

Trekking Through Movember (or No-Shave November)

In the sliver of an interval separating
peanut butter pumpkins and
Remembrance Day poppies,
I offer my follicles the freedom to
whip up a wayward display of whiskers while
the razors are concealed in a cubbyhole in the
Terra Incognita of my apartment.
Puppets of habit, my hands paw at
nothingness on the bathroom counter on
woolly and windy mornings while
dirt-like dark speckles resembling crumbs of
hastily inhaled chocolate cake lend a look of
insouciant coolness soon negated by the neglected
stubble of a sloppy, boxcar-hopping hobo.
Though the reason for the seediness may be charitable,
the itchiness has me scratching churlishly
at odd patches of grey and rust that morph me
into a grizzled geezer for the sake of
my brothers' health-and
hashtags highlighting hairiness.



Wandering between Canada and the USA, Adrian Slonaker works as a copywriter and enjoys swimming, wrestling, rock 'n' roll music, coffeehouses and deep chats during late-night rainstorms. Adrian's work has been published in WINK: Writers in the Know, Ariel Chart, Dirty Girls Magazine, Defiant Scribe and others.

The Pangolin Review, Issue 13, November 2019

The Story of My Island

I was a stunning Arabian bride—
Dina Harobi. Those Portuguese, though
they called me Isle of Swans, didn't find me good
enough, would you believe? Gallant Dutch ships,
blown off course, then began flirting with me

in 1598. It took them *just*
forty years to settle. They then used me
for about seventy years (time during
which I briefly rejected them but they

coaxed me again), keeping at bay all my
French and British beaux, despite having no
military force. They bequeathed me their
main vessel's name—*Mauritius*. Cute deer were

brought, released, and hunted for fun. I don't
know why history complains that the Dutch
couldn't bear my mood swings. Maybe they just couldn't
face the fountain of rats flooding them. Did

they grow vindictive? It seems, as they pushed
the dodo down their towering throats and
it never came back, as they emptied the
shell of my giant tortoise, as they slew

my virgin forests for black ebony,
which they carried on their knightly chest to
their land. Would you believe, they even skimmed
the ambergris off my briny froth? But

they were sweet enough to adorn me with
the hues and scents of rice, maize, sugar cane,
tobacco, indigo, and cassava.
They flogged obstinate slaves, burned them, or broke

their bones. Cadavers were hanged as snacks for
birds; that wasn't sweet! And when they found that my
soil didn't have the jewels they were looking
for and my ebony was exhausted
they ran out of patience. The coup de grâce:
1695. That savage cyclone.
My disheartened Dutch lovers forsook me
in the arms of maroons, and the French, who
christened me Île-de-France, their new belle.



***Amit Parmessur** is a teacher from Mauritius. His writing has appeared in namely WINK, The Rye Whiskey Review, Night Garden Journal, Ann Arbor Review and Ethos Literary Journal. He loves to pick off past experiences and turn them over in the light and lie about them.*

The Pangolin Review, Issue 13, November 2019

Cordons of Heaven

I wish these roads
would vanish like
the crestfallen day
on haunches
and I wish the myopia
of living would turn into
roads that move on on
to some oblivion
some reclusive waste
a tepid warmth of the sun
a gentle whiff of a reminder
a latent movement of the heart
a warmth, winter.

Winters are never different
they come like sparrows
they bring the cold like musk melons
which appear suddenly, winters come
any time in this town and musk melons
go with summer

Sometimes I am stranded in thoughts
at cross roads of dreams
and the traffic brings them into a rude halt
so do sky chiaroscuros

In oblivion I wait for skies to erupt
guns to explode
blood to rush and smear streets
the news of blood is never far away
the news of death is history

I must break this fasting of silence
not with food or water
but with a burst of tears
tears that sprout into many mists
spitballing into cordons of heaven.

Ananya Guha is from India.

Subterraneans

“In the city, there is no shortage of stories, no scarcity of divulged secrets, only (it sometimes seems) a dearth of ears”–Teju Cole, Blind Spot

The city asks of us
what we can't give. Still
we continue to give and take
little in return, now we've
become walking *emptoids*.

The Preacher Man said two
things to us: that our salvation
can only be seen through the rear
mirror; that we should learn to view
the city upside down.

The city has asked us to give again,
teasing us with possible salvation.
It says: *Give, and Ye shall transcend
old selves, and the garb of glory shall
become yours!*

We've not been able to take our
eyes off the rear mirror. All we see
is a shadow of numbers – 6, 7, 9...
Perhaps this is the password for
unlocking the algorithm of salvation?

We've become dizzy from the slavish
hours of viewing the city upside down.
Things now appear in constant rotation,
and we only see in swirly triplicates.

