every window

in this house. Still the rain pricks the glass sharp as toenail clippings. It's a Morse Code she cannot understand. It *tic tic tics* the Earth's impatience at her children loose like mice, rummaging old costumes and notebooks heaped in every precious corner.

BEAM

You were too far under the truck for me to reach you, the two of us stranded in the middle of that dark rural road—

me confused, you quiet as usual, even on the night I blurted out we were through. I rolled you your little black flashlight.

I stood, then squatted, back against the wheel—useless, it seemed. I needed your forgiveness to fix the whole thing.

It came, somehow, though you didn't speak—hands hard at work, torch clenched between teeth, that light spilling out of your mouth.

LETHE

Two wood ducks work a dark eddy. Lodged between stones, the chopped-off head of a parking meter.

Beneath the spume, brown trout root for caddisfly cases. Snow starts. I straighten to catch a few flakes on the tongue.

For fifty years I've been reading this book. I mean to mark the page before drowsing off, but every morning

I find it fallen to the floor, shut. I don't remember where I was, who was who, or how the story goes.

And so every morning, each time with more stiffness than the time before, I bend at the waist, pick up the book,

and begin the reading again.

RICOCHET

Copied from the 40s oaters we watched on TV every school day afternoon, it was our favorite sound to make when we played cowboys, cops, or soldiers:

p-tang!, *poot-a-ping!* "Missed me, kraut!" In our games, all ricochets were misses, which wasn't true for the shirtless guy in Minneapolis I saw brought down by

a warning shot police fired as he bolted down an alley. Never shoot at a flat, hard surface, say the safety manuals, advice too late for me when my BB

caromed back and hit my eyelid or when a cue ball took me for the corner pocket or for Israel Torres, who, while flaunting for his girlfriend, turned bullseye for his

own pistol shot. *Galatians* 6:7 preaches, "For whatever a man soweth . . ." You know the rest, as you also know what "comes around" —rules that often hold

for us but not for the big-time bullies, thieves, and liars, who seem protected by our childhood rules. *P-tang! Twee! Pa-ting!* "Missed us again, patsies."

THEIR IMPATIENCE—TO BE SATISFIED

with a word, a seed, a mown piece a wallow in soft damp dirt. the bulbs become leaves, the petals the branches, the lip of the fence lifts gently with the breeze, despite the undergrowth, its peckishness, an uncertain future

these tassels, small greens, and their impatience. the slow wind in the canyon, startling the fresh leaves, tangle in the river (the canyon, the rocks, the low flitting forms), the lost ocean, the low lands, the river, unnamable houses, unlivable

the single leaf sheening, holding forth in the sunlight (a tough departure, a taking-leave-of) cunning. blushed, (the blossoms gone) sidled against and tramped in, to temper growth and leakage and fortune

HYPNOS AND HIS BROTHER

Imagine dreary Hypnos here like a pinwheel spun by sideshow barkers, those spiders that weave with moonlight to catch you in their Jacob's ladder at the county-wide goat fair coaxing kids across the midway

to fire BB guns and win stuffed boars not the fingers reaching from a frozen ditch outside town, not even the force of impact. That

would be the chore of stark Thanatos heaving gravel at the curve ahead sign without a sense of humor.

White man named it Medicine Creek, with a map and solemn disdain for natives, because remedies purpled the banks—

apropos enough for coroner with skull on desk, one molar loose to dull me with memento mori to the inevitability of death when my grandfather drove out to the skeleton bridge—

Hypnos numbed to Thanatos, the Plymouth bullet-nosed like a crushed fighter jet. The same police cruiser from a barn's suicide—Grandpa's work last week when hogs nuzzled that swinging corpse's boots—warbled above to keep its engine warm. Wrapping his jacket around my shoulders, the sheriff slid

to ledge, leaned down, the dead teenager's arm halfway clear of water. It wasn't my first scoop of ice cream. The other boy held his breath deeper, somewhere I could not see. Around

a decade before, the German world circus with frantic pinwheels whirling kept the same grip in coliseums like it was St. Louis in the World Series or maybe the parade afterward.

One of the deputies found half his face

mutilated two years into his African tour before the Nazis starved him at Posen. It was not the ecstasy I imagined

nor the glory of trance and fatigue—like the timepiece swayed for us in prep school by swindler with mirrors for cufflinks, who caused our physics teacher to forget the number eight and the concept of infinity, by suggestion.

REVENANT

On the second Sunday after Easter, mixed with hymnbooks and Bibles, spring blossoms sprout in pew-backs like little secrets, their heads bowed, a symmetry of parishioners leaning forward with their eyes shut, their backs outlining the invisible architecture of prayer.

We launch our slow parade down the aisle to flower a cross, planting stalks of daffodil and lily in a crucifix.

A boy and a girl, too small for their polyester robes, receive the stems, draw them through, and tie together another cross on the other side made of slick, green tendrils, knotted with roots' fine hair.

The doxology chants for broken ground and resurrection, but what returns to the cathedral is a pagan ghost of sunshine and daisies, the language of daylight our bodies half-remember to speak, the thin music our blood makes pumping through our heads.

WHEN MY NUMBER'S UP

Roses and weeds are exactly the same

—Hafiz

I want a pile-on
at the grave woodcocks who guide
the grieving to the wake
jangled bells a buffet of smoked chops
and filets

I want too much water — mud —
a moat-full of crocodiles grinning
around the headstone
swallowing dirges whole
my hair green and my fingernails
curling out into soaked dirt

and if violets come up
in pairs months later
I'll follow
pull them down again by the roots

SISTER, EXCAVATOR

Sow a field or two of orchard.
Scrape the trees: steel bark at dusk.
Watch the fruit grow bigger
and harder than a man's plain fist,
then dig it up for iron ribbons
rooted underground.
When you start to sweat before
you go down the mine
listen to yourself drip
as heat waters out of you.
Maybe a flock of canaries
nests in the packed dirt,
or maybe the light's just full of ash.
It piles up too slow to see.

A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO GOING

Is it not said, that if a thing be really hard, it may be ground without being made thin?

That if a thing be really white, it may be steeped in dark fluid without being made black?

Have you also your hatred? Is it not heavy? Is it not long?

Who expects to be able to go out of a house except by the door?

And though I may not get a great burial, shall I die upon the road? Am I doing so?

Who is he who holds the reins in the carriage there?

(poem composed of questions found in The Analects of Confucius)

SNOW

Though my father and mother married for love, in saying *yes* she whitened his luganoesque name:

cobbler, bricklayer, breadmaker,

gravedigger— his eyes like olives clenching pits

and after generations in the old world hueing the pigment, flat tires in America still make the same sound: *day go: without papers*, *without papers*,

without papers,

without papers,

without papers.

Darren Wilson can't look in the mirror tonight without saying, *Michael Brown*, can't sip his High Life

•/•

without tasting, *Michael Brown*, can't sing to his wife without hearing, *Michael Brown*.

•/•

We were community college, wannabe philosophers disenchanted with youth, faking our way through Wright's unbroken branches,

fell down,

hit ground, and one night my friend ran off and got himself killed by a cop for being , and I

got lost on the way to his funeral.

anything.

•/•

I met an Irish-American Catholic woman like my father did.

It's been a decade since my friend died and today, Michael Brown.

I'm running out of reasons to be American.

On our wedding night, my wife's skin felt soft as goose down.

Years later, our children fell to the earth like snow.

OCCULT

Leather-seated, sore at the ankles we stood at the edge of the block, the sky a silver-blue sheen of dragonfly body, buildings which stumbled at the overgrown concrete. Beautiful, you said, a great epic. Your mouth unraveled the ancient-of-ancients, time stuck in figurative mud, raw outpouring of gospel like King James himself believed each of your ghostly summons. I gathered half of the harvest. I painted the sun. Patiently at my elbow, you gap-tooth grinned as we watched my artwork, shrouded, descend from the courtroom throne, bidding leave of the soothsayer and his lowly apprentice. Palmist uncle, this is your burden, that you shake with the conviction of a prophet.

