



SUGAR HOUSE REVIEW

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SUGAR HOUSE REVIEW

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SUGAR HOUSE REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT POETRY MAGAZINE

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MRS. & MRS.
MENGLÉTEAUX

met at a movie picture show
thirty-seven years ago
Opal & Faye:
faux pearls from the trousseaux hair of ash gray
crow feathers worn quite low dress from Bombay
a mothball strip show shoes she crocheted
now dancing slow
swigging Pernod
they lean and they sway
on wooden parquet
Tom & her Huck
with three cats and a duck
these Mss. know love
—you wouldn't believe
the lives they have grieved
as Madam & Eve—
yet the joie de vivre
this warm august eve!
Merriam & Webster
Tracy & Hepburn
sea salt & pepper
in blue sky fair weather
the Mss. huddle together
collecting bright, cast off feathers

IOWA LANDSCAPE WITH TWO YOUNG LOVERS

1/ Crossing to Allamakee

They lay low in a field of wind-blown corn:
ribbons of twining leaves scratched feeble words;
roots, like lewd talons from overlooked birds,
clutched clods of huddled earth. She was forlorn:

pricked to the slow mill of gravel and wheel;
the cold quivering lights that exposed pale
ditch grasses and wire fences; distant male
voices; the greedy pigs addressing steel

feeders; iterant lows. In blue-black light
they crossed the county line, a dull black clutch
of nightshade berries stained her hands and much
of their sudden panic slipped into the night.

And when the brightened sky held out its hand,
they took it, rose into the heavens and.

2/ Waiting Room

Everything was white: the ceiling, the floor,
the walls, the frosted window and its block
of light, the straight-backed metal chairs, the clock
whose hands were still, the backplate, deadbolt and door

that would reveal a brilliant sun-slapped hall
that would clearly lead to light-filled rooms where men
and women wait with stock replies for *When?*
and *When again?* each like a pull-string doll

who fixes its crystal gaze on the dead spaces
above their heads. And what was said would change
perspective: shift, delete, reroute, derange;
its answers (any answer) would strike their faces

with light, the kind they found in Allamakee
that night, which seems, by now, an eternity.

FINGERSMITH

Dark his desk he twists candle wax and sliced moon crafting bone
the woman singing clack clack below the window night pulled close
her shawl she sings he twists red wax muscles placed inside skin
she sings clack clack bones bump skin walls near moon sliced fingers
wrinkles above bone clack clack a sound he thinks he dreams he
loved a woman in dark at his desk trimming bones clack clack scalpel
clacks desk clacks window above her singing shawl wrapped close to
skin he can't make smooth.

DEATH OF THE CONSERVATIONIST'S WIFE

The bison conservationist is being interviewed on the radio tonight. On air, he says, "There is one holy pleasure on a train: enormous windows pouring frame by frame into the eye." He steers the conversation like he maps his land. The interviewer asks about commercial use (or meat). The conservationist says, "They weigh two thousand pounds—outrun the quarter horse." His voice is thin, the words on wires. "They're big as towers—sleepy mammals. This is all it is," he says.

On his land, he thinks, The city snow is cleared, but there are signs for falling ice. Here, the trees spruce up and splinter like a thousand fingers, leafless. Yet, this is what it is—winter ice, and what can you do, even when it falls, even if it hits.

THE LIST OF GOATS

The goat hopes to become a mountain.
That was how I thought. I listed it
with the ideas I intuited
that spring: I was unread.

The lemon tree was all yellow
in wait, as my theory mind.
The teacher & priest lectured.
My book & I talked.
Reading was found.
I was twenty-one, writing in my *Moby Dick*,
my first note.

I am the sun with fifty sails.
I am adrift at the horizon.

Included that with the speculations I turned
in my hypothetical season ... I'm absorbed
after a few items, observations,
my fingers follow down:
the goat itself
the dreaming of the goat
the goat braying on the rock
me as the goat
goat peaking through dawn.

The mind hopes it becomes
something moving.

WHERE WE KEEP THE ANIMALS

Took the dog to the groomer. They kept him
in a cage in the back. He was trimmed
down to fuzz, a bright new bandana
tied around his neck, his unshaven head
too big for the rest of his body. The groomer
girl was mad the dog acted like a dog,
because he didn't like the clippers, politely
though awkwardly kept jumping from the table.
I'd jump from the table too if a strange woman
tried to shave my entire body while she stood
me on a table with the leash around my neck. Woof!
When I came to pick him up, I paid twice,
once with a credit card, once with her complaints,
took him on a nylon lead through automatic doors,
lifted him into my car, butt like a shaved peach with a tail.

Late night, I walk him in his new look, the shape
of his body no longer protected by fur. We walked
among houses with the lights on, temporary shelter,
as they all must be. Creatures in the desert
we wait for the desert to take us, but for now
we put up houses against the rain that will come
tomorrow, turn the light on in the living room,
I walked the dog among these houses, a series
of paper lanterns lighting my life, blunted moon
behind us with its series of scarves from the far border
of the storm, my dog with his singular skull
sniffing the smells of the world, his snout
like a magnet attached to something spectacular
in the matt of grass beneath a maple, such
that his whole body braces against my will. My ribs
feel like onion skin, the paper shape outside.
The sprinkler mists above my knee. Bodies
in every lantern float above the river and sand.

BREAKWATER

The Manufactory of copper paint,
 locked above its sum of antique pollutions,
and Ten Pound Island's gulls, were quiet,
 stubbed like push-pins on a windward beach.

All afternoon, we'd studied whales
 that church their calves in aureatic troughs
below the surface, or breach the glassine
 ovals of their prints at George's Banks.

No one saw the Carolina Warbler
 plummet into the boat. Imperial-
yellow, olive-green, it hung its three-inch
 vehemence on one and then another

of us, reappearing to clutch the band
 around a pony tail, or balance on a sandal.
Admonished not to touch it, we were instructed
 that northeast gales had forced it

for days above the water. Varnished black,
 the pinprick of its eye examined us,
we thought. *See it see us*, narcissine, we called.
 In fact, it needed us only not to sink

to continue—its fine, twig-colored claws
 gripped to the deck, its feathers scumbled
in its resistance *not to*—as the wind persisted,
 the breakwater's tonnage of granite

abrading glossy light, and at the bow
 a raptus, an opening rose of water
sun inhabited, the vermeil of its corolla
 breaking as a covenant once did,

sudden, brutal in the down-rush, beautiful.

AWAY FROM THE FLOCK

As children tripped against the first hard surf
at Banda Acheh, in New Hampshire,
on a lake where bluish ghost-glow rose
with snow the wind twisted into funnels
above water thickening under them,
ice planes boomed, adjusting at their seams.

Half a world away, a continental plate
shifted into long waves the grey gauze
of TV pixels would make look small,
rolling across beach chairs into palm trees,
little people clinging almost soundlessly
to wrinkles in the muddy current.

At the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston
days later, an acrid burn gathering
at the back of my throat, I sat before
Damien Hirst's sheep, dead of natural causes.
Afloat in a glass tank of formaldehyde,
palely green, it balanced on hoof-tips as
dread does, tendons exposed in the wool
behind each foreleg, and, in its dark face,
eyes rolled upward under tissue-y lids.

Banda Acheh. At a window sleeted
closed, beside a table in which a woman's
back thinned to virtual object, above
a pond white pines and light snow
couldn't interrupt, a fox's reddish
blur skittered, my moral twin, toward
pleating water cold hadn't claimed.

Moving men, in Boston, wrestled
to uncrate the sinews of an art infarcted
as a dying heart. Downstairs, the announcers'
sentences, excited, lengthened exponentially on CNN,
as if what's arrhythmic weren't
life. I couldn't turn it off.

PROLOGUE

Last night we fell asleep before the end
of the world, another lengthy TV special:
bursting gamma rays, rogue asteroids,
super volcanoes, latent nuclear fiascos.
Awake until computer technologists
created intelligences turned against us,
we didn't wonder why. To be human
is first to try to flee, but then to burn,
drown, freeze and gasp with surfeit
and/or lack. The two bouquets of dahlias,
burnt orange and lavender-tipped, shading
to purple, that you brought back from the market
and mixed, drank hard anyway, their stems
thickly visible in a clear vase, their petals,
candle-flame shaped, perking up.

When we awakened, the end of weeks
of drought and the seventh and final threat
to existence coincided. The worst news
wasn't hard to try to bear. A flooding
fragrance, sweeter than the dahlias,
streamed through the open windows:
dirt cream parsley burnt sugar ...
We opened the door to the porch
that hot ghost had pressed against for so long.

BLEAK GREENBELT SECURITY

Atmospheric horses, vector
holes attack the average
bug watcher's plumbing.

Just phishing—no warrants.
Still the raids bagged
a spectrum of immigrants.

The infected home user's
hauling cold junk
on the Blog Express.

NASDAQ GALAXIES CAPTURED

Consumer 51, our powerful
new index forecasts minkes
will revoke the slowdown.

Our investors understand the universe
and trade only “neutral” stars.
Our astronomers control Antennae.

The barrier. The ban. The beat.
Dow! Dow! Dow! Enough oceans!
Symbolic fins can’t pass for earnings.

ALIEN SEX

I stood on the porch that night,
the lights from a parent's car just vanishing
at the end of the street. My friend and I
had been to a movie, *It Came From
Outer Space*. Above me, the stars
had lost their innocence. My block

throbbed with threats from distant galaxies.
Because I was late, I entered the house
quietly, hoping to sneak unnoticed upstairs.
All seemed normal enough for the usual
Saturday night of too much drinking—
My parents, asleep, he in his chair

in front of the guttering television screen,
she splayed out on the studio couch
in a nearby room. How quickly
the known world can turn strange.
I knew what it was when I saw it
on the living room floor. I had swiped

them from Crown Drugs and filled them
with water to ambush passing cars. This one,
viscous, lay damply coiled on the rug
like the sloughed husk of a newborn alien
that must have streaked from deepest space
even as my friend and I hunkered down

in the Southtown Theater's three-dimensional
darkness. My brain, agitated,
could come to only two conclusions,
one so fantastic my mind refused
the gross picture it posed. The only credible
way to explain it: Extraterrestrials.