And someone said in hushed tones:
*Lonesome Subterraneans, the city's teeth
is being sharpened for a bloody feast.*

Babatunde Fagbayibo is a poet and law teacher. He is originally from Nigeria but currently resides in Pretoria, South Africa. His poems and short story have appeared in web and print based anthologies such as *Poetry Potion*, *Kalahari Review*, *Ake Review*, *Agbowo*, *African Writers*, *Vox Poetica*, *Aerodrome*, *Nigeriatalks Lit mag*, *Absolute Africa*, and *Litnet*.

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Everyone Means Everyone

they stand accused—
“everyone’s so sensitive now!”
and yet...
something’s ruffled you too
oh thick skinned boomers
fake cowboys
and tough guys

they cheer a different team
or say
“these colors ain’t so pretty!”
and it pokes you
where you’ve peeled scabs
hoping to build up
a layer of scar tissue
numb to the touch

but they thrust spears
down into graves
deep in heart-soil
buried dreams
youth and rebellion
and if only corpses
were to be found there
you wouldn’t squirm so

***Brian Rihlmann** was born in New Jersey and currently resides in Reno, Nevada. He writes free verse poetry, much of it confessional. Folk poetry, for folks. He has been published in The Blue Nib, The American Journal of Poetry, Cajun Mutt Press, The Rye Whiskey Review, Alien Buddha Zine and others.*

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Violets

Found on hedge-banks
they were Keats' favourite flower,
straggling stems in April and May
prized with a depth of style.

Inhabitants of landscape,
insiders of nature designed
to preserve the pure value of attention,
working their own capable way.

Near summer's doorstep,
bleeding like arterial blood
a variety of purple and blue shades
watching the sudden daylight.

Who cares for this plant?
A poet's indolence
dreams of love's futility
with small petals cupped in a mortal palm.



Byron Beynon lives in Swansea, Wales. His work has appeared in several publications including *Agenda*, *The London Magazine*, *Cyphers*, *Wasafiri*, *Poetry Wales* and the human rights anthology *In Protest* (University of London and Keats House Poets). Collections include *The Echoing Coastline* (Agenda Editions) and *Cuffs* (Rack Press).

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Brothers

for Charles

You said give me a sign and we'll ring in the boogieing. I said sprinkler shouting I'll return from the bathroom. A wet floor undulating from the sweat seeped over ugly sweaters not ours, no one could tell we were cahootedly two twenty somethings

with a plan to effervesce. The proposal: a night of fizzle for featherings near and small, those ripply things that neither of us had used as purring prompts in high school ping pongs.

If our cafeteria sombers could spy our exuberance now—a round about of b-boy mysteria and floating sponge rockets above our shoulders—would we even dare to tell the secret of our carnal temperance? A true flinging of sockets

time-tested from the drunks trying to out-cartwheel our considerateness. Well, actually you were the one deftly not showing over the afflicted tumbler

before sending to the bathroom with a cheer up note to cry on.



Cameron Haramia is a California-born Hoosier, who can be found on the dancefloor. He's danced his way to Memphis, Mexico, and marine animals. Haramia's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Rabid Oak*, *Construction Literary Magazine*, *Leopardskins & Limes*, and *Mobius: The Journal of Social Change*.

Sent from Above

Right after my half-brother broke it off with his motorcycle mama, a crow appeared outside on the window sill and would not leave, even when my half-brother knocked on the glass with the tip of his shotgun barrel. Even when he raised the sash and swung the barrel around in the crow's shiny face, it would not leave its perch. Seeing this as a real pickle, my half-brother grabbed his keys off the cupboard and decided to go for a ride and when he approached his bike, the crow was claw-fisted to its handlebars. My half-brother thought as soon as he starts up the engine and revs it a little, the crow will take off. It did, but then promptly returned to fill in the deep depression left on the seat behind him. No matter how fast my half-brother rode or how sharp he leaned into curves, the crow was right there behind him, crowing away.

Charles Springer grew up on a farm in northcentral Pennsylvania that his great-grandfather established in the mid-eighteen hundreds. An only child, he quickly found kinship within the natural world around him and in the world of his imagination. Charley is very excited to be a part of the Regal House Publishing family with his first book length collection of poems entitled JUICE.

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your naked summer amazes me

your naked summer amazes me
like a starfish suddenly
in your hair
how is it possible
for you
to be so lovely
even on a wednesday
full of meetings
and the politics
of rain and just in case
you were wondering
your dylan imitation
slays them
at the four spot corner
of wabash and cummings
and no one
not even the night
ever had
such smile
 an impossible

here is my republic of tomatoes

i love that you said
here
is my republic of tomatoes
i am certain
you would make
an excellent pope
in avignon
or chicago
i love your kitchen jazz
i love
the long form poetry
of your perfect thighs
and your magnificent breasts
rising as two glorious moons
i love
the summer dark
sliding
into your hair
and the tide
rolling across your hands
the radio distant and forlorn
like the dream of some russian ballet
about which there is an old out of print book
in a bookstore

near the blue line stop
and that cafe
where
in the frame of the big window
i first saw you
resplendent mysterious impossible like
you had stepped into a new wave film
becoming i did not know

but came to understand
the great big tent
of how
we together and this
laughing
parade
in a sudden
tumble sky

Charles Talkoff's poetry is forthcoming and has appeared in, Dime Show Review, Visions International, and Collective Unrest. His short fiction has appeared in, JMWW, The Midway Journal, Underground Voices, 3QR, and The Urbanite.