WINTER SOLSTICE

A young sea breeze blown from the gulf Curls beneath a live oak Nestled in the lap of twilight

Tonight's new moon released from the underworld Like a Frostweed blossom climbs Into moist, dark embrace

Stars a scatter of bright colored flowers Gather in a joyous procession, Jeweled Buddhas belling the heavens

A white feather of frozen cloud glowshimmers Like an earth-radiant halo Glory in all its plenitude

T. L. JONES ICEHOUSE FEED AND SEED All Your agricultural needs a Christmas Triptych

—after S. T. Coleridge's "Christabel"

Part One

Hottest day of the summer
Adam Graben drove in to town
went straight up to T. L. Jones
in the feedstore
said Mr. T. L. I need help with my new bull
T. L. Jones said What kind of help
do you need Mr. Adam Graben?
Adam Graben said He aint proving up
doesn't seem to be working the herd
all he wants to do is graze
and stand in the tree shade
all them cows staring at him
wondering what he thinks
he's out there for

T. L. Jones said I don't know for sure what to tell you but I just got a new product out on the unproven market I can sell you to speculate on

went to his storeroom came back with a box of pills like they'd choke a rhinoceros said This is them I don't have no idea how good they might or not work What do I do? said Adam Graben

That will be the hard part said T. L. Jones You have to figger a way to get that new bull to swaller these I think if he was my bull I'd put him in a squeeze chute you can close up on him force feed one at a time ever day for awhile see if it'll work

you have to get the pill on the back of his tongue so he'll take it down or choke yougn use a bolus stick or a long handled wooden spoon for the big poke

might just work
I was you I'd give it a try
they don't cost too much yet
to not be worth the effort
and I'll give you a good buy

Part Two

Coldest day of the year so far Adam Graben drove in to town on a Thursday went straight up to T. L. Jones in the feedstore with the stove crunk up high

all the farmers inside
like a murder of crows
reminding each other
how it had been
and whatall it meant
on a day as far as they could tell
about as cold as a shithouse in hell

T. L. Jones said Mr. Adam Graben come tell us

what you giving Miss Lilith for Christmas sit down by the stove stay awhile with your feet up and take off your hat

Adam Graben said Mr. T. L. I need your help again with my new red bull you done me good with last summer you remember that

T. L. Jones said Not exactly you need to refreshen me which air new red bull Adam Graben said Oh yes you do he was standing in the tree shade not working the heifers like he was posta do

you give me some huge bull pills to get his mind off grass and get it behind his tongue to get his pecker up like a long handled wooden spoon him out of the barn out there in the field on the ball

T. L. Jones said I did that all by myself without these gentlemen's advice? Adam Graben said Yessir you did charged me fifteen dollars for a box of it and I need some more right now today

I just don't seem to remember said T. L. Jones

it must have been too long ago you gone have to help me think what kind of pill it was

They was big ones said Adam Graben about the size of the bottom joint on your working thumb more or less light blue with white speckles all the way through

kindly tasties just a little bit like a striped cane of Christmas peppermint

Part Three

Christmas Eve on a Tuesday that year
Lilith Graben got the pickup
drove in to town
Right through a red light
according to Deputy Sheriff Junior Shepherd
who followed her to T. L. Jones
Icehouse Feed and Seed
where she stopped the Graben truck
turned off the key
got out and walked
right in the slamming front door

Deputy Sheriff Junior Shepherd said By the time I could foller she was standing like Baby Jesus in the Temple amongst the farmers bellied up to the stove in their cheers

said Mr. T. L. Jones

I have something to say to you T. L. Jones said Well Miss Graben what's Sandy Claus abringing you and Mr. Adam for Christmas?

Lilith Graben said Mr. T. L. I didn't come here today to have no conversation or to talk about what we are or not getting or keeping for Christmas

I came here to tell you a thing if I could and I want you to listen to me real good

Lilith Graben said Mr. T. L. don't you never ever for any or no reason whatsothehellever sell my husband any of your Peter-up pills again I don't care if it's for his bull or a horse or a hog or a chicken or a dog you don't do it in any size or shape or color or taste I mean no more again ever period not for any reason, case or sake

and if you do
I mean to tell you right here
right now I will come back
like Christ's resurrection
carrying the first hammer I can
lay my hands upon to this store
whatever day of the week it comes on

I will hit you with that hammer and try to knock you through that wall just as hard as I can right in your balls and I swear to you that is exactly precisely what I will do then without another word she turned and walked across that wooden floor with the rattling sound of the doorpane slam she disappeared through the feedstore door then all became as quiet as falling snow not a sound anywhere inside that store any more

Coda Finis

in bed beside his second wife later on that Christmas night Deputy Sheriff Junior Shepherd remembered he forgot to write Miss Lilith her ticket for running that red light

but after thinking it over he came to believe without remorse or spite in a hundred years no one would ever know and that was just gone have to be all right

it was time for forgiveness to everbody for Merry Christmas and good night

WORST. BUDDHIST. EVER.

My eyes forsake the Four Noble Truths in search of the sentient being

that has played its annoying tune in my ear for the past half-hour.

I seek not its well-being. Nor do I desire its continued life

free from fear. I want it to fear. I want it to be terrified, to leave

me alone with my breath, with mindfulness, with not thinking.

CALL ME

Yesterday was the fourteenth day of not calling you. Today will be the fifteenth. This means you will also not have called me. For you, it is the third day of not calling. Not because you have called me (you have not) but because you count differently. The way dogs age faster in dog years. Your not calling me is younger. I am younger than you. This means I have more time. More time to be not calling you. Today I didn't have to go to work. I thought I might call you and tell you. That I am free. Do you have plans? Your plans do not include calling me. Tonight I will not call you again, although I will consider it. By calling I mean email. I mean texting. I mean driving past your house. I have driven past your work. I meant to go the other route, to avoid traffic. Then I turned left and there I was. I still didn't call you. Not from the car either. That's illegal. It's easy when I wake up not to call. It's worse around four pm. That used to be the time dusk fell, back when we used to call each other. The thought of dusk, at least. The thought of you used to not be painful. Not like skin on hot metal. Slow realization of sear. The third day not calling you, I almost forgot. The seventh I thought: this is the seventh day. I am resting from not calling you. I need a vacation from not calling you. When this is over we will laugh about these things. They will be jewels, not rocks. I don't call you because it's already over. We agreed. Or something like agreement. I talk to myself instead of you. I talk about this. I laugh at myself instead of with you. The bill shows it. We never agreed about not calling. You never said you'd call. I didn't say I wouldn't. But I do. Not call you.

ADVENT

The wind shifts even the sound of the train pulling out. Shrill stop's ending

begins its impetus, lean into move. The wind knows to move:

in front of the house, purple leaves shuffle from a neighbor's tree, crisp flutters, like fried beet shavings skim over the sidewalk.

Inside, the animals
push into any space
my half-folded body makes.
The leaves pulled down,

not enough. Three blocks the wind brings the sound, through a closed window;

The wind vaults its coax of the train: come on now, it's time, come now, c'mon.

APIARY (REDACTED)

Though the honey is swollen and outgrowing the field, honey is a currency we no longer accept

for its upkeep. Morning-frenzied drone of wing and paper. I can almost shape my mouth to it,

almost taste the names broken off the aster. It takes a colony to draft the smallest story,

only a single hoe to revise it, or some well water bucketed up from the sunless depths of earth,

where we sing from. Cool and sweet, the waking world takes shape

and from shapes their silvery shadows like mercury flowing over the grass.

I open my mouth and all the bees fly out, all the hive-trapped light, almost all

the light. Not knowing a damn thing about light or how to sing from or without it,

I am tasked with dismantling this permanent settlement, to tear holes

into the holes and rewrite the field entire, wash it clean for tomorrow's garden.

MIGRATION

for Odette

It's hard to say something cynical hearing geese cross the sky. My parents drove hoping I'd see St. Margaret's Bay or it wasn't about me; but it was shining and flocks covered the water. They had such plans, talking in bed in the dark with their door shut. Instinct means remembering without knowing, and smiling last night I lay and listened with no agenda, as if farewell were profitable, so many places to go, just one to leave. The dead come along without resistance, the past miles across like an inch of moon.

A WINE CAP IN THE NIGHT

To my left, inevitably,
Someone's backyard, lit
By a string of pink paper lanterns.
It seems like a family,
A late dinner around a picnic table
In a screened-in porch.
Someone smokes a cigarette.
Now that I'm drunk,
The pinpoint of crimson looks paler,
And the smoke drifts
Toward the spot where I should
Be standing.
Next to a leaning rose bush,
Surrounded by black, brittle petals.

These surroundings take
On a charcoal wash
That's alleviated in time
By the moon's trace, nearly full.
A searchlight at the clouds' opening
Meeting my footfall a second too late.
So I squat by the cool shoulder of a
Lawn boulder: a stubborn thing,
Hard to place.
But it sizzles with a hint of light,
Half pink and half pale.

From here
I nearly etch out
The family through the thickening air.
I sense their movement,
A figure now suddenly defined
As it drifts past the lit window
That centers the porch.
A radio clicks on. The remaining
Apparitions stay seated, seem to lean back.
The amber speck dips down, jots out.

I can't believe they're awake Now and at this hour, But I'm beholden nonetheless. If the window's light Ceases its steady relief, I fear for my blindness. On the second full of the second season, the rose-blue moon

stops Chicago like a cork. Bicycles chase

the lake. I ride the starred Drive, a carpet vacuumed

up to the Drake, to lakeshore condos. It's a scape

of bracken beaches punched through with legs.