Either way, I had no choice but to destroy
the evidence, picking the sticky chrysalis
skin up with a thick wad of Kleenex

and shoving it deep in the kitchen trash
right alongside my own astonishment.
Upstairs, I tried hard to distract myself

with prayer, but that wet rubber
crackled in my mind's air like static
and there was no getting through
that night to the starry kingdom of God.
Next morning at breakfast, I studied them
carefully through my new 3-D glasses,

my father in profile with his coffee
and Sunday paper, Mother a bit
groggy at the stove, tending
pans of bacon and eggs. Nothing
amiss: no telltale scales on his hands,
no saw-toothed tail switching beneath

her gossamer robe. All through breakfast
I stayed vigilant, my eyes as sharp
as Flash Gordon's, my mind hyper
with the ammo of fight or flight.
After breakfast I planned to search
in our backyard for the crater, the mother ship

I knew it would contain.
I would bravely destroy the invaders.
Then it would be my most solemn duty
to inform the world: From now on
here, on Planet Earth, things would never,
ever again be the same.

I HEAR VOICES IN A BOOKSHOP IN
DULUTH, MN

for R. K. Meiners

It was offered in a slow and halting way,
as if the words had to be retrieved
from memory's Lost and Found.
Books ... are ... like ... old ... friends: that's what
he used to say, my teacher and friend,
on those days he came to class unprepared,
days that toward the end occurred more and more often.
He would gently place a stack of his dearest
pals on the desk, gathered, or so it seemed,
at random from his cluttered office,
pick up the one on top, and off he would take
us on a purely improvised ramble,
wonderful journeys full of turns and twists
as if he were tweaking one of his favorite
quotes from Frost to say *No surprise
for the teacher, no surprise for the student.*
I heard his voice again this morning
as I bumbled bee-like among the blossoming
rows of a pleasant sun-lit bookshop.
Contrapuntal, my mother's voice chanted
in my other ear, her words bitter and elegiac,
how college and books had stolen me
from her and made me think I was better
than the rest of the clan. And if it's true
that I lost my innocence not in the backseat
of my Buick but in the endless and musty stacks
of the university library, who can ever believe
the human story would have amounted
to much had not Eve and Adam selfishly
opted for the bitter fruit of knowledge?
And wasn't the apple simply a clever trope
for desire, which tells us to covet whatever
we haven't already got?

Now in the bookstore
coffee shop, my pleasing stack of paperbacks

spread before me on the table like a Shibboleth,
a sign to the unlettered, I think happy thoughts
about original sin, about Satan, creation's
first Sophist. In an hour of browsing
I've lingered in Tuscan twilight with a bowl
of cold garlic soup and glass of Chianti,
bold yet unpretentious. I've unearthed good news
about butter and eggs, and coming closer
to the historical Jesus, I have found the old one
suits me better, and Buddha perhaps
better yet. Sipping my cappuccino, I admire
my new friends, their bright jackets,
their distinctive Garamond or Palatino dialects.
Beyond the glass window the unabridged edition
of the fallen world keeps turning its pages,
and I will be sorry to have to put it down.

THE RECOVERY ROOM

This is where they bring you
when the knife has finished
its work, when that small army
of hands has quelled
the sudden riot
in a distant province of your body.
Here your breath must learn
to stand again on its own
two lungs, your heart
prove it can still carry on
its own its steadfast little tune.
Here memory must forget
its losses, your tongue remember
your name, your date of birth.
Beneath the blaze of lights
you see the masked faces
leaning over you, and at last
hear their invitation to awake.
There is the priest, still clutching
the tiny vial of oil in his pocket.
You will not need it.
The world is, once again,
a breast swollen with milk.
Drink deeply. Put that other
hunger behind you. Your place
at the table has been saved.

RECENT SIGHTING OF A 1962 CADILLAC

Fins bristling and grille smiling,
top-down in December,
the blue car cruises: a living fossil.

The driver of this terrible lizard
keeps his own speed limit, fails to signal, glides
through stop signs confident as a general.

Is the man behind the wheel a connoisseur,
freezing a highlight in red taillights,
like a fly preserved in pitch?

Is the driver also the driven?
Founder of Detroit, Antoine Cadillac:
names, a place, a product tarnished.

BROTHER KENNY (BROTHER BIRD)

in memoriam

There was a tumbler pigeon in your hand,
brother Kenny, elder brother, king-archer,
its unbridled flight above the chicken wire
filled with speckled eggs and caged birds.
They roost inside the mouths of gargoyles.
Their hooked nails climb the brittle stars
among the charred oak and smokestack
into the dominion of a feather blue sky.

Inside your perch at a Veteran's Hospital
you twice tried to raise your skeletal arms
and lift a throne of angels above the earth.
Was that a lighthouse nest you warmed
as the north wind shook your body down
snapped the masthead and hollow bones
as those seabird eggs broke into blossom
and sang in your cupped and weary hands?

You held crossbow and Apollo's arrow,
brother Kenny, elder brother, king-archer,
your wild boar tail and black bear heart,
tanned and skinned, teeth straightened,
pinned to walls too frail for majesty.
You fell, curled, out of your wheelchair
like crumpled paper in a schoolyard ruse
as stray pigeons pecked at your sleeve.

The tenement neighbor dropped the baby
starlings into a barrel of fire at the curb
and you whimpered from the third floor
railing that rose and swayed like a ship
its flag raised into the insignificant air.
The ash and snow fell over the garden.
Had you looked into the wishing well
the way one stared into a fire?

There was a song sparrow in your hand,
brother Kenny, elder brother, king-archer,
one last letter tied to its wounded leg.
Its angel wings called you to the window
one iridescent last kiss to delicate lips.
You released their glory older gray bird
and fell to earth one hand on the wheel
the homing pigeon tumbling heavenward.

SHALLOW TURQUOISE GRAVES

Juarez, Mexico

Decoding a landscape
of custom cars and tacky gold jewelry in the city built
on a nameless mass of women—

At a particular time each day—

most barely out of puberty—strangled, raped and mutilated,
some with nipples bitten clean off,

as though predetermined by some unnamed gods—

and in the colonias,
women stumble home in darkness after ten hour shifts.

the sun slants deliriously—

Down unpaved roads, past black cars with tinted windows,
guided only by occasional laughter
and distant radios.

soaking the mesa in turquoise gloom—

The maquilas, lined up on the border like miserable sentinels,
where women assemble clothes and shoes and television
sets for chemical burns and five dollars a day.

last light ignites the tips of her boots like a torch—

The reporters: see only patterns, not people. No women,
only templates to fill with pertinent details:

hints at the soil gathered loose around her hastily buried body—

this one had tattoos, this one wore turquoise rings. For them
the city is a semblance of order,
like a discarded wedding dress—

a loosely spun web over a black hole, a whole populace
that smells of blood—

the dream ends here, in a city dressed like a cemetery of the future—

what does it matter what you call it?

AFTER THE SORROW

for Paul

A match touched to a Marlboro Red,
your cupped hands a bulwark
against wind, the glow is a beacon,
a portent to deny, a labor to hide.

With the Lao night sky darker
than the only true question, (why?)
is there something else to sense
to sound, to see, to know, to ask?

Is the lotus truly inclined to white
like Viet traveling vestments, or is
hoa cuc, the yellow chrysanthemum,
known to altars that touch absence?

Or how is it that a flower's beauty fades
in your dawn and three distracted villagers,
eating sour tamarind and red lychee,
have rest, have nothingness through your toil?

Hiding that death in the wet greenness,
you arise anew from the elephant grass,
a knowing monstrosity, a god of sorrow
marking mud with vulcanized rubber.

GAZA, JANUARY 2009

Blackhawk rotors rotate
and artillery brings
exactness, brings the truth
to those who have lingered
in a hard marketplace
gesturing, splayed fingers
haggling over Chinese
knock-offs or a fair price
for melons that reveal
orange inside when dropped.
The minaret wobbles,
the muezzin is silent
because some do not know
the lone necessity,
doubt. Here certainty is
physics, shrapnel, and shells,
the heart pierced by design,
force ordained by worthies,
those who live to destroy,
to repeat, to defend
sacred lexis. The tongues
in long confused texts speak
through parchment, through curses,
through claim of righteousness—
plastique belt, assault rifle.
This is where certainty
reigns, where white phosphorous
gleams like the Light-bearer,
falling again to earth,
to our pitchblende darkness.

INFERTILE PLANET

You consume his wealth like a moth.
Surely every man is but a breath.

Psalm 39

You worry in God's turn,
not believing in the darkness of night,
or the design of day,
or the way its moth finds you drunk,
asleep, the light burning through your
eyelids to turn forgetfulness to DNA.
Everything is heavy.
You see Euclid's burden from underneath.
John shaped his baptism in lead. Hand on head, genuflect.
Against the glass, the moth's winged beat is hairy and dogged.
You let the worries bead like mercury—embedded
in between strands of protein and muscle.
You flex that heavy metal before the altar
of unwind, re-wish, of playback and false start.
But all the signs read water, funnel, rivulet.
Moths should be gray and brown but this moth
eats the light until his thorax is red
and his cracked-up wings throw a bottle of blue
onto your forehead as the blue dries
negative in his wind.

What we observe is not nature itself,
but nature exposed to our method of questioning.

Werner Heisenberg

Our neighbor John shapes his story in between trays of lead
and screen. He's shaking out the dirt where the lives
of dolls are born. He has found: a hairpin, a quarter,
a shell (not from snail), a bottle brush, a toothpaste cap
and forty-two miles of nylon hair. John wears a hat
like Indiana Jones'. He scales back the soft walls of neighbor
and road and finds the shore of Lake Bonneville opening
baby doll's blue eyes wide, mouthing "mommy" at the bridge

of plastic and sea salt. Is there anything more enticing
than dirt free from dreck or the feel of that baby doll
resting softly in your elbow's crook?
John's dirt is antiseptic. Not even rocks pollute.