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Beginning of the year

January armed with your
Hair, hijacked the jet engine of
My boiling brain, in little puffs
I, swing the cigarette round.

The sky holds a gaze, as the
Sucking cloud tightens a pucker
Up, in order to steal a kiss from, the
Sun and to push another in return.

It is June. Death is distant,
Love is recent, summer is a
Traumatic mess fashioned in your
Post – cultured dress and nature hones

Your curve, with it the grass cleaves,
The growing horns of heat
The city discharges from optical
Fibers, in its color, a sound begins

To circle around the honking, rattling
Down on a motor, to catch the news,
Of a soldier returning home and soon
The four- lane highway will quiver

With stomping, tear- spattered flags
Will wave the emblem of drenched valor
But I stay at unrest, for I have an appendage
My heart that had marched, to serve

In the front line of love, it still is not
Rewarded, down at the ground, your
Waged freedom toppled its jurisdiction,

It awaits with all its terms surrendered,
All acts amended, usurp the blood, assume
Control, annex it all.

***Christ Keivom** is an English Honors Student at Delhi University, and currently is in his second year. His nihilistic perspective derives inspiration from romanticizing Death and thus this way he escapes the mundane reality by frequently smoking. He loves cats, he loves cats and twice with that love, loves his muse.*

#1

lighting eighty
mochi cake candles
winter solstice

[kigo - winter solstice]

#2

longest night
another goods train
rumbles the old tracks

[kigo ~ longest night]

#3

black moon
the nightingale's song
interrupts a hoot

[kigo ~ black moon, every 19 years in February]



Christina Chin is from Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. She writes haiku, short poems, paints for art exhibitions, creates meaningful short videos of her poems and art. She has haiku, haiga, senryu, tanka and gogyoshi featured and published both in print and online with several reputable anthologies and journals. Christina is published in Haiku University Japan's multilingual Haiku Anthology Vols 3 to 5 and in one of Japan's biggest haiku Monthly Magazine, a Haikukai section dedicated to feature saijiki examples selected by the President Nagata Mitunori and Professeur Mine Mukose of Haiku University Japan. Her continued interest in haiga, photo-haiku and shahai won her 1st Prize in the 8th Setouchi Matsuyama International Photo-Haiku Contest 2019, for which she received a Grand Prix Award from the Honorable Katsuhito Noshi, Mayor of Matsuyama City.

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Cape, Mask

With its dust, the moon
floats over the hills.
There's something arousing
about its voluptuous body.

I think of its monthly rhythm
or if it's upside down,
or not.
Zigzagging, a bat takes the night.

I open my hand and, like Merlin,
I'm holding moonlight in my palm.
I toss the light in the air,

the bat wears it like a mask.
When I flip the moon around,
the dark side is the bat's cape.



Fragmented #3

Lust is lust. This day's heat is lust. To forgive
is to embrace. Things happen, then again, things
to avoid. Static is not the same as ecstatic. What
to do with sadness. What to do with joy. What?
Pretending is not the same as preparing. To rise
restless and hot. Come with your mouth like a
spoon. There once was a beautiful summer,
sticky with pollen. There were beautiful bodies
sticky with lust. Sweat is not the same as mist.
Once there were two beautiful bodies sliding
through the juiciness. We gathered into each
other the broken parts. Syncopated each muscle,
each bone, open access. Something is crackling,
static? There's nothing left to make me wonder.
Nothing now and always. Nervousness is not
the same as Nirvana. Copulation as transportation.
Your body, like a warm bird in my hands. Small
and brown. To embrace is to survive. To burn is
to love. To burn is to lose. To burn. Fire needs
oxygen. The years have fallen and dried. Memory
snaps shut. Of small things, I still have the starfish
and there is nobody to tell the story but me.