Water begs them, pedaling to the lume.

They wait on the lozenge to flick and plume.

Come, otherworldly and complete—
a wheel of flaked

stars, a dock off a manicured sandbar. The city erodes outside my pillbox car.

Tonight the waves thin in the moon, cast my pink skin blue.

SEVEN SISTERS

with a line from Li-Young Lee

What are mountains but lichen-backed rocks, crevassed blue flocks? I made

it back to you, howling pack, flat capped jacks, thrust up bottle caps,

blades. Come, smooth others, rough sisters; like a jay cranes his beak to the tree line,

I'm farther in than I've ever been. In the fog, a stand of pines mulched sculptures

divined on their sides. This scream at your crags divides to a track, a seam I itch

to rumble through; lead seven, you pull the blue, mouth the breeze, grab me.

ATHENA

What do we call an embryo after a doctor says, I'm sorry?

Someone who knows, tell me what to call matter that will not bud.

Good and wise, teach me how to multiply, how to flood the plain. I want to hear the heart's measured stamp,

hold a notion given shape, a body wrapped in sunny cloth.

I'm thinking of a girl with ruffled hair. One toe sweeps the sand. Her parents sit beneath a green umbrella.

My mind constructs their sense of triumph, their work-proud pleasure, their birthmark smoothly made, their wonder of wonders sprung from a tiny-celled thimble.

Her outline vibrates in the sun like she who split her father's skull, leaped whole from his brain.

RESEEDING A NATURE TROPE

Notice what happens when you grasp this idea, *Mother Nature*, with its custody of everything, its cougar silence, sucking mud, and spores.

No parish priest, no heavenly reward. Forget climate data for the moment. Forget the Enlightenment. Focus on

cattails roughing up a little breeze, hill-cupped sky, light-soaked leaves, purple stamens dabbed with pollen.

You might carry this idea forward or curve back to hawks hovering within the gray fog of childhood.

You can stalk a ripple of deer or skim a mountain lake with ice-edged dawn. Spell it out with sunlight. Scurry

squirrels limb to sill. Ash the night with bats. Notice how the idea swells hemisphere to habitat, seeding margins,

scaling hollows, jagging slopes, surf and marsh, where flocks erupt and fling outward, sifting past Orion

like interstellar dust. Free will fills the central figure, *Mother Nature*, like a pit, like a moth inside

moon-white silk, or a boy awash the green stream's plush. Grip my hand, son, let's cross a summer lawn, enjoy enduring connections. Adhere like water within water, daughter. Can you read "horsefly"? Can you say "beanvine"?

So many conceptions feel umbilical as we stretch—word to world—her two-way tether.

ALASKA

When she speaks at length of job creation under the current administration, I'm too busy changing her oil to understand.

When he tells me he's going into seclusion
I pack him a box of power bars and books to help sustain his hefty illusion.

When they tell me they're seeing each other I call Alaska and rent a cabin.
Then I call both their mothers.

When I get to Alaska it's cold as hell.

No one bothered to tell me this.
I cover my body with oil from whales.

No one calls me—there's no phone.

I know how to get the hard jobs done.
Then I learn to like to be alone.

PARADE

Here in the postcoital economy no one can afford a cigarette, much less a light to help find the way to bathroom or bar, cloakroom or car that waits in the garage for gasoline so dear it's only a dream, like the one of recovery, financial or otherwise, a hypothesis proved by the graph below, so slow to move upward or across.

Here in our bed there's light at the far end of the tunnel of love, and a little British car we only dream of driving over a cliff we call wedlock but opt instead for hairpin turns which throw our bodies together as if for the first time, which was also in this MG, as many years ago as there are lines in this stanza, which float down the page like us in a parade.

WASTING TIME

Sitting here on a bench by Central Park on a Tuesday afternoon, smoking a cigar my wife lets me have two a week-when I should be running the statistics on the latest data or grading exam papers or working on crossing off the top items on my to-do list: like replying to my four thousand eight hundred and fifty-three e-mails, or studying the difference in Spanish between *estar* and *ser*, or sending a check to the international NGO working with trafficked women in Uganda, and afterward I could have some scheduled fun, during which I might have an out-of-the-box publishable idea, instead of sitting here smoking my cigar and nodding in complicity to the other old cigar guys passing by or watching the kindergarten teacher with her class of five-year-olds in their bright red Robertson academy T-shirts and their tiny rainbow-colored knapsacks, still young enough to be dallying down the street holding hands without worrying how much time they are allowed before they have to be somewhere else.

DAVY JONES, AGE 13, IS AFRAID OF THE LOCKER ROOM

Not because he's ashamed of his privates, but due to his recurring dreams of pirates, salt-rough and crude, as likely to smile as slit your throat, anarchistic pirates, generous with wedgies.

And in these dreams, he wants to gather them up into his demon arms and kiss them, carry them down to imaginary places. After dodgeball, Davy wades across floorboards glazed with wax, his sixteen tentacles

trailing like a mop, his black hair and horns styled perfectly in the echoing gymnasium. Waking Davy, unperturbed by criminals at sea, mouth barbed with thirteen rows of villiform teeth. Tough talk Davy,

belching up bones in the back of the classroom. When, at last, he slips out of uniform, it is one light-speed gesture; he hurries through the ritual fast as any sea-devil, and glides off into the halls quick

as shadows on the backside of a curling wave, his eight eyes flicking backwards for fear of unseen Jolly Rogers, those teams of black flags coasting dunes invisible, but everywhere, cannons aimed at his pride.

AFTER THE LATE AND LAST CHAT

The demons stutter and starve, their fires growing into our own

Someone checks the raised seals of our official papers / we are free to go

We fly our silk banners

Our white flags, our waving arms / they were folded once

I wipe my hands on my apron, that eternal act

And stir and stir / the air

The fire is fine

Clarity is smoking out the sides / the fire

Our past / our future, held together barely with wire

Not the nimble, thinnest gauge that people thread through dream-catchers

Not the thickest gauge used for hanging heavy mirrors that show

An empty room (or a human face) its own emptiness

Regular wire, medium gauge

The kind a fisherman buys in a bait shop before buying beer

The kind of wire that holds the heft of a fish and never forgives itself

Those dark eyes, those determined gills

Anyone swimming upriver understands

The depth of the water below us / the dark

Our future might not be our best creation

We promise not to fool ourselves

The fire the fire the fire is fine

ASK GEROME ABOUT A SWEATER

It was dark green, so dark he might remember it as black & I know he wore a lot of black then so he might confuse this sweater with another one but this sweater was special. Gerome can tell you why. It could be special to him for a different reason than what I'm thinking, but nonetheless, he would remember it & me, of course, Gerome would remember me & that night which was special too but not in the way that the sweater was special. *Is* special. That night passed out of our hands in a way that my giving him that sweater cannot. Even if Gerome finally gave it away last year, or if he gave it away a month after I gave it to him—well, it's sad, the thought of him giving away that dark green sweater, the moss-colored, thick-wooled, perfectly-shaped sweater, the one that made Gerome's eyes less green and more hazy. He was a tree in it. He didn't know what to say when I offered it under a solstice sky, next to the Ferguson's mailbox. It's possible he didn't understand the gift at all then & it occurs to me now that he may not have liked it. I don't remember him wearing it beyond that first night, though I also remember he disappeared altogether or at least that he floated away on a cloud & the sweater tied us together with invisible thread. When you see Gerome, ask him if he still has the dark green sweater I gave him in the middle of March in 2002, eleven minutes before we kissed for the first time, which was also the last time & thirteen minutes before he told me that story about his father which made him cry in a way that I couldn't comfort him & in a way he couldn't recover from & seventeen minutes before I learned how far away from each other we really lived.

CLEMENTINES & BLUE SKIES

One of the symptoms of an approaching nervous breakdown is the belief that one's work is terribly important.

—Bertrand Russell

I left a cleaning tip for the hotel maid & in her thank you note to me, she hung stars above her loopy letters. Earlier I left my office with poems on its door & pictures of bears holding babies & outran the sunset south, barely thinking of the wrong minutes I take in meetings. Christy, I've left, I'm away from it now, living on clementines & blue skies, the red rock highlighting the gold in my hair. This place, far from that place, agrees with me. I think you know what I mean. How some people think I can fire them & others think they can fire me. Thank god for Caroline, the woman who waters the campus plants, who plucks the brittle, browning leaves from the otherwise waxy, thriving greenery & hums the whole damn time. I love how often she dies her hair & the colors & the fanny pack she carries no matter the season, how simple & quick & real our conversations. I care about the weather when I'm talking to Caroline about weather. More than I care about budget updates or deadlines that no one plans to meet, not ever & now not me. If I could get this knot in my shoulder to diminish, I'd raise my right arm high to protest the futility. I can't remember, Christy, if you're the kind of person who puts a bowl of fake fruit on your dining room table but does fake fruit make you strangely full & sad too? Do you imagine biting into it & breaking a tooth, or worse, finding it easier & easier to chew?