How can you say to my soul,
"Flee as a bird to your mountain!"

Psalm 11

Baby's blue eyes wide and crying on the bridge of the station.
That baby missed her train. She missed her mama
too but the train promised her bray and rock,
clearing seventeen Ecclesiastical Visions by noon.
The baby measured knee high as Fourth of July corn
but baby's chanting about Desdemona and her stained
glass leotard called the train back to port. "Desdemona"
baby cries from between the cracks in the windows.
The sparks carry baby's syllables all the way into Iowa
where they fall hollow as if on plastic windows.
In order to catch her calls, Iowa promises to
wash its glass back into fecund soil.

It is no good to try to stop knowledge from going forward.
Ignorance is never better than knowledge.

Edwin Fermi

By clearing seventeen Visions by noon
her fallen apple, her only meal in May,
St. Teresa the Eighth clung to mutations and evolutions,
even selections. To explain the hankerings of some
besmirched priests she sang a song about defiance
and perpetuation.

Only the sky will attest
Only the moon can confess
The boys you bring to me
Will howl like girls for you.

As the church must foster forwards
so must the main line of men. And though it turned
out that the main line of man was a disrobed penis
behind the choir's baton, the priesthood
ensured its progeny. The boys sing
Ave Maria but turn their cheeks to Father John.

They will still bring forth fruit in old age.
They will be full of sap and green,
to show that Yahweh is upright
Psalm 92

A fall apple turns mealy by May.
Things aren't as beautiful as they should be.
I count flowers one pink line but not two.
I wait on the couch for the mailman who
promised to bring me myrrh and money,
but instead I get a postcard from the city of Hawaii—
squares of white hotels and frozen beaches.
You may as well have sent me a missive
from the barren moon.
Even the mailman has turned ugly
his once packed abs and tanned legs
have grown sinewy and webbed from stringing
himself from truck to box, box to slot.
He's a spider man without palp or fang.

The first principle is that you must not fool yourself—
And you are the easiest person to fool.
Richard Feynman

Things are beautiful but not as they should be.
Oh but look at the wind. Beaufort was right.
On the sea of clouds I see the gentle breeze
of perhaps scattered white horses.
Raise me up into the bridal reins,

let me see beauty with sun always behind me
and trees not as differentiated leaves but
as hounds of green braying to be let off
their leash and track the ocean back
to its source. The wind holds the zygote.
It plays craps with the tiny cells. "Behold
the flagellum." Wind rolls snake eyes.

The children also of his servants shall inherit it.
Those who love his name shall dwell therein.

Psalm 69

Even off her leash, the dog,
pressed plain, is not a wolf.
In the entrance to an old coal mine
in the way back of Yellowstone
a fire pulls her under. Five pups
down, one to go and she licks
the salty work off her own legs.
She hasn't eaten for days. The old
taste of meat makes her mad
for her own birth. She mouths just
at the caul at first, then at the tubes
of flesh. Her teeth bite, gentle
as a dove. Her stomach full again
she tries to stand. Whether she meant
to eat them all is a love dug deep.

Prediction is very difficult,
especially about the future.
Niels Bohr

In 1927, in the entrance to an old coal mine
I got knocked up as I was knocked
against the seeping mine's walls.
The way my back fit, molded into the scrapes

the men cracked with their picks and their hammers
made me believe this was how it was supposed
to happen. There I was, Mother Mary, holding
onto two rocks, hanging by the strength of my
own fingertips, an inverted mountain climber,
inside out spider, a foreshadow or an acrobat
I stood high and wide. Stars aligned for my meant
to be. The sea was dirty between my legs smelling
of dead plankton. I wanted live catch.

He turns a desert into a pool of water,
and a dry land into water springs.

Psalm 108

The man made vessels with his pick and hammer.
He lost his money and his daughter in Vegas.
He sold his car to a clown for a sack of golden
raisins and a gallon of water to catapult them
back to their original soft grace.
Tucson is no place for a man
and his pewter pots.
On a sky-tear, he'll paint their metal shells a watered down
paste made from red dirt and the estrogen of horse piss.
With cold teeth, he bites an inscription.
He plants a basket weaver into the metal flesh.
The metal turns sour then crumbles in his hand
as if he had no idea that succession made history
endometrial. He has no fire left to cauterize the wound.

Perfect as the wing of a bird may be, it will
never enable the bird to fly if unsupported by
the air. Facts are the air of science. Without
them a man of science can never rise.

Ivan Pavlov or possibly Linus Pauling

On a skyscraper, water shells down
in cascades on just-washed glass.
The window washer hangs alone
except for his cords and bench,
his squeegee and his shaky bucket.
He plays his own God swinging
there to the umbrellas-less
and hat-free down below. They
think he's pigeon shit as he slides
the window dirt off the rubber
cussing and slow. His drip collects.

They are free from burdens of men,
neither are they plagued like other men
Psalm 73

Playing God to the monkeys swinging
softly in their cages, the Biologist knows
the experiment had gone wrong when
the monkeys started smoking cigarettes
after the Professor had stuck them with the patch.
With their Dunills just out of reach
the monkeys taunted the Doctor.
The doctor would have given anything for a drag
of their Turkish fetish but the monkeys
raised their eyebrows against his flirtations.

Even a universe that is completely chaotic, without
any laws or regularities at all, could be supposed to
have been designed by an idiot.

Steven Weinberg

I would have given anything to drag
you out of the river. Your foot was stuck
under a rock, bending your leg upstream

while your hands pounded down to get
someone's attention—not mine. I watched
when your shoulders went blue. I figured
your ankle had numbed. I took your foot off
between the joint and handed it to you.
You hopped off away from me to sit on the bank.
tourniquet by belt, wrinkling nerve by thaw.
You thank me by bleeding out into the snow.

Let me hear joy and gladness,
that the bones which you have broken may rejoice.

Psalm 51

When you set about imagining how soft
the universe seems to be made for us,
don't forget how hard the benches are—
the math is, waiting and sleeping are.
Mohs' scale believes in progress and the crumble
of talc and the bite of quartz. But one
to seven is not the difference *six*
but the slide of a hill, the wind's new direction,
a plastic ocean, a chemical garden, an overzealous cell
multiplication, a smelter of broken mountain,
a missing glacier, a lack of water, *don't go*
the absence of a dirt road, the quiz of long love.

DARWINESQUE

A beetle dying in an envelope,
A clam flying from pond to pond.
Darwin's last act was to let the bug go gently
And to then himself, die.
Lucie sees that seeds fly carried by wind or birds
To drop softly beneath our trees,
So what's the matter with Kansas?
We call them ours because they wouldn't be in the Mojave without us.
Beneath them, pods and needles, rocks and seeds, beetles,
Eleven years. A white man and woman, their Asian child.
We call her ours because she wouldn't be here without us,
Our nature evident in Ben's sadness and anger,
His unmistakable face, our future stowed
In the seed boats Lucie makes,
Floating them ever so swiftly across the marble table
To crash and spill on the ground beneath our feet.

BUDDHA IN THE PINES

We passed the god
In a failing taxi
The lantern's light fell
On the passing backs of whole families
Riding one scooter Things have worn out,
Subject finally only to use
And living among them
One knows [not]
In time passing now and always
The blind child sings more beautifully
Blind on the street in Mumbai
Buddha walked in China
& though Jesus is said to have been in India
The watches are all broken now that grandmother's
Useful fingers have skipped whole generations
The second's hand is his robe, disappearing
Mary wasn't invited to the movement's naming
It was all material
And I no more saw my name
In the auto parts yard surrounding our life
Than I believed prepositions
Signaled a political position
Though touching myself
I often called for something bigger
To please, please reach down and take me
& then the child knocked again at the door

CLEOPATRA VII

I come from a long line of names.

All males—Ptolemy.

All females—Cleopatra,

Arsinoe or Berenice.

As if the names could shape us

like lilies in a pond.

AKHU¹

I wear the uraeus², the rearing cobra
will spit poison if you think me harm.
My tomb contains an exquisite soul
house with a huge courtyard for food.
I never had a problem with enchantments, but now ...
the scarab beetle has almost finished
pushing the sun across the sky
and Octavian's army approaches,
sniveling desert rats who
gnaw at the root of things.
The tone-deaf horde is unmoved
by fluting, poetry, dancing.
They cut a swarth of silence
into the sacred walls of sound.
Today is the end of music, harmony,
the kherep selket³ has turned her back
placed a vial of cobra poison into my tomb.
Augustus will win, but I will not sing for him.

¹ *akhu*—enchantments/sorcery/spells

² *uraeus*—rearing cobra worn as part of the king's headdress, poised to spit poison at enemies

³ *kherep Selket*—one with power over scorpion goddess; scorpion and snake charmer

REED

Where were your friends
when history labeled you?
Where were the soft fronds
of spring yellow growth?
Where were the fingers
that stroked your father's flute
but refrained from the temptation
to float away on its sound?
You bent like papyrus in the wind
or a note in the breath of your country.
The Romans picked you up
like a reed and bent you past
the sadness of a musicless pipe,
alchemised the music into cobra fangs.
O long lost reed flute,
supple like sheer linen
draping your lean torso,
I wish the gods had sustained
music, I wish the crocodiles
still wore jewels. I wish the essence
of roses overwhelmed our silver
flutes and they would begin
to sing a new elegy written
by the wind playing on the reed
rushes embroidering the Nile.
O silenced queen,
let them put you in your tomb
and do the opening of the eyes
ceremony on all of us
who have become bitter reed,
dry and unkind.

2003 A.D.

Cleopatra, age 14

A book on Caesar
says I've already slept
with Antony, and will soon
sleep with Cnaeus,
Pompey's son.
The book gives
no details, like how
Antony got past
the palace guards
or if my father
was complicit in the matter,
forsaking Ptolemy XIII,
my betrothed.
The book doesn't even say
if I enjoyed it.

AUTUMN SUTRA

I wanted a leaner, a sparer style.

I wanted birds to be able to fly
through the branches
after the pruning.