Nuts And Bolts

The year's longest fever,
my garden, a dried moth
fractured by heat waves,
hollows of cracked earth

Nature shape-shifts a pond
desiccated in the aftermath
of a burnt forest
pulled to its knees

There's a backlash of regret
of water supplies rung dry
with fat dust balls
and swarms of dead things

Black ants hustle to the surface
of a scorched nest
humming sounds like the OM
of Hindu mythology

My mind darkens with grief
for these loose nuts and bolts
for the parched breath of crickets
for sweat strung like bleeding teeth

If I were to cry for this land
it would be like a mother wolf
watching her cubs poached
by human savagery

***DAH** is a Pushcart Prize and Best Of The Net nominee, and the lead editor of the poetry critique group, The Lounge, and the author of nine books of poetry. He lives in Berkeley, California, where, for the past fifteen years, he has taught yoga: meditation, stretching, and deep relaxation, to children in public and private schools. DAH is currently working on the manuscript for his tenth poetry collection.*

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Abandoned Houses

Adulthood makes you a child.
Cutting your teeth on the hardest words.
Like woman. Like man. Gurgling
gender's tongue twisting nouns
on the silver streaked calcium rocks
in your mouth. Maturities rescued smile.
No one grows up. Only into abandoned houses.
With cancerous mailboxes waving white flags.
Only the next sorrow. Lives here. Blood red
Roses on fences of rust. Everything else
is an adolescent stamp. Licked to the point
of drowning. Few remember their first address.
Memory sounds like the Godfather weeping.

Daniel Edward Moore lives in Washington on Whidbey Island with the poet, Laura Coe Moore. His poems are forthcoming in Weber Review, Duende Literary Journal, Slipstream, Levee Magazine, The Blue Nib Magazine, Cultural Weekly and Tule Review. His chapbook, *Boys*, is forthcoming from Duck Lake Books in December 2019. His first book, *Waxing the Dents*, was a finalist for the Brick Road Poetry Book Prize and will be released in February 2020. His work has been nominated for Pushcart Prizes and Best of the Net. Visit him: danieledwardmoore.com.

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Song

aspens dance
beneath 'Himalaya-like' clouds,
piling up in the heat
over the flatlands

then an opening in the sky,
blue as Siva's forehead:
but are they the Doomsday clouds? darkening
into gray ash
floating over, dusting
those naked in 'fear & delusion'
who wheel
towards Kali's jaws

& has the Road become the Soul of creation?
with its roadkill ditches, its billboards
that cows & humans
labor under? the Road,
stretching endlessly, or
disappearing
under the sky's garment of
'patience, forbearance, non-injury,
passionlessness, indifference to
honor & non-honor'

later,
the aspens lean towards the sky,
trying to catch a whisper,
a zephyr of their incarnation
coming from Soma,
the new moon

***Dave Shortt** is a longtime writer from the USA whose work has appeared over the years in a number of print & electronic literary-type venues, including *Astropoetica*, *Surrealist Star-Clustered Illuminations*, & *Ygdrasil*.*

The Pangolin Review, Issue 13, November 2019

A War Story

Little wound
I am sat now, to tend to you.
(As is the norm.)

You ought to know, the world operates on rituals.
To heal, to grow, to renew, you must be one of Us.
To Belong is to be baptized with a Name
And the trappings of Paraphernalia— posh, posher, poshest—
The value of your life.
But you're tiny—
Perhaps you'd settle for less. The same old list,
And your desires modest.
You trickle down—
For that is where you belong
Had you been etched in flesh and blood,
You would know how to levitate.

You are reborn, fresh and glistening red.
(As is the norm)
Host of rituals must tend to the newborn.
Wash her—
The wound on my right little toe,
And the cold, curled-up aftertaste from last week's blow
Dry her—
The sanitized hurt on my right little toe,
Rub them—
Scrub them—
Your gaze like rashes on whatever is left of this unfed winter skin.
Dress her— in white.
Clothe them like a gift—
Wrap their raw and red—
And lock them in our Father's history of honour, shame and hymen.
Little wound, I can hear you pulsate.
Your throb, like morse code,
Reads: Untend.
I tug.
I scrape.
Undoing the smother of warmth and vigilance.
You are reborn —
A naked — raw and red.

Don't hide them— a fresh hurt, your battle scar,
Every wound is our weapon of protest.

Hiccups

I don't wait for first rains

It's earthy scent and memories of bygone lanes
Dust coated volumes —
The leaves greying with browned yellow stains
Perched high up lighting the night of some godforsaken loft
I care not for its truth and lies— its moth eaten remnants
In drudgery's grand scheme of things, I am told, I should shut my eyes.
Pick up your life, pick up speed, I let the humdrum set in—

I rise—
When on a busy morning hiccups set in.
Random spasms of choke and lock
An elder's blessing, a lover's gift
They set me free from formula's trap.
I shut my eyes
Only to open them
Somewhere between pale and vivid
A glimpse of growing up unfolds—
The past of paper boats and flying kites, the beauty of sibling fights
my first tryst with the pen's might
I was a child, a sister, a poet once.
Hic. — with every twitch a new sense prevails.
The sacred taste of Sunday feasts, green mango pickles and home-made Bengali sweets,
A festival borne out of mother's love.
Hic. — The scent. A jolt—
I stare into the distance as it begins to rain,
The smell of fresh earth draws me toward soul drenching roads.
I sigh— the long drawn air upto to its mundane trick
draws me back to life.
I rise.
To pick up the scattered jigsaw of routine, clockworks and reminder notepads.
Shutting my eyes to the past that my present holds in contempt.