THE RETROFITTED PAGE

Horned Larks sew the wind. August at the pond, the crowd greets me.

Sideways and straight ahead, the cat tails puff brown, crumble in my hands, puckered from washing cucumbers.

Canning late, the whites of my eyes burn green, pickle-brined retinas, dill weed beans;

mustard seeds dot my cells. I float like fennel, marked by half-moons of onions, studded

with the occasional clove. I cut cobs, and freeze corn beyond midnight, passing two a.m.

once, twice. Cotton sticks to my back, sweat ribs my breasts. My mind taken with garden:

the garden to the side of the house, the garden at the back of the house,

the garden five hundred feet before the barn. I have cabbages to guard, rows of green beans to pick,

tomatoes to slice, kohlrabi to pull, the chard pushing itself to flower.

Preservation, but I have no time. Always, August leads to January. I have to put up food for the long, lonely

months of winter. Already the leaves scatter. The ridge of frost heaves points to autumn. I remember:

bunchberry, currant, wintergreen. Snow changes everything. I stay up and boil, press the seals of plastic bags,

screw jar lids on tight, pray for the safe seal while comets blur the sky,

and the aurora borealis is only a kiss, promising to sway this corridor soon.

ARSENIC FOUNTAIN

Smaller than a shell sink, feet sunk in esker, the serpentine ridge winding past torn roots, the sweep of the os, eyes dry behind the sluice.

Deep in the trough of the ditch, dirt ridged hands, numb from walking behind the tractor all day long, teeth muddied, fingers cold from picking potatoes, I seek

the water nest; the water net, test tube throat, recipe of water, segment of glacier residue edged green. There are shipwrecks in this pond. It would not be lying if said

the devil sponsors a whirlpool here. Death in a blue recycled glass. The same story ending the same way, a flash of red light, and the storm deep within the surface,

everything points to blue jays. This is the closest one can get to the abyss while living to spell the song, in the mindless liquefaction of cold and morning

this mist like the whisper between lovers, the space between the act and the discovery of the betrayal, the blindness that comes before the hurt, peace lurks,

I follow the invisible bank. You see the place where the water meets pasture, where wet meets even wetter. This is church, the place where she can see each

raindrop and the stingy heart of the rain. The fern foams. She sets the slope. She follows the orange cat, thinking: ginger. Him: paws sinking in soil.

Her: knees knocking in green waders. They: a bucket of oats, the sun turning the pond into marbled glass. The broken nautilus full of borrowed

water, the ripped bridle, the frilled scrap of saddle blanket, the deep pit of the skeleton, the bitten cupola,

the pond a broken dryer, a worm of lightning, the fern folding, creating a sphere of light in the bowl, enlarging the breath, opening the brilliant plummet of the foundation.

CAPRICORN

Sometimes the sky is a deep purple with a thick streak of pink through the middle and the highway is a gold chain you've snaked across some wood grain in the shape of a river.

Sometimes you're driven up out of the valley and you swear, just for a moment you see the northern lights. But that thin line of orange is just some factory parking lot, burning its reflection into the fog.

Which reminds you of failure. Yours, specifically and how it brought you here. And here reminds you, still, of her, the soft, peach-like skin of her neck, and this, how you used to drag the skin from peaches, but now you eat them whole, so there's nothing wasted anymore.

Sometimes you bury the pits in your backyard because nobody's watching. You imagine you are filling the soil with burned out stars. You tamp down constellations with the palms of your hands. It gets so bright sometimes it makes you nauseous, which reminds you of what you've done.

Sometimes things get broken, she said. Sometimes a car wrecks on the side of the road and your father sees it and says to you, my god, be careful out here.

And you try. You try for as long as you can.

ONCE OTTERS

Past the beach breakers we bob tart as cranberries. The ocean our filthy broth this close to the bay, but who cares just don't swallow the stuff. The earth whips calendars like a Lincoln's spinning rims, even when you swear it's standing stillstill spinning. When you swear our hula hoop orbit's got so much backspin it's bound to come back to us here beckoning from the past. Shattered, as our halved apples no longer look like owl faces but hapless, half-assed fractals. I swear I once swore less. Not to be portentous but above the dangling fingers of kelp we could float like otters, arms entwined akimbo to keep from floating away into that empty, cold vastness, and instead we drift like snipped bobbers unknowingly unmoored on the placid surface, sliding apart.

PRICILLA RICH BECOMES THE CHEETAH

Wonder Woman is at my dinner party shackled and lassoed in a sealed aquarium her hair a man-of-war

in the very state of awareness without oxygen that I intended

the steady clinks of silver on porcelain should widen to alarm bells as they reach her ears

But she rises inevitable as carbon dioxide all white teeth and delivered promise

I stand in front of the mirror afterward

It is no less dramatic as I flick daddy's dimes from my nails and arrange a cheetah pelt

in the shape of my nakedness
Whose claws are my fingers
Whose teeth are my mouth

I sheath and unsheathe my nails wondering how one woman disappears as I appear

CIRCE IN EXILE

A man gave me immortality so that I would understand I was a gift for him

He looked in my red eyes and saw the end of the Earth as if he ended it himself with his clever hands in my violet hair

He forgot to give me eternal youth that marshmallow in my mouth that endless school year in which geometry will not untangle

So I gouged and percolated skinned and extracted the nature of beauty mapped its heart-shaped exterior ate its livered center

and found myself alight a mason jar full of fireflies a green lawn persisting grotesquely under the cold Attu sun

DR. ZUEL BECOMES GIGANTA

My blood and its disease curled like twins in a bed unwilling to sleep apart

I needed a new space to hold each ineffable organ my mind sparking on a thin stick my desire potent as motor oil my knowledge trapped in the shape of human hands

I stole a gorilla's body struggled with her leathered fingers unaccustomed to wielding syringes threading buttons or combing the steeples of her orange hair

So I stole a circus performer's body and felt the crescendo of her muscle I could tower and grimace dumb as concrete dizzy over highways and swallow ant-sized men

Or I can dwindle and squeeze into a drop of acid a blink of pain a shock of bitter on a taste bud

I fit anywhere now neat as a zipper's teeth even with a city of hapless men silent in my belly

BLACK HAWK—SANTA ROSA SOUND

What they teach you is that it takes only thirty seconds for the ear to come undone, and so gravity unpicks its seams.

Checklist. Checklist.

My husband says you can prepare years for this, and then in the space of ten seconds three poor decisions release you to the sky—or else

whatever's gone wrong was already flinting in the machine's belly before flight. In any

case, you will never feel the spiral's grip, never see the opening titles coming. Fog. Fog,

which blurs and comforts, erases the membrane-thin shore. What else could part heaven

from its reflection? What else could soften the sound from the sea?

JOHANNES DEVILLE, The first atheist cartographer

He favored content over destination. If a child played hoops in the street, he mimicked her minutest detail.

He drew her with dots and the country, the houses and taverns, the ponds and goldfish. He drew with black

on white vellum. He drew the calf that gave its skin to this land. He plotted battlefields and graveyards.

Even the wind took hold with powdered silver scattered from west to east.

He despised cherubs beyond the borders.

He believed in grounding observation. He's in every map below the legend—that tiny shadow holding a pen.

IN BAS-RELIEF

for Anna Beth Rowe

You said you found a city once in lights, with shadows worn into the roads and walls. You said you saw no people nor names on street signs, and the city felt erased. At city hall, you trembled at the door. You said you feared a history of ghosts, or worse, no recorded history at all. You wrestled with the door, then found an in. Behind the entrance desk you saw, you said, the city on the wall in full relief. The rivers colored blue, the streets in pink. You traced where you had been and still to go. You wrote on it what you would later say and transcribed the city with where you'd been.

STILL THE BELLS

Each day the ground just looks the same. I turn around and walk away the day, then sit, untie my shoes, and listen to the bells, except there is no church or tower near, nor cat nor cow. It's morning dark. Just stars and grass. But there are words and they draw lines between the stars and count the blades of grass. The constellations always seem incomplete to me and *Leaves of Grass* a pointless prayer. But still the bells and words. My toes are cold. The sun is near and soon it will erase the night. I don't know why I write you every day, and wait till dark to send it in the mail, when still the ground's the same, when still the bells.

MAKING LOVE TO A VENEZUELAN WOMAN WHO IS LARGER THAN ME

She says
Can I come in?
and I'm frightened.
My space is sacred
or
as sacred as a dormitory shower can be.