In a chastened season,
why does my longing
appear everywhere?

*on the walk, fallen
crabapples smear of ochre
crushed under heel*

Conundrum to be solved by techné,
though perhaps

I loomed larger:
I wanted to be the altar,
not to kneel there.

REVIVAL

The way the mountains bled purple that
one blue dusk announced
what savory thrusts were being born
inside us. Blessed are our bodies in clubs
like camp-meetings charged to holy filaments.
Bless our husky-frolicking hymns,
and our tumultuous strains come bearing
down. We arise and drop, arise
and sway. Twigs crackle beneath our soles,
and those white-gloved hands encircle.

ROADBLOCKS

Given said variance, rather my side of the orchard,
is it merely about the hook-up where I'm legislating
other pods in daisies, an enormous yellow grove
between the gurney and the exhilaration of Formica
in her eyes? One touch of my hand, the gavel lands,
and she's constellated. I wandered through a feverish
belief in teeth biting grass, in half-awake moans.
Across the majority of night, breasts, waists, throats pure
as punctuated skies. I took old Blue to cafes, spoke grief
to all the distingué faces, also too, in the fly business.

THERAPY

Ashes of fire in his mouth, rain sloshed in
his head. He felt caressed once like a skyline.
Day of warm sunlight drowsing languidly
which was the damp belly of his sorrow.
He thought of his mother's muted, joyous cries,
and slumped further, only now in memory, smoke
curled from his lovers' lips, bursts of ghost-snakes.
He ambled, retracing steps from The Convenience Store,
yet all he could see were industrial clouds, dreaming
of avenues that ran straight and clean.

HEROIC SIMILE VIA SANTA FE

after Robert Hass

When Frank was shot in Leone's *C'era una volta il West*,
the scene bred in the music of Morricone,
he twisted like he'd been punched:

Who are you?

Hundred men lay timbers,
slamming spikes in the jejune air.
Jill carrying buckets of water.

They stopped work,
imagined the day done.

Could these men make Santa Fe?

I don't know.
I can't do anything.
The path from here to that trench
is undecipherable. Frank, laying dead,
has lulled the whole scene.

I watch from my room:
more workers fetched from a train,
Cheyenne perched in sand.

MIDSUMMER: RUNNING

for M.M.P.T.

Day One

It's late morning, and the highway lights are on,
their triad starings still bright. Their halogen—
I'm not paying for it.

Day Two

I've killed more fruit flies in the past two days.
Have you landed yet?
The sprung walls are pockmarked now,
pox-marred, shingled.
I didn't know they bled like that.

Day Three

And that slash of tree bark
lying in phone booth shadow, how
it looked like a dead seagull.
Now is where I confess: *we always lie and
we always enjoy always the sheer lying,
we, like chameleons, or salamanders,
in the light or dark, it doesn't matter.*

Day Four

This new South, where leaves become frogs
on the Longleaf Trace, cardinals bloom
four-directioned flame spun red.
My Northern eyes still work,
mostly. I'm lying again.

Day Five

Have you landed yet, dearest cliffhanger?
Remember the time we borrowed that car
and drove to a place south of South?
Here we are, I guess,
except you're not.

Day Six

The windshield speckles.
The trees, black on black.
On my right, the blur of neon, a bar.
On my left, three cars enjambed slick.
Sixty miles, night. I'm coming.

PORCH SITTERS SIPPIN' SWEET TEA IN HEAVEN

Dialogue between Janie Crawford and Pheoby Watson

1.

Chile, it's not about the water, though *love is lak de sea*. Faults always lift under siege—. It's 'bout the sex: *it's a movin' thing*. Katrina flaunt her diva complex, *but still and all*, her stiletto stilted, & that slut slipped her hips over da Big Easy, lap danced over da Bayou, strut through the French Quarter. A harlot in humid perfume stuck, tugged her girdle, hula-hooped like a wooden spoon, while Dixie's sugar spilled, bystanders eyed, an ankle bracelet snagged the head of a tombstone. Seduction rain danced the Creole Sea.

2.

It was when we was leavin' or fixin' to consider it da first time me and Tea Cake heart breakin' from da Muck back in '28. Dat's whut 'trina act lak: a wildebeest of a storm lak de one in de Everglades.

The sky had God's handwriting in its foreshadows: a sepia photo tinged wit da rust of waitin.

3. (Pheoby speaking)

Uh-huhn, you knowed it too! Spoke wit dat conjure woman who say 'trina left here hurried in a halter-top, a fiend for Louisiana's five-day erection, pining over some lover: a sultry waltz to New O'Lean's moan.

4.

Girl, look lak Death came through
there! The horizon kneeled
spirits flood da sky. Watch
God parade: parasols balloon
under the shimmy of Spanish moss shawls.
Carrions epigraph tombstones.
An insatiable rape submerged da 'glades.

RUINED NYLONS

for Debra Jean Palfrey, the D.C Madam

Where dates palm,
Florida's root suspends

by a noose knotted at the thigh
of her nylons. She was careful,

manicured acrylic nails,
& polished each in flagrant beet.

Removed her rings—not
a run on her nylon rope,

then swung & wrestled
a gale of grief from soiled laundry.

Death's her escort—
for free.

AFTERMATH OF THE PERFECT POUT

Carmen Jones murders the “flyboy.”

I seduce a licked cigarette,
contemplate how a stiletto

can be used as a weapon,
flick red-tipped ashes

into the wineglass on my bathroom windowsill.
Patrol lights redden below; oversee a tarot’s hand,

bury garter-less butts in the space
between the pane & the screen ‘cause I can

be unfiltered here
in my reflection, spend time silhouette.

The crime scene flickers in redrum lipstick,
a hummingbird whines.

My snuffed cigarette’s the only evidence
swat under a dagger sole.

WISHES

*January 7, the father drives the children to the
two-lane bridge and throws them into the water.*

I toss them like pennies off the bridge,
into the past, each wish
undoing us. I imagine your howl
and hear its echo from below.

I don't look at their faces, but grip
them from behind, one arm
across the torso, the other hand
clasping a small thigh.

I'm grateful that they struggle,
each kick and wriggle
a reminder of how you push
and squirm beneath me.

You said you'd do better
than me, but these children
stick between us, hold us
together like glue.

It will take blood to free us,
and the ripping of skin. Tonight,
I grant your wishes. Each bundle drops
from my arms like an offering.

SUNDAY EVENING

*The twins were found dead Sunday night
in their father's home after police got a call
around 8pm requesting they check on them.*

We found him lying
on the bed—
not asleep, but neither
quite awake—his eyes fixed
on the wall behind us,
and below him, tucked
beneath the bed
were the two small
bodies, bundled together
in a large towel and placed
face down.

How long had they lain
there? And him
above them, covering
them with his body,
the way a man might
throw himself on a grenade
and wait
in that long still moment
for the world to erupt.

I WANT YOU

The smallest draft + the door slams, our lives
are the cause of so much wind,
the effects of. This morning breakfast
was the result of a winged bird
which can't fly, therefore sustenance
as turbulence of idea, design vs.
actual use. Examples abound: these hands
through centuries have learned
to make their way to ancestry tools—hammer
vs. pen, key in one, doorknob in
the other. Maybe we're all only coasting
on fate's breath, maybe I've made
my way to this room because eons back
some rock fell on a Neanderthal
not related to me, which raises questions
of luck and kismet, questions re:
my failure to listen as my future wife
tells me of her day's drags,
and every time I don't listen I prove
the rock fell on the wrong neanderthal
and every time I don't listen invites
a turbulence of self, of who
I hoped I'd be by now. Yes, there were
plans, for whom are there not?
But then different tools and meals, therefore
the man I hoped to become
(age 16, stealing peaks at thumbed *Cosmos*,
discovering How To Please)
remains turbulent, a self: our lives are cups
we tip and sip from, set right, refill.
We are both the drinking and what's drunk,
together in the dark or miles apart,
and the wind outside so loud so loud so quiet.

OVER LUNCH

You are telling me about North Dakota.
The flatness, the relief of the landscape
and how blue the fields became early in the morning
and evening. Early July, you say, is as though
you can't tell if you're driving toward a lake,
or not. You can't tell if the world
is going to swallow you whole into its blueness,
or just take you one piece at a time.
Now your ears are left in New York,
while your feet are still planted in the prairie
among crops still frozen as winter keeps
all things hidden.
I glance under the table to see if your legs
are still with you. Somehow
you move about
from one place to another. Somehow you can even run
through this white city and dry snow.
Outside we walk with our faces to the sky.
I talk about the winds in the north country—
snow blowing in our eyes, what's left of ourselves
in this salt we call home.

THIS TIME IN FEBRUARY

last year,
I went out
to see the angel that had fallen
in the backyard.

Boy, do not lose your eyes.
Do not drop that moon.

YOU SERVED BIRDSONGS

in glass,
white as milk.

A cat sleeps in a red bowl
on a table.

I walked into a river
and the river in the evening turned
into a white stone

a warbler sings and the cat
carries it home in his mouth—

now on my doorstep,
to wear around my neck.

SNAKE RIVER, END OF MARCH

Near-silence along the swirling, pearl-green Snake River, steady tread of footfalls on the path, electric lines from the downstream dam conducting a discourse of power through the canyon and away without a sound. Goose shit along the trail, barest blush of wild carrot, flowers like baby asters rising out of a grayish, alpine moss. Once or twice I startle geese from the bank—they rise up, bellicose, and splash down mid-stream, honks of annoyance drifting swiftly westward on the river's chalky, mineral-rich flow. The tide laps quietly, like a mouse sipping milk from a teaspoon, and I feel, so far away from my family, dazzlingly alone, like an Inca mourning his vanished civilization. These hills resemble Irish mountains in their sculptural grace, their treeless amplitude, their saurian greens and shale browns and straw-colored bands of broom, and where they have been tilled the soil shimmers dark as unrefined chocolate, spring wheat inching sunward to dye them the color of waxed grocery-store limes. They are so steep! The cows appear ant-sized, sure-footed as llamas clinging to sinuous, sun-rippled slopes. The winding country road across the palouse and down to this canyon would be a highway in Ireland, or the Andes, though the nearest town is nothing but silos and crane gantreys to load the river barges with barley. From here you can float all the way to the Pacific Ocean, past apple orchards and salmon ladders, locks and spillways, drowsy horses in winter blankets near a gully painted yellow by swaths of early-blooming daffodils. After a while I climb back to the gravel parking lot and sit at a green picnic table beside my rented Pontiac. Charred remains of hot dogs, a half-eaten lollipop in the grass, sound of songbirds, sporadic hammering—a ranger is repairing the roofs of the picnic pavilions up the road. Otherwise, silence, or nearly. Water slapping riverstones, calm propulsion of heart and lungs, ageless hills like the musculature of buried giants emerging from winter. O broken, the becoming, the becoming—.