Debadrita Chakraborty is a postgraduate researcher in Gender Studies at Cardiff University, UK. She did her MA from Macquarie University with a distinction in Twentieth Century Literature. She has written academic papers making contribution to past researches on Postcolonial Literature, Gender Studies and Migration Studies and have worked on translation projects on Dalit Literature. Her interest also lies in the field of creative writing. She has won competitions as a writer in college.

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A dialogue between a ghost and my loneliness

There a flame of seizures burn,
Of mosaic screams, so silent and pure.
I see a mirage of a floating spot.
Dark. Dark as my tongue.

I am confused now,
What to name it?
Anxious eye of Saturn,
Or a baked sunset spreading like the moon.

Loneliness - it hears a forlorn grief stuck on my foot.
Watching the footsteps of heavy breath.
I carry particles of sickness home,
Everywhere I move, I become a sticker of loss.

And death visits me like Winters.
In mist and cold forms,
Circling my toes and thumbs.
Thumbs swollen like dipped in water for hours.
It's the ghost. Ghost of fears and trauma.
The white night of everything,
Everything of everything.

I watch it performing operation on my body,
Each day like a lady plucking tea leaves
Or plucking twigs & twigs.

Loneliness does that to you.
It wraps a cauldron of wrecked wrist,
Shrinking & shrieking.
And all you can do is
Sink patiently.

Devika Mathur is a published poet and a writer residing in India. Her works have been published in magazines like Visual Verse, Indian Periodicals, Blue Ink Poetry, Sudden Denouement, Vita Brevis, among various others. She has been the part of the amazing anthology All the lonely people and is a contributor/ writer for Whisper and the roar and blood into ink. Recently, she started her own online magazine olive skins for surreal writers.

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In Pale Blue Futures

In pale blue futures, no one can connect;
No one can communicate. There's only
The vague shrieking of nothingness. There are
Only fragmented voices, coming through
The airwaves, like spectres of dreadful night.
There is no redeeming light there. There is
A profound absence at the heart of things.
It's as solitary as distant stars.

***Dominic Windram** is a performance poet from Hartlepool in the North East of England with a strong interest in literature, art history, philosophy, comparative religions, politics and psychology. Highly qualified, he has had a number of poems published in the Northern Cross (a monthly Catholic newspaper serving the diocese of North East England) and New Poetry 2018 (edited by Aria Ligi.). He is now a resident poet on P.N.N (Progressive News Network) hosted by the ebullient Rick Spisak.*

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The Comedienne

Shakespeare of the profane
her annie hall jacket
is her security
blanket
she sips her lemon tea
and turns tragedy into
One liners
her face is a map of
israel
a poet of the absurd
she's a wonder woman
with chutzpah
id rather have a woman
who can make me
laugh
than a supermodel

even when she loses
she wins

Coffeehouse Poem # 433

A barista comes in
With her boyfriend
She's a hippie girl
And she's wearing a dress
Instead of her usual jeans
And t shirt
She looks like a different woman
In a dress
And I try not to let her know
That I'm looking at her
Even as she stands with
Her boyfriend.
She admires me for reading
So much
Tho secretly she hates it
Sometimes, she talks about
Me to the other baristas
As if I'm not there
But i don't care
I think working a nine to
Five is toxic
I'm not trying to fit
Anyone's idea of what's
Normal
I'm not trying to be

Accepted
I still think she is lovely
A hippie girl in a dress
Like a fresh flower
In the dog days of
Summer

Marvin Gaye On A Postage Stamp

and my 10 year old self
rides with daddy, in his pickup
listening to James Brown, Al Green
or Otis on the radio

my first college girlfriend
crushed on George Michael
my 20 year old self, thought
he was fly for a white guy
i owned a beatles white album poster

trump played purple rain at
a campaign rally
even prince admitted to
voting republican

leave it to music
to be the drug that cures all
girls wear tattoos
as billboards to their
soul

i listened to janis joplin cds
wondering if god gave her the
wrong skin color
years later, i repeated the same
mistake with amy winehouse
and sara bareilles

i phones are our jukeboxes
and google even thinks
for us

my 15 year old self listened to
prince, as i became addicted
to pro wrestling with my aunt
cleotha

“talk to me, so you can see
what’s going on...”