She has told me in confidence how she was previously misled and mistreated.
Communication, she has said is key to any lasting relationship or whatever you'd call whatever it is we're doing.
What is it we're doing? she asks.

I have no idea
if there is a word
or a particular combination of words
that can say that I love what we do
but hate that we do it.
So instead
I say
I dunno
what would you like it to be?

She doesn't know either.
But she enjoys my face
and I her passion
the fact that she is the first woman
who has kissed my eyelids
when I wanted her
to kiss somewhere else.
And we tolerate each other
for a little longer.

GOD (DAMN) PARTICLE

"[This particle is] so central to the state of physics today, so crucial to our understanding of the structure of matter, yet so elusive, that I have given it a nickname..."

-Leon Lederman, Nobel laureate

Wait. Say tomorrow we draw the pleated blinds on just the one set of footprints? Say we really have been walking alone on the sandy shoals of space for all time passing on our love of story

so each story's telling thrums harder with a purple rabbit or state-of-the-art Jesus. Light begetting light until a ventriloquist says it's all good. Ecclesiastes and thermodynamics' second law

insist the narrative and current methods of seeking our lost parents are long obsolete. Cue ALMA, Chiles' radio telescope whose name translates to *heart*. Cue also the array of gray dishes

in the desert Southwest spread wide, their quadratically-hopeful mitts *booping* acknowledgment. I, too, hold hope in one outstretched hand so some nights it's less the threads of blood pinking my urine

as it is the moon's skin draped over shingles and cracked cement calling me to the back deck where I piss pints of spent fuel between the spindles. Lower back whinging, I crane my head

towards footprints I swear I see in the moon's regolith, dust and dirt astronauts say smells like discharged black powder, or strawberries. Gritty as mortar. Facts like these fill me so I could almost

shuffle off the precipice of this sealed and permatreated deck and freefall around a pedestal, or abalone foot of what still refuses to make itself known to me. Drained to the yard's slope, better ready

for orbit around any mass greater than mine. But, wait. Let's return to the beach once more and search among the quanta of sand grains. Let me pore over the fine print of atoms the lens in my smartphone counts plancks between as if Yahweh could ever hide there. Wait. Tell me, little crab claw, what lightswitch on what ghost circuit remains that hasn't been thrown? Where's Waldo and where's the cherub

chomping his Cuban cigar? Say this goddamn particle both *is* and *isn't* the Great Big Empty. Say *I Am* so I know the canopy or the leaf giving up its veins at thirty-billion zoom. Say anything

so there's something I can say I know. Say I didn't give away thirty-three years of blinking at that impossible, subzero night. Say what stone's still left unturned, where's left for even the wee gods to hide?

MILE 13

From Devil's Cornfield to Hell's Gate it's 13 miles of not-a-lot in Death Valley except the slight, steady incline and, at the top, my son's good "Why is Hell's Gate up high?" has us stumped. Back in the rental we have 13 miles of slow-going single track to contemplate who'd make the gate to hell the only shot at heaven in a valley so far below the nearest sea. For fun we wonder if the car can go all 13 miles without touching the gas or brakes. I point the nose out of the parking lot, let gravity take it. Our bets involve who's paying for ice cream, as if the kids would ever. Over the pedals my foot hovers, that twitchy rabbit. My son thinks we won't make it. My daughter thinks I'm cheating. My husband explains combustion engines and fuel compression, which sounds akin to the air of Death Valley, thermal layers pressing like quilts, like pillows pushed to the face. In five years my kids will both be teenagers and when I asked my friend Amorak if his 13-year-old daughter still sat on his lap he gave me the sad look that told me not only was I not going to like the answer, but I had no idea how to ask the right question. My daughter's humming something made up and my son's swooping through with his own humming, in and out of tune for half those 13 miles as if the music from their throats were pushing us along. Hell's Gate somewhere above, the car a dozen feet below sea level. If the ocean made it here, we'd be goners. The car coughs a little as if reminding me of something. All I need to do is steer. Still we're falling.

THE MATING HABITS OF HUMANS AS INTERPRETED BY DEATH VALLEY PUPFISH

If I stay in the current, I am staying in the current, I am freshed out of river, I am beside someone's footprint. Wriggle-go-lightly where waters coolest, I am muscled scale and mute. If I choose a side cove where the water goes slack I may be looking for you. I may, manner of speaking, call your name. I brown to your blue. I chase to your slim finning. I may expect this inching, suitor my way on by, pretend not to notice. I may noise loudly, for what I'm worth. I may lose sight for what little sight I have, I may despair if you slip pondly, if you choose another, if the muddiest bank calls. If you let me press my dorsal to your dorsal, my adipose fin to your adipose fin, my gills to yours, if you promise me the want of your streamline then I will give you fry of my longing, I will pupfish frenzy, I will lair this one hot canyon into a fold of our bodies. I will no longer wonder what is upstream or down, I will true to you in ways no fish trues, I'll flare fondly and icthyologically, I'll fish out of water, if you have me I'll landwalk.

OUR BROOK IS CALLED THE LOOM

for David

Our brook is called the Loom. It's ours because we've never seen anyone else there and now because Dad is gone. September light melts the leaves, moves with the wishing of late summer and all feels made of him. Remember when he cleared a path and took us there? We walked down without pushing back the branches.

Now we push them back and the ground is spongy—Was it then? There is the getting on with life and there is the Loom that reminds us of being kids for a long time, and there is the Loom always coursing in its own life that was never ours or anyone's, but is, the way water holds us until we emerge—

Brook life. What to make of it? What swims here in this stream? I should know, but instead I thank it for curling through our time, for its swirl clear and clean—I lean in to drink, crouch among the black rocks, the clinging weeds. I walk on the fallen trees.

LIVING NOW AS WE DO NOW

In the first narrative presented here we are a people on the brink forced to contend with unpredictable weather—

the icons indicate rain when the percentage chance is less than even, the sun shines behind reckless pixel clouds. We cannot trust whatever you mean when you say

environment

& this is our America today. The second narrative introduced into this field happens when we see lights in the night sky, their milky incandescence, the unknown

heat muffled by distance, apocalyptic sign or else an age of luminous compassion depending on your leanings. Do we ignore this bright glimpse,

these things that distract us from our lives on the ground, or is the soul's most gracious act one we learn through fear's instruction?

My life is a breakdown, this the final narrative, the last collapse. I promise to build a better person from the ruins of this one

I have been

for so long, so many years, too many goodbyes. I will try to forge a new life in this peaceful mind.

I will travel alone—

beyond narrative, apart from chronology—

into the treedark coolness, find a likely spot to lay down & work hard to disappear into the green that has been left to us.

88 MAPS BY ROB CARNEY (Lost Horse Press, 2015)

REVIEWED BY LEXI JOCELYN

Rob Carney serves as an expert topographer in his most recent collection of poems, aptly titled *88 Maps*, guiding readers along various paths in search of a meaningful destination. Carney invites readers to follow as he searches for home within himself, among others, and on the surface of a wild and beautiful earth.

The collection is divided into five sections: "Departures," "Directions," "No Return Address," "Home Appraisals," and "Arrivals." The first poem in the book and the only poem under the heading of "Departures" is the one for which the collection is named. "88 Maps" is a series of vignettes detailing the discovery and contents of maps found in the basement of a home. In the opening, Carney establishes his capability for vivid storytelling.

I found them rolled up, dusty, in an old armoire too big to get out of the cellar—

no way to fit it through the door frame and angle it up the stairwell—

decades ago he must have hauled down wood and built it where it stands.

And it's not just a place to store winter jackets. He was being deliberately permanent,

sawing, planing, and jointing more than six feet underground.

The final stanzas of "88 Maps" serve as a transition to the next section of the book as readers embark with Carney as their guide:

I know about maps, though: the way they all start somewhere,

[...] but always arrive at the ocean, stars, or underground

whichever way we go.

"Directions" contains twelve poems in which Carney observes the relationship between human beings and the natural world that surrounds them. The poems in this section serve to highlight place and the improvement of the conditions in which we live. In "Here, in the Rugged, Noble West," "Suggestions for Urban Renewal:," and "Here in What Used to Be Mexico," Carney uses lists to comment on political issues of wildlife management, the preservation of nature in urban environments, and immigration. Contextualized by the national political climate in which we live, the imagery and directness of these poems point to cutting truths that have become all too difficult to keep in focus. From "Suggestions for Urban Renewal":

10. A new Target's not where people fall in love.

From "Here in What Used to Be Mexico":

- 2. Our language is not a lug nut,
- 3. and you're a thinking human being not a wrench.

"No Return Address" consists of four prose poems detailing the complicated intersections of human relationships with the natural world, with sometimes dangerous results. "Undercurrents" portrays the sublimity and danger of the landscape of the American West:

Seems like every weekend in the summer here, someone wants to take you down to Moab. You go there and hang out and marvel at nature and beauty [...]