THE NEW SOFTWARE

Folks, the new software is here and it is fantastic.

What a delight to use and a terrific enhancement
to productivity all the way around the bases.

Purchasing has hit a homerun with this product.

Folks, to get started you'll find schematics online
if you know the input codes for those
or else some nifty full-color manuals to peruse.

I should say there *will be* when the manuals arrive.

Folks, the manuals are very, ah, rigorous.

Good idea to sign up for some training classes
with a tech guy in the computer lab—
they are working to fix the a/c out there pronto.

Folks, it is not an “intuitive” system, the new software.
Folks, it is not a system but a virtual “environment.”

We will work and live in it like bees in a hive,
like a snail in its shell, without the slime,
which is great, but also without the honey.

DANGEROUS JOURNEYS AND THE WIZARD OF OZ

One kept a knife in his boot.
A truck was completely hand made.
We made love in a ditch in Texas.
Woke up parked on the railroad tracks.

When Dorothy opens the door
and sees Oz for the first time.

A truck was completely hand made.
One swallowed pills to stay awake.
Woke up parked on the railroad tracks.
Officer, I already have a ticket for that.

From sepia toned to brilliant color.

One swallowed pills to stay awake.
Missed a turn, plunged down an embankment.
Officer, I already have a ticket for that.
Peggy's small arms around my waist.

Giggles in the bushes are munchkins.

Missed a turn, plunged down an embankment.
Crossed the bridge on my bike, 110 MPH.
Peggy's head, nestled against my back.
A bear did body work on my Volvo.

What makes the Hottentots so hot?

Missed a turn, plunged down an embankment.
I forgot the gas can was hidden under the hood.
A bear did body work on my Volvo.
One kept a knife in his boot.

There's no place like home, there's no place like home.

TROUT DREAMS

A trout stream appears in the street
and you find a fly rod
leaning against a lamppost,
all set to go with a light tippet
and a royal humpy.

You are on the moon
and your dog is barking
at the earth.
It is so large
against the moon's horizon.
It is a good thing
you are both wearing
your space helmets.

You and your cellmate Frank
argue over whose dream it is.
Frank—in for double murder,
a.k.a. Philadelphia Lawyer—
so convincing, and you wonder,
if it is his dream, where will
you go when he wakes up?

You are driving in your convertible.
You turn on the radio:
it is you reading a poem
about riding on the back
of an enormous leaping trout.

An enormous leaping trout,
you can barely hang on.
Yippee ki ay
under the full moon.

There you are in the LA times:
lying on your belly
in the surf wearing
your black cowboy hat.
Katherine is there, pulling
hard on a bent fly rod.
The fly line is clenched in your teeth.

Yes, April is the cruelest month
and April first is the cruelest day.
You turn on the radio again—
it is the muffled static,
the far away, barley audible,
barking of your dog.

HOW FAR BACK IT GOES

The salamander falls off the leaf
and drifts down the side of a deep
canyon wall into the wild dark
of lazy mountain stream
and begins sucking on the side of a rock
that no man will ever touch or ever care to.
Then some sort of deep disturbed fish
comes up and kisses the ass of the salamander.
Then some other horrible aquatic creature,
something no person living or dead
has ever seen kisses the ass of that fish.
The ass kissing continues through the afternoon
deep, way back, into the dark crags of history
into the very fathomless evil
that no person will ever understand.
Kissing asses goes that far back, that deep.
Now here in a kitchen in the middle of
the plain day you give me an honest hug
and say thank you.
I love that I have no idea what it's for.

A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER

Don't call her vagina a beautiful flower.
Please don't.
If her vagina were a beautiful flower
then she would have bees in her pants
all the time
and it would be impossible to hold her
close enough
to be intoxicated
by the gossamer tendrils of her perfume.
One cannot be swept away by subtle
drops of dew welling at the corners
of her eyes when you reveal
your most vulnerable,
baby-chick-softness
sentiments
if your dearest love
is hopping around
like a River Dancer on crack,
waving her hands madly
in front of her crotch.
Then, all you've got is
is a screaming freak-out
ripping her pants off in public
and that would not be a flower,
my friend,
that would be porn.

AT THE COFFEE SHOP

A woman waits in line for the bathroom.

Her lower back scoops like a teaspoon.

She stretches like a cat made delicate

from a dunk in the tub. Sitting across from me,
a man takes a photograph of her, concealing
camera behind his palm. The knit

and purl of his eyebrows belong

in a mugshot. I give him a look to say, *I see
what you are doing. I can feel the electric*

of your misogyny, I can smell your skunk.

Back to the book, I feel the airless weight of the lens on me.

His wet oyster eyes. I flutter lash, and pose.

AT THE RESTAURANT WITH
THE BURGUNDY WALLS

We are talking about cooking. You slip into
a tongue you are trying to hone. *What's the word for—?*
Cebolla, I answer. Oh, yes, that, until it sweetens in the pan.
There are some words we have forgotten how to say.

We consider employment prospects against the yardstick
of political objections. For you, *habichuela*, a corporate
tutoring agency. In the interview, you demonstrated a lesson
about reading analog clocks, a significant skill

even if only for properly punching a timecard.
You want to make them thirsty for it, want learning
to mean more than earnings. There is so much bread on the table
and we are made leaden with wine.

This, too, is politics: you tell me midway through the meal
that when I talk about education, it makes you want
to bite my lip. The capitalist in me asks,
For how long? I am sick of economics,

the task of quantifying. Nothing can say what it means
to just be present: not a gesture, not a word.
Not this poem. Not I, for certain, my mouth feeling wild
like a fish that wants for water.

AN APOLOGY TO STAY A GREATER
LOSS, WITH *DEMI*

In a café, cappuccino and croissant
at hand, I write *I'm sorry*.
At the next table, a small loaf
in the society of bread—a demi—
distracts. It's enough for dinner
and the next day's sandwiches.
I'll accept more than my share.
I write *Blame* in the saucer
of olive oil. In French peace
is paix. Only next to long loaves
of sourdough does the demi seem
unfinished. The croissant evokes
the crescent of demi-lune where
sun reveals the whole after seven
days; the complete yet not full
demi-tasse; the bra's cut for breasts
whose slopes place nipples just
beneath a lacy rim. Moons, crusts,
cups—my fears of loss, of the miracle
of multiplying loaves, of letters
of regret. Half or whole, in French
bread is pain.

ON TEARS

Tears do not add up with the same firmness of American quarters. Or pennies. Or dimes. They fall with the urgency of escapees, no way to lose the dogs of grief who will lick them up, swallow, and stand firm, panting, waiting for more. Even Alice's pool of giant tears only measures four inches deep. What if we all met in mourning and shed our tears into a large hole and created a new Great Salt Lake? Well, if the moon were a wafer of bread, and the salty pond the broth of redemption, we might have something. But, there's no saving the moon. Somebody nibbling it away every month. Or maybe the sky itself is the pool of tears, and the stars grains of salt. Or okra in the soup. Tears fall and evaporate so quickly nobody has time to lick them or collect them, label and study them under microscopes for self-pity or righteousness. Even the drip from the faucet is bigger than one tear. Is there anything sadder than when the tear emerges to weave down the landscape of the cheek, sometimes even down the neck. If they don't fly off the chin. If you don't have somebody with a tissue saying *there there*. Once you reach a certain age, nobody says *there there* ever again. Maybe that's sadder. The last *there*. And you're on your own, spilling them into small droplets on the floor or the rug or the cement or the car seat or the gravestone. And you're swallowing hard and they count for nothing.

VISIT TO THE CAVES

We followed the surly guide down steep, slippery steps
with a German family, a French couple in black leather,
and fifteen Boy Scouts from outer space. Seven hundred steps.
Our children, ages three and four. At step fifty, my son slipped
and clutched the low railing. I picked him up trembling.
My wife grabbed our daughter as we maneuvered the dark spiral,
falling behind as the guide flicked on a series of lights
below us. Stalagmites and stalactites met in long slender threads.
Excited Boy Scouts recognized these formations from their
own planet. We picked up trails of narration, struggling
for balance. Far above us, a tiny hole of light where the first caver
descended, and his brittle rope ladder. If you paid extra
and signed your life away, you could enter the cave like he did.
The Scouts stared up, their mouths dark caves of awe. Natives
knew of the hole long ago, and, landfill pioneers, they had dumped
their garbage in. Trash, and the bones of those who'd strayed,
had once littered the bottom. Now, fake bones simulate
what the first explorer found. At the bottom, all lights
suddenly snapped off and we stood alone together.
My son whimpered invisible into my neck. Then, a recorded
symphony arose, and light returned. On the climb back up,
my legs cramped and trembled. At the top, the guide shook his tip jar.
I'd never been so happy to put my son down. I've never carried him
that long or that far. We were near the famous cave paintings
(photographs on display near the snack bar) you're not allowed
to see. Human breath can ruin them. We dropped coins
in his jar. The guide sniffed dismissively at our wide-eyed children.
The Scouts boldly claimed ownership of the world while their leader
drank at the bar. We stood alone, twirling the postcard rack.
Across the road loomed the Dinosaur Zoo—large cement creatures,
piped-in roars and cries. Our children loved it.
They begged us to take pictures of them in front of each display.
They acted and continue to act as if the cave never existed.
As if we never carried them through the dark.
As if our breath had not ruined them.