music stopped being relevant
to me, after the 90's
i live to be unhip, i'm cool
in my own way

i order a rachel sandwich in a new york deli
as i hum broadway show
tunes

ice cube endorses trump
and white ph.ds dissect
rap music like a cadaver

the 52 year old me watches
my 8 year old self
listening to love will keep up
together, singing with the
groove

*A two-time Pushcart nominated poet from Boston writing for 28 years with 300 publications in print and online in such publications as Hiram Poetry Review, Mudfish, Poetry Magazine (online), Ceremony, Cacti Fur, Bitterzoet, Cactus Heart, Similar Peaks, Gloom Cupboard and Poetry Salzburg namely, **Erren Geraud Kelly** can also been seen on YouTube under the Gallery Cabaret links. Erren is also the author of the book *Disturbing The Peace* on Night Ballet Press.*

The Pangolin Review, Issue 13, November 2019

Rustic Life

The wrens and canaries sing me a victory song
at the border, accompanied by clashes of cymbals.
The wafting scents of roadside roses
greet me halfway;
with elation my spirit weeps.
The dolphin at the village stream leaped,
Its beauty and allure still intact.
My attention melts on to the old bullfrog
bloated croak, signaling he is alive.
I sat beside him as he snapped up an insect
with his sticky-quick tongue and offered me as meal.
The thrills from foot hills,
they have grown mightily for another millennia
and allow nature's peace flow into me
as sunlight flows into trees.
Garden of naturally ripe fruits,
golden threaded pumpkin and a pole of okro,
I fetched some to cook dinner by a smoky fire.
Night came and i sprawled on the floor
under the hanging moon listening to
the tales of heroes as told by my grandmother.
I lay back and see the stars silently boom with light,
soaring with pleasure just like I.
My base is the rural plains.
The city's load on my mind is lightening,
and my heart feels nearly free.

Fall and Rise

Even before he mounted the stage,
the throng already took to their feet
cheering and chattering his name.
He must have been a man very skilled in his trade
with recipes that do the tricks -
sublime rhymes, punchlines,
pun that mesmerise like an elixir
that fell on the soft bed of the hearts.
Man was on fire, we could feel the heat.
He was conjuring magic
until suddenly, he went silent.
He has forgotten his lines.
A loud silence enveloped the hall.
A shift of the energy filled the air, a twist.
The audience, his fans,
they wish they could send him a well for the drought.
That wasn't necessary!
He burst forth like the water from the spilt rock of Meribah

and redeemed himself.
This time, the ovation was loudest.

If you are stuck between the truth and reality, pick the truth!
The reality is that you will always fall,
the truth is that it's okay to fall but you can rise again.
In a crumpled ball paper, there are various shapes.
In a drop of oil mixed with water - that's a mess right?
But I see different colours.
We don't fail, we practice to succeed!

Slow Down

Our life is a reality show that strived on boredom!
Daily, we dash out of our homes to fill our dreams hole.
We reappear late at night with weakened legs
and pores soaked from exhaustion.
We Break up with lovers and friends
and wear stress like a ceremonial apparel.
We live a life spiraled out of control,
we can't fully grasp the passing of time
that has no remote control.
Our soul is lost searching for a shore.
Crushing pressures weigh on our sanity,
And disappointing reality begins to seep through the cracks.
I know nothing but we are all slowly sinking.
If we don't slow down the dance,
We may be crippled before the song is over.



Ezekiel Archibong Oluwasalvage studied Law in University of Benin and was called to the Nigerian Bar in November 2018. He currently practices with Aina Blankson LP, a leading law firm in Lagos, Nigeria. He believes that Man's catastrophe is caused by Man's intolerance and that the world would be a better place to live if, as humans, we could focus on the things we share in common rather than the things that tear us apart. His works are published and forthcoming in *The Palm Magazine*, *Best Poetry*, *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *Scarlet Leaf Magazine*.

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The Sixties

Listen up to British novelist L. P. Hartley:
The past is like a foreign country.
Or is a foreign country
Like the past? Think England, circa 1960.
The air feels older. The clothes,
The color of the sky, the shadows
Stretched out from the trees—they all look soft.
As does this gravel path, the way the light falls off
Its crumbling edge. As if a photograph
Has muted over time. Don't laugh.
This family could be mine.
Or yours, ambling in the park. How they're all trying
To have some fun: a bike, a tennis racket,
A sunny afternoon. They're backlit
As the five of them (Mom and Dad, the kids) approach the camera lens,
Half-smiling, in a line. You sense
That nothing could go wrong inside this scene.
Jump forward 50 years. What does it mean
When everything around you shifts? When every open field
Could be a target for a nuke, its deadly yield?
Imagine now a terrifying flash
That fixes each of them, like Pompeii effigies, in ash.