- [...] Somebody died that day. Drowned. [...]
- [...] what I'm saying

is there must be someone who's still sick about that summer because this guy they loved went out and ended up dead. No more telling him it's time for dinner. No more sex or calling him on the telephone. Gone. Just memories. And even those getting less and less every year....

In "Lost and Found," a man is on a boat with a grizzly. "Dinner Date" illustrates a woman's aversion to chicken. Despite the complexity of the maps illustrated by Carney, simplicity of language creates a series of honest portrayals, depictions of fragile and fickle human life in the 21st century.

The poems in the "Home Appraisals" section of 88 Maps evaluate the priorities of people searching for a home, both literally and metaphorically. Carney's emphasis is on wildlife—the plunge and pursuit of hawks; the color, texture, and shapes of plants; the smell of "rain on dust;" the attributes of insects; the "shimmer of fish." Likewise, Carney accentuates the parallels of home and memory construction, as in "2,140 Square Feet":

You pass between the two through an open arch but not the kind of arch you see in church, the kind you find in women: rounded hips, the small of her back, her somersaulting laugh, her slow smooth way of coming 'round from sleep.

or "January 26, 2009":

Forty-three thousand job cuts in one day, in just one morning. Thirty thousand more

by late-afternoon. Mine wasn't one of them. We're not part of the millions since last May

who've lost their homes—lost porches and front doors, the mantel 'round their fireplace, the trim

they painted 'round the windows one April: pale green to go with her flower garden.

Or the place where he first saw her naked. Or their kids' favorite hiding closet. All...

As in the opening section, the final section, "Arrivals," contains only one poem. The final poem of the collection, "In the Only Zombie Flick I'll Watch," finds Carney reaching the X on the map he's been drawing for the past sixty pages:

It's generic Defense of the Genre 101: our anxieties projected,

the dead-alive virus of consumerism, suburban fear of wild animals

whose wildness is safely on TV, and so on, and so on. Take your pick.

While Carney does not exempt himself from falling victim to the concepts these zombies represent, he does express a desire to choose the more difficult path—rising above petty consumerism and insubstantial activism. Carney's map culminates by reaching a conclusion that his place is to find home and strike a balance between coexistence with other human beings and with the natural world.

Though Carney tentatively reaches his conclusion, it is important to note the cultivation of uncertainty in these maps—informing readers that it's okay to not know all the answers before embarking on the search, to not know all the answers on the way, and it's okay to not know all the answers once home has been found. As he states in some of the book's closing lines:

Certainty feels like a flag when you fly it. It snaps in the wind and makes the sound of your own good name,

of your own high opinion. It's the opposite of birds. And it was birds that he was growing, after all: [...]

[...] One morning he went 'round his yard on a ladder. He paid no attention to everyone clapping,

just picked each bird and released it into the sky.

Ruin and Light By Danielle Beazer Dubrasky

(Anabiosis Press, 2015)

REVIEW BY NANCY TAKACS

Danielle Beazer Dubrasky's *Ruin and Light* is a stunning sequence of poems, like a body of water with many inlets, each shadowing natural images such as stones, leaves, fish, shells, constellations, and skies, in a patient cadence. Each poem reveals bits of a story in a non-linear way about two young people who form a relationship that metaphorically and literally traverses wild places, and can never be forgotten. Although this is a chapbook, its depth and beauty allow it to seem like a much longer book, one that should be read again and again.

The book is addressed to a male "you." A story is told back to him, even though he is a part of it. There is a "she" in the relationship, possibly the poet's self. Imagery, symbols, and references to myth throughout the sequence allow the reader to feel the couple's losses, their epiphanies in their attraction to, and need for, one another, and their mystery. The fact that the story is told back to him suggests that he may not be aware of some of the events in the way the poet wants him to be, while also indicating that his side hasn't been told: "Only one of you is telling this story. / No one will ever know / who is body and who is shadow."

In poem three, after the young woman has revealed her story, which the you "hold[s]...as if you could never burn," and begins to carry her "sorrows between your fingertips," she goes into detail about her scar, and how in her mind it brings them together:

She carries a sundial shell in her hand, its tip a gnomon. Libra's scales follow the day's journey on a sundial—

the scales that were derived from the scallop Venus rode to the strand, the only shell that crosses oceans, clapping two valves through spume,

a hundred eyes on its rim. St. James fell into the sea and was buoyed by mouths clinging to his clothes.

The scallop-shaped scar on her cheek is a pilgrim's sign as if she has traveled to the groove in your palm and all her days were held in one moment she glimpsed out the corner of her young eyes while collecting shells

when she saw her own life's helix curl into a carapace to land at this morning's shore.

In her shell-collecting on a shore that reminds her of Venus, through the telling of her story to the you in the poems, the young woman is able to begin to cast the weight of it, lose the "carapace." It is key in this poem that the poet not only uses the word shell to mean self-protection, but skillfully allows it to radiate into fairness, sacredness of the body and sexuality, the birth of love, the plight and also strength of a woman, the connectedness to a groove in the man's shell as his own scar that she recognizes instantly because she feels imprinted herself with all of the myths and meanings of "shell."

Although some of the poems suggest the couple are in their teens, they seem to also have a history as children: in the anaphoric "the children who have never heard rain," and in poem four: "You treasure marbles, matchbox cars, old maps, / stray fishing flies you unhook from reeds. / [...] You give her what you value most— / a mayfly nymph broken off someone else's line." Likewise, these childhood memories arise in poem 17: "You were her mirror—a blue sea in which she found not herself / but a boy looking up at her window, who memorized maps by flashlight / and followed a strange road to her cul de sac."

Experiencing their intimacy, as the poems build, is tantalizing, as in poem five:

You taste sweet water when you drink from her lips, she tastes snow and a thousand blackberries.

When she becomes your lover, she hears the notes in your voice's flame—moths playing wildly with light.

When you become her lover you are bound to someone always searching for ocean.

And in poem seven:

Deer tongue fallen apples, haunches taking shape in the dawn, the only sound: soft mouths nudging open ripe skin.

She rests her hand on your navel where your first hunger was nourished

and touches that scar where you were cut and released.

Dubrasky has a unique way of allowing images to surface, as if they are tossing in the waves of the couplets themselves, eventually washing ashore the intimate moments of the relationship as the couple wanders together and then apart.

These images pulse through the sequence, with the repetition of words like "deer fur," "map," "acorn," "train," "ocean," "shell," "river," "scar," "swan." This repetition shows transformation as the relationship intensifies and shifts. Deer fur is tied into fishing lures by the male character, which are used repeatedly. In poem seven, he is depicted as casting a fishing tie to lure the female character, "to catch her hair once, her fingers twice, with deer fur..." In poem 13, after she leaves him, she pictures him calling her back "to the strands of deer fur" she imagines he is still tying into flies as if he is unaware of the relationship's ending, believing she will come back to his "mirrored world." In poem 17, the image of deer hair surfaces again after it is clear she is not coming back, and he "unlatch(es) a box of deer hair" and feathers, but the speaker imagines him choosing from pheasant and peacock, instead of the deer fur that was only tied for her. Dubrasky intuitively places these images, showing the character and progress of the relationship, as well as the man's character, with the resonance of this gentle image to lure her, but with the sinister sharpness of the hook that is beneath the "iridescence."

The images seem culled from the depths of the poet, revealing how nature, too, is deep and timeless, just as the relationship, not without its troubles, has been for them.

Recurring constellations and maps reveal their importance when his "father chart[ed] Cygnus in the August sky" or in a later poem when he "touch[es] the past on vellum / in a constellation of vanished cities." In the last poem, "Cygnus appears in the stars over the rusted tracks" as the poet shows how she imagines he must be leaving his past behind.

Likewise, she reveals how he has been influenced by the relationship he has had with her: "What she has given you is a way to pilot the distance / between memory and a river of roads." Water remains important for her. She floats, enters waterfalls, plunges into rivers. In poem five, she

swirled in eddies, dizzy beneath stars; she became its break and took in silt,

she became its eyes and saw minnows, trout, deer fur skipping the surface.

And in poem 10:

Your stories join on a shore where freighters cross a lake that makes its own weather—

lifeguards muscle rowboats against the tide beyond bathers plunging into choppy water.

The above poem foreshadows their unraveling with the "choppy water" as well as the line he speaks to her "I am memorizing you already, you say." The next several poems suggest more unraveling, with trains cars that become unbuckled, "flowers and rain on the willows / [that]call her back to the river," while he looks into a pool, wondering who "is behind those eyes, that mouth—"

In poems 15 to the end, the poet casts more light on their mystery, though shadows remain, fluttering or rising to the surface, as "Moths tap inside the lampshade, spiraling the wrong way home" for him, and in one of the final poems:

She looks for you behind mirrors as if the river could break open the rooms where you held her in quiet breathing.