TORTILLA SKINS

In the hot light of your kitchen, 'Uelita, you showed me how to press the thick dough against your popping, aluminum table. Your hands the size of the tortillas to come, willing the mass to open as soft disk. My hands too small to maneuver, to stretch over it, to pull the dry powder in. I was fifteen and knew you were happy. Years after 'Buelito had died, you a new kind of woman. Certain eyes. Laughing, traveling, playing cards. Able to wake and say no, to skip the heat of the day to cook the midday meal. Bake a cake instead, at night. Crochet and smoke at the same time. Speak up around men. Accept a small glass of beer. The dough as cool as your hands, your red fingernails disappearing into the ball. Would you remarry? I ask. You are quick to answer. *Yes, it is ugly to live alone.* Your fingers have memorized this motion, this touch. All I can think is how the wives in Mexico flail in sick waters, in tired, wakeful oceans, choppy white crests salting their faces, silenced and gasping by the slap of spray. Romantic novella endings kneaded into the eyes and ears of daughters, spiteful neighborhood chisme, the sealing orders from men, sons, brothers, husbands. The lines on your face, Uelita, deep like the folds of the dough in your hands. The portraits in your living room, bridal framed faces, faint as shells at the end of flat beach, stripped of color by the brine of dry sunlight, waiting for the tide to soak them, turn them, or swallow them. Bone exposed at the back of the neck, you bend to your yes. And we press our tortilla skins to the heat, their faces down, to cook them.

(IT'S NOW ABOUT THE GRANDKIDS
WHICH I HAVEN'T PROVIDED;)

It's now about the grandkids which I haven't provided;
no matter what my poems make & make & make. Now
in the park, I notice a 3 legged grey greyhound keeping
up with other dogs & the plot of yellow tulips upstaged

by a red one.

(GUILT THE ENTIRE DAY
FOR NOT HELPING ...)

Guilt the entire day for not helping
a pine siskin I watched hard-smack

a window and fall fifteen or so feet
to cement steps.

The center of her
organizing: a light sleet gives voice
to downed leaves.

(DEAR NADIA, DUE TO CONTINUED
SILENCE, I'M UNDER ...)

Dear Nadia, due to continued silence, I'm under
the impression that they didn't want to meet up
with us. I understand that time is dear to all and

narrowing and I'm not offended by their to-not

-face silence, but I don't find comfort here and

I must remember to show gratitude when I hear
no and *yes* and especially *maybe*.

YOGA CLASS

I fear parking lots, malls,
and the sprawl of furniture stores
in Duluth.

I fear lonely roads, rest stops.

A family sits down now
to a supper of tangy lettuce
and organic beans.

Beth, the yoga teacher,
says to be good to our feet.

She asks us to tug on
each toe, make a fist
to knead our arches.

I think how once
I caught Delicate Arch
throwing its arm around
the Rabbit Moon.

I like it when the moments
fall gently into one another,
end up on some island
with no human footprints
and many bear.

I want to know the tall grasses
swaying with punk-like tops
that sprout small
silver crowns
and the short grasses
like waterfalls
that erupt into feathers.

I'm back at the lemonade stand
where a boy showed me
his clay figurines of a fruit bat
and a sloth.

Today I feared the quilt,
the black one inlaid
by a great-great grandmother,
with her postage stamps
of red taffeta
and cotton garlands,
will flutter whenever I touch it,
into nothing.

I watched my cat stalk the lizard,
fed my dog her favorite: lima beans.

Alice Miller says over and over
how shame kills. I fear how
the spirit might never revive
when cruel words as well
as hands crease it
with discipline.

I don't fear
the long portage
or the sticky mouths of ticks,
but how the earth
is losing itself, the spin
of it beyond those
who are chopping wood,
putting up clothes lines,
riding their bicycles
uphill to town.

Beth says we're done
with our shoulders
and our arms.

Now we must try to do
hand stands, head stands
so the blood will come to our hearts.

MIDDLE AGE

So medieval, all this talk
of bridges and canals, crowns
and roots, even the central x

of extraction like some small
Anglo-Saxon town marked
on an obscure map. The

room itself hums chivalric,
and the walls glow the pale
azure of an unenlightened

era. When we open our mouths
to speak, we spit out kennings,
our ribboned breath both

scop and caesura. It's dark
here, and the Renaissance isn't
due to arrive for years.

SILHOUETTE

She sits at the desk—the house's depot, its fane—
daughterly, and waits for things to begin. Soon the train
will pull in with all its attendant weight and the weight
that smoke bears. Soon too the faithful will arrive, late
as always, hobbling down the path on bloodied knees.
Until then, the airless square and hollow space between
the window and the storm is strewn with flies, sans
serif and mum and light as air. When she picks one
up, it is like picking up nothing at all. That is how and here,
she conducts the morning, both empty station and engineer.

ESCARPMENT

*after Georgia O'Keeffe's Nude Series (Seated Red),
c.a. 1917, watercolor on paper*

In the ski town near Baldy Mountain,
I sink into dreams warm and red, visited by
a figure who rises with the louvered light.
She finger-brushes the belly of sky,
plucks down snarls of cloud
and tatters of atmosphere
that she presses to the hills
and hollows of her carmine flesh.
She leans and twists and sways
to keep herself lithe,

humming to herself what she might do
this day with the shapes in her head.
She shivers, then fades like a tarn
in fog when I wake.

By day, I scarf down free donuts
and a slew of odd jobs. I run
for the bus, weighted with bag and jug.
Eyes darting, my roommates size me up.
Bare as sandstone cliffs, an anonymous
cow-skull in my grandfather's woods,
I dream that we become tight friends,
and that for us to fit like miter joints
in a hay barn, I plane and gouge and lathe
all my splinters and gnarls.

IN PRAISE OF THE MOON AND HIS NURSE

*after Remedios Varo's Celestial Pablum
1958, oil on masonite*

Because the night is made of jet crystals and the whispering
of his amber lips that beckons the sea. Because he is sick
with sorrow for his burnt and poisoned darling, the planetary
companion he wheels around. Because the nurse is clever,
nimble, and merciful, forsaking her stylish furniture
and bric-a-brac to build the machine that catches the stars,
grinds them into sustenance for the moon.
Because her rhythm is constant, turning the crank
with one hand, with the other spooning star-manna
into the saffron mouth of the moon.
Because they both possess internal clocks and silver wills.
Because his beauty marks are rills, scarps, and basalt
clusters studded with glassy olive-green bubbles.

SUMMERSCAPE

The galley of an unknown author's work
In a fully justified format:
Every stark hill italicized
Every glaring lake capitalized
With no single tree misspelled
Or single flower misplaced

Again and yet again, the sun has
Proofread the text
With all its attention

And [presumably]
Found everything just perfect

MATINS IN THE CATHEDRAL OF WIND

for the Utah Chapter of the Nature Conservancy

*If I stay here long enough
I will learn the art of silence.
After I have given up words
I will become what I have to say.
—Richard Shelton, “Desert”*

If I stay here long enough
in this havoc of landscape,
colloquy where enormous rocks
collapse into each other,
this place of desert and sky
wrenched apart by stone walls
buttressed with crimson arches,
shafts of light or brilliant clefts
suddenly opened with a hush
like the quickly drawn breath
of ancient winds trapped
in cool silence of primordial dunes
pressed into stone, where
a rough-legged hawk rides wind drift
in a lazy helix, waits
for rising thermals above the
tortured wreckage of sand
and stone, creosote and desert phlox,
sky and jagged horizon, each
glimpse, touch, scent its own
mélange of belief,
trinity of grace, beauty, dignity

will I learn the art of silence
and through silence hear breath
from another world cross and spill
over the juncture, sough as the moon
folds its wings and rests
on the shadow of limned bluff,
arroyos echo the deafening roar

as starlight tunnels its way
into labyrinth and from that echo
understand there are no geographies
in the language of man
whereby one may find wisdom,
only to live here long enough
in the most sacred of sanctuaries
and learn not silence
but the art of silence
and the knowledge there is
no art without faith in existence,
that frail detritus of belief,
or believing in belief,
the intersection between
stone and wind, light and shadow,
no more than a tatter of cloud
caught on a ragged bluff's selvage
in this valley of kings where
the sojourner linger until

after words have been given up
like flung jewels stitched into clouds
where strands of sunlight glitter
in the La Sal's snow wedges,
now lifted by a wind tendril
into a flood of rushing light
westward like thunder to smash
against the Moab red wall
as it blisters the darkness
into trembling fingers of shadow
clinging to any rock crevice,
then scrapes downward
until all is ablush, as if God
slapped the desert's face
into brilliance, horizon
suddenly broken as arroyo
winds into absence of canyon
where earth fell

into a hollow beneath itself,
the world alive with the gift
of light: cloud shadows
race westward, up the mesa walls,
angle north, then leap
the horizon beyond sight;
cool silence of a salt dome,
the braided persimmon moon fragrance
lingering in beardtongue, peppergrass
and yucca, the bend of sunlight
into open lip of slot canyon,
manifestation of *beresith*,
the great command *let there be*
hurled into the void of darkness
until word became flesh
and drew first breath
of crimson wind and world
became living sanctuary,
body of divinity manifest,
the words given up,
transformed into most holy
of holies whispering through the wind

I become what I have to say
sunlight bent and cooled
by the flow into seep rock
inside the lip of slot canyon,
walls scoured clean by wind,
where glistens the amazing
white flower of sacred datura,
the burning bush,
a lingering votive candle
held in the open palm
of God's mind.

QUESTION

I know you can answer
this question, she said:
If a person lives near an arroyo

will scorpions scuttle up
and into the house? Turning
the question on its chitinous back,

I said: If a scorpion lives
in an arroyo, will humans hurry
out and into the wash? Consider

the brilliant honeycombs
discovered last week
in our patio wall—

six wax lattices loaded
with honey, the hive humming
through early spring days,

bees slipping in threes
and fours from the stucco crack
before we sealed the sweet

cavity with lavender and caulk.
Even past midnight
the lit door behind me lures

dark creatures: geckos dart
along the doormat, a heavy beetle
hurls itself at the shuddering glass.