Gary Duehr has taught poetry and writing for institutions including Boston University, Lesley University, and Tufts University. His MFA is from the University of Iowa Writers Workshop. In 2001 he received an NEA Poetry Fellowship, and he has also received grants and fellowships from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the LEF Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation. Journals in which his poems have appeared include *Agni*, *American Literary Review*, *Chiron Review*, *Cottonwood*, *Hawaii Review*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Iowa Review*, *North American Review*, and *Southern Poetry Review*. His books of poetry include *In Passing* (Grisaille Press, 2011), *THE BIG BOOK OF WHY* (Cobble Hill Books, 2008), *Winter Light* (Four Way Books, 1999) and *Where Everyone Is Going To* (St. Andrews College Press, 1999).

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John Berryman's Recovery

Berryman may be found dreaming,
the poet conscious of words
sounding from heaven where
I do not want him to die.

Drinking his depression to death,
the old man is a child again
as the drunkard seeking sobriety,
there being so many futures
with all the ways of recovering.
No life is certain in itself:
Berryman is the poet falling,
never reaching the ice-still river
if an angel intervenes,.
raising him up to understand
a certain life and a wilder one
in homage to ancestral music
becoming his Dream Songs.

Imagining his choice
caught between bridge and water,
the poetry, like paper, flew
from the heart of a broken man
to the whole of a life.

Then there was no more.
What was there remains
for us to follow down
into a mind making sense
at last of all the words
that might be and surely are.

Hunting

There is a sky darkening:
the shadow of flight on the water,
The sacrifice of self by fear
demands a steady hand
The hunting of the wild,
a body to be devoured,
whose death will not be mourned,
cloistered against the world.
The solitude so clearly appeals
when it falls and there is no-one
away from human eyes
and common understanding
without a word of ceremony.

What happens is thought natural.
There remain the signs of flight

Geoffrey Heptonstall has a published novel, *Heaven's Invention [Black Wolf]* 2017. His recent poetry has appeared in *The High Window* and *Poetry Pacific* and is about to appear in *Nine Muses* and *Optimum*. His recent essays have appeared in *Fiction Southeast* and *Montreal Review*. And his recent fiction has appeared in *Fiction Week*.

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Monsters and humans

*Would the monster
hiding underneath my bed
be scared of the thoughts
going on in my head?*

The magical shield of my bedsheets
loses its powers when I realise
that maybe the monster would feel sorry
if he tasted the darkness behind my eyes.

*I let my hand dangle off
the bedside.*

Perhaps he understands empathy:
if he touched me, I wouldn't need to bawl.
The only monsters who ever hurt me
were always humans, after all.

*If the monster
saw the darkness in my head,
would he hold my hand
sticking out of the bed?*

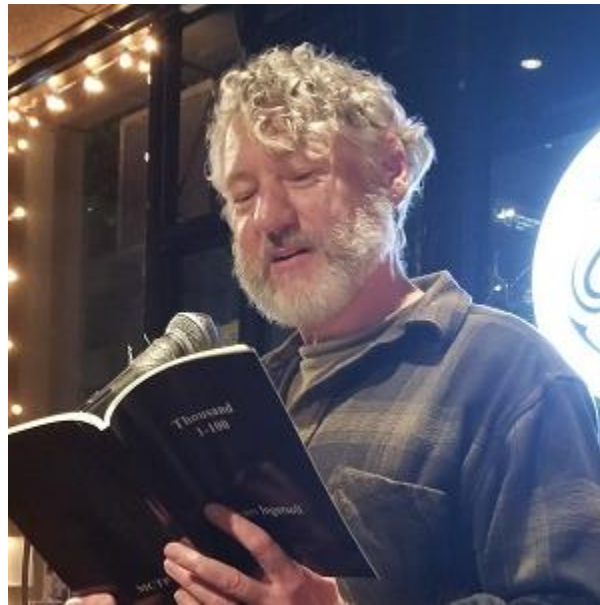
Giada Nizzoli is an Italian living in the UK, loves the Oxford comma, and has ink in her veins (not literally, or she'd be dead by now). Although she also writes fiction and non-fiction, she has a soft spot for poetry, which she regularly posts on her Instagram @will.o.the.whispers

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Big Cloud

It is getting desperate. It is getting angry!
It sees us, sees we are running away from it.
Now it is chasing, and it is faster!
Thinks it needs to tap me on the head to get my attention.

Soon it will really get in our faces. Keep running.
We can be shut of this sobbing rain
and its sodden pleas. Maybe I should feel for it.
But I don't. I don't!



Glenn Ingersoll works for the public library in Berkeley, California USA, where he hosts *Clearly Meant*, a reading & interview series. His multi-volume prose-poem-epic *Thousand* (MCT Publishing) is available from Amazon, and as an ebook form Smashwords. He keeps two blogs, *LoveSettlement* and *Dare I Read*. Recent work has appeared in *Dodging the Rain*, *EgoPHobia*, and *Bindweed*.