The mirror shows only one face with eyes that haven't slept for years—she wanders past closed windows, stares at the alcove of your locked door.

She looks for you in stories of an old father weeping over his bound son before he finds the ram in the thicket between leaded panes.

When did the water freeze to glass? The boy still lives in your hands,

The reader feels the poet's tenderness for their story, despite what has happened between them:

You can take her back in the darkness, she is not a dream her body against yours, her hair, cheek, lashes brushing your arm.

Don't open your eyes she whispers and you both drown in a braided river

but as your drown you rock each other as if you are riding a train

through a place no one else has entered. You listen to the note only you have heard on the sinews of her voice,

a vibration of music so exquisite you must open your eyes—your fingers hold moth wings burning in starlight.

I was lulled by the undulant feel of these poems, by Dubrasky's boldness with language and its subject, and stirred by the images and symbols that seem to converge and break apart in other worlds and other myths. This sequence masterfully gathers the story of the relationship in *Ruin and Light*, and unfolds its own myth—dark at times and dreamlike, but wholly alive.

- Kwame Alexander, Booked, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016
- David Almaleck Wolinksky, The Crane is Flying, Dos Madres Press, 2016
- Karen Leona Anderson, Receipt, Milkweed Editions, 2016
- Cassandra Cleghorn, Four Weathercocks, Marick Press, 2016
- Katharine Coles, Flight, Red Hen Press, 2016
- Kevin Cutrer, Lord's Own Anointed, Dos Madres Press, 2015
- Heather Derr-Smith, Tongue Screw, Spark Wheel Press, 2016
- Emily Dickinson, Illustrated by Tara Lilly, The Illustrated Emily Dickinson Nature Sketchbook, Quarry Books, 2016
- David Ellis, Life Sex and Death, CreateSpace, 2016
- Melody Gee, The Dead in Daylight, Cooper Dillon Books, 2016
- Teri Youmans Grimm, Becoming Lyla Dore, Red Hen Press, 2016
- Piotr Gwiazda, Aspects of Strangers, Dos Madres Press, 2015
- W. Nick Hill, Blue Nocturne, Dos Madres Press, 2016
- Janine Joseph, Driving Without a License, Alice James Books, 2016
- Lisa Lewis, The Body Double, Georgetown Review Press, 2015
- Sharon Olinka, Old Ballerina Club, Dos Madres Press, 2016
- Elizabeth Onusko, Portrait of the Future with Trapdoor, Red Paint Hill, 2016
- Jessy Randall, Suicide Hotline Hold Music, Red Hen Press, 2016
- Melissa Range, Scriptorium, Beacon Press, 2016
- Aaron Reeder, *Dawn*, Orange Monkey Publishing, 2015
- r.h. Sin, whiskey words & a shovel, Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2016
- Kip Zegers, The Pond in Room 318, Dos Madres Press, 2015

DAVID ADAMSON grew up in Salt Lake City, UT, and now lives in Silver Spring, MD, with his wife, a cat, and occasionally two sons. He has a PhD in English studies from UCLA. His day job is writing and editing at a nonprofit policy studies firm. He recently resumed writing poetry after decades of keeping quiet. His other hobbies are hiking, reading history and literature, watching baseball, and drifting in and out.

IDRIS ANDERSON was born and grew up in Charleston, SC; for the last two decades her home has been the San Francisco Bay Area. Her first collection of poems, *Mrs. Ramsay's Knee*, was selected by Harold Bloom for the May Swenson Poetry Award 2008 and published by Utah State University Press. She won a Pushcart Prize (2010), a Pushcart Special Mention (2012), and has published poems in *AGNI*, *Arts & Letters*, *Crab Orchard Review, The Nation*, *Ontario Review, The Paris Review, Plume, Southern Review, ZYZZYVA*, and other journals. She recently completed a residency at The MacDowell Colony and won the Yeats Society of New York Poetry Prize, 2015.

CARL AUERBACH lives in New York City, where he practices psychotherapy. He's had three poems and a short story nominated for a Pushcart Prize. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Hawaii Pacific Review, Louisville Review, Nimrod International Journal, North American Review, The South Carolina Review,* among others.

PHILIP BELCHER has the great pleasure of living on a ridge top in Asheville, NC, where he's thrilled to see bears in his yard frequently during the summer. He has published poems and critical prose in a wide variety of literary journals and is pleased to serve as an advisory and contributing editor for *Shenandoah*, the literary journal of Washington & Lee.

WILLIAM BONFIGLIO is an MFA candidate studying creative writing and environment at Iowa State University and a graduate of Bucknell University, where his poem "Remembering The Loons" was awarded the Julia Fonville Smithson Memorial Prize in 2011. He previously served as poetry editor to Flyway: Journal of Writing and Environment.

HEATHER BOWLAN lives in Raleigh, NC, where she completed an MFA in creative writing at NC State in 2014. Her poetry has been published or is forthcoming in *Chicago Quarterly Review, Codex, The Nashville Review, Day One,* and elsewhere. She's received an Academy of American Poets University Award and a residency from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. She's the chapbook editor for BOAAT Press and on poetry staff for *Raleigh Review*.

ROBERT CAMPBELL'S poems have appeared in *Columbia Poetry Review, Ninth Letter, Asheville Poetry Review,* and elsewhere. His work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. He holds an MS in library science and is currently an MFA student at Murray State University. He lives in Lexington, KY, where he serves as reference and instruction librarian at Transylvania University and reviews editor for *DIALOGIST*, an online journal of poetry and art.

CORTNEY LAMAR CHARLESTON lives in Jersey City, NJ. He is a Cave Canem fellow, an alumnus of the University of Pennsylvania's performance poetry collective, The Excelano Project, and a founder of BLACK PANTONE, an inclusive digital cataloging of black identity. His poetry has appeared, or is forthcoming, in *Beloit Poetry Journal, Crab Orchard Review, CURA: A Literary Magazine of Art & Action, Eleven Eleven, Folio, Juked, Kweli Journal, The Normal School, Rattle, Winter Tangerine Review,* and elsewhere.

WYN COOPER is the author of four books of poems, most recently *Chaos is the New Calm*. His poems have appeared in *Poetry, Slate, The Southern Review, AGNI*, and in 25 anthologies of contemporary poetry. His poems have been turned into songs by Sheryl Crow, David Broza, Madison Smartt Bell, among others. He has taught at Bennington and Marlboro colleges, and at The Frost Place. He lives in Boston and Vermont, and works as a freelance editor of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. WynCooper.com

DARREN C. DEMAREE'S poems have appeared or are scheduled to appear in numerous magazines/journals, including the *South Dakota Review, Meridian, The Louisville Review, Grist,* and *Colorado Review.* He is the author of As We Refer To Our Bodies (8th House, 2013), Temporary Champions (Main Street Rag Press, 2014), The Pony Governor (After the Pause Press, 2015), and Not For Art Nor Prayer (8th House, 2015). He is the managing editor of the Best of the Net Anthology and lives in Columbus, OH with his wife and children.

Born and raised in Utah, JUSTIN EVANS spent time in the U.S. Army before attending college, graduating from Southern Utah University in history and English education. He earned his master's degree through the University of Nevada, Reno. He now lives in rural Nevada with his wife and sons, where he teaches at a local high school. His latest book, *All the Brilliant Ideas I've Ever Had*, is forthcoming from Foothills Publishing.

KATE GASKIN'S poems and other writings have been published or are forthcoming in *Tar River Poetry, Cherry Tree, Turtle Island Quarterly, The Southeast Review Online*, among others. She grew up in Alabama and now lives in the panhandle of Florida with her husband and toddler.

BEN GUNSBERG is an assistant professor of English at Utah State University. His poetry appears in *CutBank, The Southeast Review, The South Carolina Review,* among other magazines. He is the author of the chapbook *Rhapsodies with Portraits* (Finishing Line Press, 2015). His poetry manuscript, *Cut Time,* won the University of Michigan's Hopwood Award for Poetry Writing. He lives in Logan, UT, at the foot of the Bear River Mountains.

ELIZABETH HARLAN-FERLO is super interested in overlaps between the sacred and the profane. In a recently former iteration she taught high school students about social justice and religion and facilitated their conversations about ethics and culture. She is currently off mooching friends who are International School teachers in Thailand and India. They seem to put up with her writing habit if she washes the dishes. ElizabethHarlanFerlo.com.