The scorpions have their own
concerns, scaling low branches
to snare the skittish moths

or else pressing into crevices
beyond roadrunner's reach.
And my curious friend

who thinks I can answer
her question?
She draws back

from each stone and stem
knowing every hand burns
for the perilous sting.

GREAT SCOTT HUMANIZED

Admittedly, a landscape of sequined arses.
These tremors in drag as inconsiderate
as any four AM ritual.
Those dam pyres are still smoldering
and the postman's bike
is at the garden gate,
as the sun coughs itself
into the morning sky.

SIGN IN A BANGKOK TEMPLE

*It is forbidden to enter a woman
even if a foreigner is dressed as a man*

even if that man otherwise
a woman should decide upon a rear
entry at an odd hour when there is
not a bending over for worship
it is forbidden even still if
a foreigner who is an actual
man should experience religious
culmination upon entering a woman
foreigner while presenting a favorable
passport having been stamped
with the black head of the new
premier and not our yellow state
fruit no matter how odd
the hour of bending over or how
culminating an entry may have been
worshipped with or disguised
as a forbidden actuality that might
appear to be presented or otherwise
entered upon between a kind of man
or non-man equally prohibited
from disguising rear entry by passport
law especially while having an odd
presentment dressed culminantly
as a banana or even a disguised
version of such a fruit or other
plant of national origin while under
this forbidding prohibition applying
at typical hours it is forbidden
absolutely even if those forbidden
cannot read this and are dressed
accordingly.

MY CPA NEIGHBOR IS WASHING HIS HOUSE

"If man will strike, strike through the mask!"

—Ahab

He's blasting his siding
with a power hose,
cleansing from attic to patio.
Shirtless in khakis
and red bandanna,
he mounts his ladder
like a pirate in rigging,
spraying a sill
as twilight fades
and lightning flashes
and a downpour hits.

He's getting it clean,
making it right,
in the face of things:
his landlubber's job
with its 1040As;
his wife, who slapped him
in the driveway at noon;
his kid, who haunts malls
and plays video killer
in what used to be
the family room; and the dog,
who does nothing
but bark and shit.

This time, by God,
it's him or It
as the silt surrenders
and the droppings dissolve
and the thunder applauds,
and so do we,

from behind our curtains,
as he climbs toward the clouds,
primed to impeach
the All-Seeing Eye
or poke it out
if the hose will reach.

SUNDAY MORNING ON THE PATIO

No bells or whistles, no
hosannas in the highest, no body
nailed up and bleeding,

just the first robin of the season
posing dark-eyed and orange-breasted
on the rim of the empty birdbath,

beneath it a familiar resurrection
of green, and because suddenly
I have this odd urge

to use love, the word, in a sentence,
I tell my wife, who's sunning
nearby in a recliner, that

I love her, and when she looks up
I confuse her eyes with the
robin's, my confusion doubled

when she takes wing and glides
into the kitchen from where
very shortly she returns,

pot of coffee in one hand, cookies
in the other, her feathers molted
to reveal the skin I touched

last night before I went to sleep,
the house dark and silent,
the windows up

to admit a flow of air so steady
I let down my guard to ride
on a current of softness

forever, nonetheless certain that
when I alight I'll be, if not
here, then elsewhere.

ANGELOLOGY

Because I have never seen an angel, because
I have serious doubts that they exist,
I study them seriously,

parse them for what we have named
and given them, orders
to reflect our love

of orders—angels, archangels, principalities,
powers, virtues, dominions,
thrones, cherubim,

seraphim—all of them sporting wings,
all of them male, one
of them now

perched half-human, half-bird on my shoulder,
whispering something I can't
make sense of,

its competition that of a relentless surf,
above it a gull suspended
under a blue sky

patient to yield to a moon that is surely
female, its face akin
to the circle

I drew in first grade, then so painstakingly
colored, my teacher standing
tall beside me,

one hand on my shoulder, Miss Katie Puls,
I can see her now,
urging me on.

SUNDOWN SYNDROME

Sundown, and the world shrinks
to become the world you lie in,

syndrome doing its best to say
you are not alone.

You are alone. The lovely woman
in white

thanks you for the samples of blood
she has taken. You say—and

you say it sincerely—You're
welcome.

Nearby, the one you have spent
the bulk of your life with

stands ready to stand where she is
indefinitely. Above,

fluorescents do their best to replicate
the sun. What your mind tells them

is that you know their devious
little game, that

you didn't just recently fall
off the turnip wagon.

You know what you know.
You are alone

a member of a group of signs and
symptoms

with a distinct connection to the sun
as it goes down. And down.

And something familiar touches
your upper arm.

Alone, you touch with the tips
of your fingers
that which is touching you. You
are alone and not

alone. Someone has parted
the curtains. Sundown.

Sundown syndrome. You
return the touch. You

watch the part in the curtains
grow darker. And

darker. Someone's
in the kitchen with Dinah.

Now it is you and the one
nearby and the one

in the kitchen with Dinah.
And Dinah. And

the one with her is strumming
on the old banjo.

Inexorably is the adverb
you think of, you

absolutely love. Because
that is the way the world is

turning. Inexorably, and
always, as the song

you relish to remember says,
toward the morning.

HISTORY OF HURRICANES

BY TERESA CADER

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL MCLANE

Early in the first and title poem of Teresa Cader's third collection of poetry, *History of Hurricanes*, we are thrown headlong into the conflict that haunts nearly all the poems that follow:

*No whirling dervish on the radar, no radar, no brackets
no voices warning—no Voice—fugue of trees, lightning*

Because we cannot know, we imagine

What will happen to me without you?

That final question, posed within the context of the impending hurricane season, opens the door to countless other impendings—seasonal change, aging, children growing and, of course, death—and places the poems in *History of Hurricanes* securely within the lyrical realm and, more specifically, in the long tradition of the early Latin and Anglo-Saxon *ubi sunt* form. The *ubi sunt* relies upon the question “where are those that came before us” and Cader not only poses this question in various ways throughout the text, but attempts to answer it in ways that are equally compelling. Much like the hurricane that becomes conspicuous in its absence in the above passage, many examples of the form feature a presence, whether abstract or personified, that looms over its protagonists. What is off the radar or forgotten is what most endangers us. That is not to say these things are repressed in Cader's poems. Rather, she names them. There is nothing rhetorical to questions posed and nothing sentimental in fears and flaws confessed. This is particularly true in “Blue Table With Pomegranates,” where Cader writes of a table a couple has decided to give away and concludes:

I know how your hands smooth skin, stroke hair.

That much I allow myself to imagine of your body

Taken from me someday,

And the table—

Already spoken for by a young couple at the iron gate—

or in “Petrified Light” where, upon seeing a large-scale museum display of a black widow, the speaker admits:

*... Whoa, I said to my ordinary. To my stubborn. To fear's
Onion smell welling up in my armpits. What we have here is a body
Created for me. A creature of wild and deadly desire. Bad.*

While both passages contain a powerful confessional element that is poignant in its simplicity and expertly woven into deceptively mundane contexts, what is perhaps most interesting about the two poems, and nearly all the poems in the book, are the contrasts they create, the vacillating between fear of the deaths and losses we are helpless to stop and the pain and traumas we are capable of and culpable for.

The poems in *History of Hurricanes* are, for the most part, firmly rooted in the domestic. Whether walking the dog, watching birds through a bedroom window, or taking a trip to the museum, family, lovers, children, and home are all thrown perpetually into focus. Even when poems gesture towards seemingly larger historical events or figures is always a result of some more localized trigger, as in “Burying Ground,” where the speaker’s daughter discovers the graves of six children lost during the Revolutionary War including a boy just under 3 years old:

*She asked, “What does ‘wanting 8 days mean?’”
Eyes wide: “What happened to them?”*

*War in Lexington. Fear. Near starvation.
In eighteen days the deaths of six children.*

*Disease. Epidemics. “Could be smallpox,” I said
“Don’t worry it’s been eradicated.”*

*She wasn’t worried. Summer’s rebound
beckoned for another bike ride into town.*

But I went back to read the stones more closely.

Cader's speaker, like any parent who has not lost a child, finds herself in the disorienting position of explaining away the fear to her own child while internalizing the tragic potential of a world that had been so average only moments before. The presence of death is realized in a far more concrete way later in the book in the poem "Habits", which stands out both as the longest poem in the book and, in many ways, as its climax. Cader writes of dealing with both her mother's death from what is presumably lung cancer, and her ashes which the family plans to use to fertilize a memorial tree:

I cannot watch again. I will not water the pitted

*ground with my prayers, or spend nights in the garden
singing to the god of drought. Have you watched a tree die?
Pathetic fistled leaves, cocoons like burial shrouds.*

How much should I save, one pound, or two?

What is so stunning about Cader's poems is how much mileage she gets from absence, how much she does with so little. Like the hurricane alluded to in the first poem, these poems are all quiet nods to the inevitable, to moments we can neither predict nor prepare for. The poems are mostly short and even the longer poems are surprisingly stark. There are few grand gestures or metaphors made in the book and few of the poems call attention to themselves in a way that says "Look at me, I'm important, I'm a crux." Instead, the connections between poems are clear, the conflicts are consistent, the craft impressive in its subtlety. *History of Hurricanes* reads as a poignant meditation on love and family that, time and time again, is interrupted by moments of doubt, an ode written and rewritten, but like that songbird bringing good news in "Aria" is silenced "by the swift and deafening, a spring downpour."

History of Hurricanes by Teresa Cader
(2009, Triquarterly Books/Northwestern University Press)

BIOGRAPHIES

SANDY ANDERSON'S *Jeanne was Once a Player of Pianos* was published by Limberlost Press in 1998, and she has a chapbook forthcoming from Outlaw Press. The 1997 recipient of the Salt Lake City Mayor's Award in Literature, and the 1995 Writers at Work Writing Advocate Award, she has been artist at residence at local schools, and has given workshops to groups of disabled, veterans and prisoners. She is currently editing her 4th anthology of disabled writers. She teaches piano for a living. Her poems in this issue are from a manuscript entitled *Cleopatra's Coins*.

LISA BICKMORE teaches writing in Salt Lake City.

WENDY BLANKENSHIP completed her MFA in Creative Writing through Naropa University. She is the co-author of *Along the Black*. Her work has appeared in *Not Enough Night*, *The Myriad*, *Bed* and *Transmission*. She writes and teaches in Salt Lake City.

SIMMONS B. BUNTIN is the founding editor of *Terrain.org: A Journal of the Built & Natural Environments* (www.terrain.org). His first book of poetry, *Riverfall*, was published in 2005 by Ireland's Salmon Poetry and his second book, *Bloom*, is due from Salmon in late 2010. A recipient of a Colorado Artists Fellowship for Poetry, his poems have recently appeared in *Whiskey Island Magazine*, *The LBJ: Avian Life*, *Literary Arts*, *South Dakota Review*, *Verse Daily*, *Isotope*, *Orion*, *Corridors* and *Southwestern American Literature*.

WESTON CUTTER'S work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Best New Poets 2008*, *Willow Springs*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *Seneca Review* and *Third Coast*. He runs the book review site *Corduroy Books* (corduroybooks.com) and is a creative writing professor at a tiny school in far northwest Iowa (called, appropriately, Northwestern).

JIM DANIELS won the Blue Lynx Poetry Prize for his book, *Revolt of the Crash-Test Dummies* (2007). Two other books were published in 2007, his third collection of short fiction, *Mr. Pleasant*, and his eleventh book of poems, *In Line for the Exterminator*. In 2005, Jim Daniels wrote and produced the independent film "Dumpster," and *Street*, a book of his poems accompanying the photographs of Charlee Brodsky, won the Tillie Olsen Prize from the Working-Class

Studies Association. His poems have appeared in the Pushcart Prize and Best American Poetry anthologies. He directs the Creative Writing Program at Carnegie Mellon.

NICK DEPASCAL graduated with his BA in Creative Writing from the University of Arizona, where he received the 2004 Fred N. Scott Prize for Poetry. Currently he can be found in Albuquerque, NM with his wife and son, enjoying coffee and sopaipillas. His poems have been published in *The Houston Literary Review*, *The Monongahela Review* and *Breadcrumb Scabs*.

CARRIE FARMER talks serious trash to the few Scrabble opponents she has left. Her home, NY Giants-blue, houses two cats (Franklin and Fern), three rats (Fink, Flora and Fiona), her OP Lady, and three (or more) unseen (and non-paying!) roommates. She hasn't bought eggs for a year, as her two hens (Patty and Nuggette) kindly provide chicken-fruit daily.

CHARLES FORT'S forthcoming books include: *We Did Not Fear The Father: New and Selected Poems* (Red Hen Press 2010) and *Mrs. Belladonna's Supper Club Waltz: New and Selected Prose Poems, Volumes 1 and 2* (Backwaters Press 2010 and 2011). Carnegie Mellon University Press reprinted Fort's first book, *The Town Clock Burning*, under its Classic Contemporary Series. Fort's poems appear in *The Best American Poetry 2000* and *2003*.

YOLANDA FRANKLIN knows chocolate is an aphrodisiac, appetizer, and dessert; Baileys should be served over ice in any weather; parenting is for the gods and teaching is God's work. Friends, family and stories inspire her to get out of bed. Yolanda's dream for retirement involves lattes, umbrellas, poets and writers, pen and paper, and bookshelves filled in rooms with her favorite people.

RANDALL R. FREISINGER lives and writes in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where spring and summer are like pleasant dreams you can't quite remember, and where fall and winter are extravagant waking realities. When he isn't shoveling out or snowshoeing with his wife, Jill, and his two dogs, Zeke and Cocker, he continues to work on a writing career that includes many magazine and anthology pub-

lications, four Pushcart Prize nominations and four books of poems, including *Plato's Breath*, winner of the 1997 May Swenson Poetry Prize from Utah State University Press, and the recently released *Nostalgia's Thread* (Hol Art Books, 2009).

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TOM HOLMES is the editor of *Redactions: Poetry & Poetics*. He is also author of *After Malagueña* (FootHills Publishing, 2005), *Negative Time* (Pudding House, 2007), *Pre-Dew Poems* (FootHills Publishing, 2008), *Henri, Sophie, & The Hieratic Head of Ezra Pound: Poems Blasted from the Vortex* (BlazeVOX [books], 2009), *Poetry Assignments: The Book* (Sage Hill Press, 2009) and *The Oldest Stone in the World* (Amsterdam Press, 2010). Just recently, he was nominated thrice for the Pushcart Prize. His work has also appeared on *Verse Daily*.

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COLIN JAMES is a member of *The Brothers Of The Endemic*. Discussions regarding the denial of self are held regularly with Bonita Bob and Brother Badger. Comments or queries should be mailed in a large wardrobe to 3 Denial Close, Blacon, Cheshire, UK.

LIZ KAY holds an MFA from the University of Nebraska, where she was the recipient of both an Academy of American Poets' Prize, and the Wendy Fort Memorial Prize. In 2008, she was awarded a Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Prize for excellence in lyric poetry. Her work has appeared in, or is forthcoming from, such journals as: *Margie*, *Red Wheelbarrow*, *Whiskey Island Magazine* and *The New York Quarterly*.

CLAUDIA KEELAN'S collections of poetry include: *Refinery* (CSU Poetry Prize 1994), *The Secularist* (University of Georgia Contemporary Poetry Series, 1997), *Utopic* (Beatrice Hawley Award, Alice James Books, 2000) and *The Devotion Field* (2004), also from Alice James Books. Her sixth book, *Missing Her*, was published this year in the Green Rose Series from New Issues Press. She is a professor of English and Creative Writing at UNLV and the editor of *Interim*.

ELIZABETH KLISE VON ZERNECK'S poems have been published or are forthcoming in *Cincinnati Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Measure*, *Ninth Letter*, *Notre Dame Review*, *The Pinch*, *Poet Lore*, *Potomac Review*, *Rattle*, *Spoon River Poetry Review* and *Water-Stone Review*. Her recent work was honored with the 2008 Robert Frost Foundation Poetry Award, a 2008 International Publication Prize from *Atlanta Review*, and a 2009 Illinois Arts Council Fellowship Award in Poetry.

WILLIAM KLOEFKORN'S most recent books are *Out of Attica* (poetry) and *Breathing in the Fullness of Time* (memoir). His new and selected poems will appear in the fall of 2010 from the University of Nebraska Press.

DAVID LEE has been a soldier, a boxer, a university professor, a pig farmer, the only white athlete to play for the Negro League Post Texas Blue Stars and was the first Poet Laureate of Utah. His book *So Quietly the Earth* was selected by librarians at the New York Public

Library for its “Books to Remember” list. He is the recipient of the Utah Governor’s Award for lifetime achievement in the arts and has received grants from both the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. “Matins in the Cathedral of Wind” is in Lee’s new book, *Stone Wind Water*, which will be out in April from Black Rock Press, University of Nevada/Reno. Lee lives in Texas, with his wife, Jan.

DENNIS LONEY’S work has appeared or is forthcoming in 32 *Poems*, *Able Muse*, *Sewanee Theological Review*, *Shit Creek Review*, *unsplendid* and *Measure*. His manuscript, *Casualties of Conveyance*, was a finalist in the Anthony Hecht Poetry Prize. In 2006, Dennis was awarded a fellowship from the DC Commission on Arts and the Humanities.

JOEL LONG’S first book *Winged Insects* was the winner of the White Pine Press Poetry Prize and was published in 1999. His chapbook, *Chopin’s Preludes* was published by Elik Press in 2005. His chapbook *Saffron Beneath Every Frost* was published by Elik in 2007. Long’s poems have appeared in *Isotope*, *New Orleans Review*, *Interim*, *Rhino*, *Gulf Coast*, *Bitter Oleander*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Bellingham Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Willow Springs*, *Sonora Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review* and *Coal City Review*, among others.

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LANCE NEWMAN teaches American Literature and Creative Writing at Westminster College. His poems have appeared in *1913*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Dusie*, *Fringe*, *New CollAge*, *No Tell Motel*, *nth-position*, *otoliths*, *Pemmican*, *Perigee*, *Streetnotes*, *Stride*, *Zyzyva* and other magazines. His poems included in thiems issue were made at 3by3by3, an online mixing table located at <http://3by3by3.blogspot.com>.

SCOTT POOLE is the author of two books of poetry, *The Cheap Seats* and *Hiding from Salesmen*. Poole is also the resident poet of Oregon Public Broadcasting's weekly show, "Live Wire!" and the founding director of both Wordstock, Portland's Annual Festival of the Book and Get Lit!, Spokane's Annual Book Festival. Currently, he is a software developer who lives in the town he grew up in, Vancouver, Washington with his wife and two children.

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LAURA STOTT received an MFA from Eastern Washington University. Her poems have appeared in various publications, most recently, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Weber: The Contemporary West* and *Redactions: Poetry & Poetics*. Laura teaches freshman English,

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NANCY TAKACS is an emeritus professor at the College of Eastern Utah in Price, and is currently an artist-in-education for the Utah Arts Council. Her new book, *Juniper*, will be published by Limberlost Press in spring 2010. She spends summers in northern Wisconsin with her husband, Jan, and their dogs, Emma and Vladimir.

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ROBIN TUNG holds an MFA in fiction from The Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University. She is a recipient of the Milton A. Saier Award and was recently nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her work appears in *NANO Fiction*, *Labletter* and *The Basilica Review*.

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CHANGMING YUAN authored several books before emigrating from China and currently teaches writing in Vancouver. Yuan's poems appear in *Barrow Street, Best Canadian Poetry, Exquisite Corpse, London Magazine* and over 200 other literary publications worldwide. His collection, *Chansons of a Chinaman*, and monograph, *Politics and Poetics*, were both released recently. Yuan has twice been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

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