TOM HOLMES is the editor of *Redactions: Poetry, Poetics, & Prose* and in July of 2014, he also co-founded *RomComPom: A Journal of Romantic Comedy Poetry*. He is the author of seven collections of poetry, most recently *The Cave*, which won The Bitter Oleander Press Library of Poetry Book Award (October 2014). His writings about wine, poetry book reviews, and poetry can be found at his blog, *The Line Break*: TheLineBreak.WordPress.com

ALLISON HUANG is from the quieter, more rural corner of Princeton, NJ. She likes her poetry tangy with a lot of sweet. She leaves her window open when it rains, and takes the consequences—a mildewing wood pane—with proper stoicism.

ZEBULON HUSET is a writer, teacher and blogger who lives in San Diego's East County. His poems have recently appeared in *The Southern Review, Portland Review, The North American Review, Harpur Palate, The Roanoke Review, The Cortland Review,* among others. Visit his blog NotebookingDaily for new writing exercises everyday.

LEXI JOCELYN is a young writer and educator-in-training. She earned a BA in English from Southern Utah University, with an emphasis in creative writing. She likes to see, hear, and feel things. Her hope is to turn the world into words.

GENEVIEVE KAPLAN'S poems, essays, and reviews have appeared in or are forthcoming from *The Los Angeles Review, Zyzzyva, small po[r]tions*, and *Post45 Contemporaries*; she is the author of *In the Ice House* (Red Hen Press, 2011), winner of the A Room of Her Own Foundation's poetry publication prize, and *Settings for These Scenes* (Convulsive Editions, 2013), a chapbook of continual erasures. Genevieve lives in southern California, where she edits

the Toad Press International chapbook series, publishing contemporary translations of poetry and prose.

ANDREW KOCH has been to fifty American states, but currently lives in Texas. He is a PhD candidate at the University of North Texas and holds an MFA from Eastern Washington University. He enjoys serving as managing editor for the online journal *Stirring: A Literary Collection* and reading maps.

KATHLEEN KRAFT'S poems have appeared or are forthcoming in many journals, including *Five Points, Gargoyle*, and *The Madison Review*. Her chapbook, *Fairview Road*, was published in February 2015 by Finishing Line Press. She has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize three times. She lives in Jersey City, NJ, where she teaches yoga, movement, and writing—flows between them as it were.

ASHLEY SEITZ KRAMER has won the Ruth Stone Prize, the Schiff Prize, the Utah Writers' Contest, and most recently, the 2014 Zone 3 Press First Book Award in poetry. She earned her MA from Ohio University and her MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts, and she taught college writing in Ohio for a decade. She now lives in Salt Lake City, where she is an assistant dean at Westminster College and a doctoral student in education, culture and society at the University of Utah. Her first book, *Museum of Distance*, was released by Zone 3 Press in the fall of 2015.

BRIAN LAIDLAW is a poet-troubadour from Northern California. He has released the poetry collections Amoratorium (Paper Darts Press) and The Stuntman (Milkweed Editions), each of which includes a companion album of original music; another full-length poetry collection called *The Mirrormaker* is also forthcoming from Milkweed. Brian continues to tour nationally and internationally as a folksinger, and will be joining the creative writing PhD program at the University of Denver in Fall 2016.

DAVID LEE, retired, splits his time between Seaside, OR; Mesquite, NV; and Boulder, UT, where he scribbles and wanders available trails and byways, all at about the same rate and pace. He is currently in intense training to achieve his goal of becoming a World Class Piddler. His new book, *Bluebonnets, Firewheels, and Brown Eyed Susans*, will be out in early 2017 from Wings Press, and he will be teaching poetry in the MFA program at the University of Nevada/Reno this fall.

SANDRA MARCHETTI is the author of *Confluence*, a full-length collection of poetry from Sundress Publications (2015). She is also the author of four chapbooks of poetry and lyric essays, including *Sight Lines* (Speaking of

Marvels Press, 2016), Heart Radicals (ELJ Publications, 2016), A Detail in the Landscape (Eating Dog Press, 2014), and The Canopy (MWC Press, 2012). Sandra's poetry appears widely in Subtropics, Ecotone, Green Mountains Review, Word Riot, Blackbird, Southwest Review, and elsewhere. Her essays can be found at The Rumpus, Words Without Borders, Mid-American Review, Whiskey Island, and other venues. Currently, she is a lecturer in interdisciplinary studies at Aurora University outside of her hometown of Chicago.

MEREDITH MCDONOUGH lives in St. Louis, MO, where she takes care of a little girl who prefers to wear just one shoe. She teaches, makes glutton-free deserts, and her poems have appeared in *Linebreak*, *RHINO*, *Juked*, and elsewhere. One day she will master Olivia Newton-John's dance to "Physical."

OWEN MCLEOD'S poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *New England Review, BOAAT, Willow Springs, the minnesota review, Bellevue Literary Review,* and elsewhere. By day, Owen is a philosophy professor at Lafayette College; by night, a studio potter. In the fleeting intervals between, he struggles to be a poet.

DAVID MOOLTEN is a physician specializing in transfusion medicine, and he lives, writes, and practices in Philadelphia. His verse has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *The Georgia Review, North American Review,* and *Water~Stone*. His most recent book, *Primitive Mood*, won the T.S. Eliot Prize from Truman State University Press and was published in 2009.

TRAVIS MOSSOTTI was awarded the 2011 May Swenson Poetry Award for his first collection of poems *About the Dead* (USU Press, 2011), and his second collection *Field Study* won the 2013 Melissa Lanitis Gregory Poetry Prize (Bona Fide Books, 2014). Mossotti has also published two chapbooks, and recent poems of his have appeared in issues of the *Antioch Review, Beloit Poetry Journal, Southern Review,* and elsewhere.

AMY O'REILLY lives in Omaha, NE where she is a student in the MFA program at Creighton University and an instructor in the university's English department. When she is not writing poetry or grading papers, she enjoys teaching her cats to meow on command and cooking with her amateur-stand-up-comedian husband.

KATE PETERSON earned an MFA from Eastern Washington University in Spokane, where she lives and works as an adjunct professor. Her poetry, nonfiction, and interviews have been published and are forthcoming in many journals such as *The Sierra Nevada Review, Glassworks, Willow Springs, The Examined Life Journal, Baldhip*, among others.

NATE PRITTS is the director and founding editor of *H_NGM_N* (2001), an independent publishing house that started as a mimeograph 'zine, and the author of seven books of poetry, most recently *Right Now More Than Ever* (2013) and the forthcoming *Post Human*. Nate lives in the Finger Lakes of New York; find him in the digital world at NatePritts.com

JASON W. SELBY'S poetry has appeared widely, most recently in *North American Review; Boston Review;* and *War, Literature & the Arts.* He was also a finalist in the 2014 River Styx International Poetry Contest. He is editor of his hometown newspaper, the *Times-republican*, and lives in very rural southern Iowa with fellow writer Jennifer Pruiett-Selby and their three young children.

KAREN SKOLFIELD'S book, *Frost in the Low Areas* (Zone 3 Press), won the 2014 PEN New England Award in poetry. She received the 2015 Robert Winner Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America. New poems appear in *Baltimore Review, Crab Orchard Review, Crazyhorse, Indiana Review, Forklift, Ohio*, and others. Skolfield is an Army veteran and teaches writing to engineers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

SARAH J. SLOAT lives in Frankfurt, Germany, a stone's throw from Schopenhauer's grave. Her poems and prose have appeared in *Passages North, Whiskey Island,* and *Beloit Poetry Journal*. Sarah's chapbook of poems on typefaces and texts, *Inksuite*, is available from Dancing Girl Press, which also published *Heiress to a Small Ruin* in 2015.

DEREK SUGAMOSTO is a writer/editor from a small town in the Metro Detroit area of Michigan. His work has been published in *Greatest Lakes Review, Orange Coast Review, Dogwood, Sheepshead Review, Tulane Review,* and apt.

NANCY TAKACS is the 2016 winner of the Juniper Prize for poetry; her collection *The Worrier* will be published by the University of Massachusetts Press in 2017. She has two other books of poems, including *Blue Patina* recently published by Blue Begonia Press; and four chapbooks, one of which, *Red Voice*, will be out shortly from Finishing Line Press. Her poems have recently been published in the *Harvard Review, terrain.org, Hayden's Ferry Review*, and *Kestrel*.

J.R. TORISEVA'S work has also appeared in or is forthcoming from *The Cincinnati Review, Descant, Fulcrum, The Fiddlehead, CV2, Prism International, 14 Hills, Nimrod, The Adirondack Review, Grey Sparrow Journal, Soundings East, JACKET,* and *Days I Moved Through Ordinary Sound* (City Lights Books, 2009), among others. J.R.'s been awarded a waiter scholarship to

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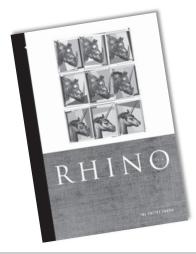
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