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Samburu to Masai Mara

Out of the north, Samburu,
through Isiolo, by Thomson's Falls
into the valley of Lake Nakuru
water circled in thick pink, shore
made of squishy, fragrant Flamingo droppings,
baboons on the cliffs nearby, buffalo and
giraffe on the plains.
Spread out beyond, the Great Rift Valley,
Longonot, twin disks tracking,
Masai children, near Narok,
dancing and singing by the road,
women's ear lobes impaled, stretched out for beauty,
corks, film canisters, metal dangling down,
a child with hand smashed and bleeding,
tents along the creek on the Mara
plains stretching out far and distant
daily checks for snakes and other
biting, stinging things,
at night, quiet, save a bark,
a howl, a random growl,
above, a quarter moon's soft light,
movement in the shadows,
life and death through the night.

J. B. Hogan has had some 270 stories and poems and nine books published including: *Time and Time Again* (time-travel fiction), *Tin Hollow* (fiction), *Fallen* (short fiction), and *The Rubicon* (poetry and short fiction). When not writing fiction and poetry, he is a local historian and bass player in his hometown of Fayetteville, Arkansas.

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Reality Aside

The world is falling down,
And yet he does not look.
Missiles fly above,
And yet she does not see.
Playing pups and cutesy kits:
Too exciting to ignore.

Terrifying screams;
He hears but drowns them out.
Explosions wrack the streets;
She simply can't be bothered.
Just drown it out with Joplin barf
Or Swift so whiny sweet.

Hundreds killed in bombing;
Nothing to say here.
Neighbors slain at home;
They were bigots anyway.
But if they miss SNL
How will they face tomorrow?

Suddenly the screens go dark:
"Connection Lost" they read.
Fury rising they look up:
Now the heads will roll.

J. S. Allen 's previous publications include a couple of poems in online venues last year (including Issue 3.2 of *The Pangolin Review*), as well as several short works in the local periodical *Shorelines*. Of these, two stories (*The Buck* and *The Otter Kit Streamer*) won 1st and 2nd place for fiction in the 2015 and 2016 editions respectively.

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Impressions

A double cheeseburger at Charlie's Kitchen,
strong coffee at Coffee Connection,
black and white movies at The Brattle Theater.

Crowded shelves
at Wordsworth, Paperback Booksmith
music on the streets,
downstairs at The Idler.

Great shows at Jonathan Swift's,
a sign on the wall reads:
"There are no strangers here,
only friends who haven't met."

Intellectuals, bohemians,
politicians, runaways—
at home--
in Harvard Square.

***James Goss** is a writer, actor and musician, author of *Pop Culture Florida* and the *Vinyl Lives* series about record stores and collectors. He lives in South Florida with his family.*

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In the Friendly Sky

The prostitute is sitting next to my wife on the train reading Vonnegut,
High,
Listening to a track from Steve Miller's The Joker.
We were coming back from the airport.
What can be said after a long trip?
Which was harder, our trip,
Or hers?

Jason Gallagher was a contributing editor at *Evergreen Review*. He is a member of *The Unbearables* poetry collective and has had work appear in *The Otter* as well as in the *Kind of a Hurricane Press* anthologies *The Seasons* and *Storm Cycle* and in the first two issues of *Post[blank]*. He has also had his book reviews published in *Sensitive Skin*, *Gainsayer* and *The Otter*. He lives in Upper Manhattan with his wife, fellow poet *Brendaliz Guerrero*, and works as an adjunct English instructor at *Borough of Manhattan Community College* and *Brooklyn College*.

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I Never Miss My Water

The well has been dry now
for over a week.

We gleaned small doses
of nourishment from the
tender flutes of grass blades
and drops of mildewed
tea stained circles left wilting
in the California skies.

We kept our eyes posted
North towards the Angels
Crest horizon, and we
brushed our long golden
hair towards the south,
fanning it at Sunset and
Laguna, into the tide pools
of El Matador, where the

fancy drones buzzed high
over head, snapping sexy
shots of sandcastles and
their melting moats with
every new lash of salty
stone cold wave that came
crashing down.

When I was a toddler,
my parents used to keep
their dirty brass coins in
a thick old glass arrowhead
bottle, one big enough
to house an amazingly detailed
model Aircraft Carrier from 1918,
constructed entirely out
of waterproof matchsticks.

And in that carriers noble hull
there were housed,
a steady legion of
hidden horned beetles,
ready and willing,
to swim the murky miles
of Pacific sludge.

And in their barracks, in little
tiny water beetle footlockers,
lay the sepia toned

brittle photographs of their
beetle babies and their
beetle wives, and on the
backs of each photo, so
carefully scrawled... the

words and passages i'd
waited over a whole week
to inspire me, but never got.

Yes, my own poetry writing
mechanism was down in
one of those barracks as
well, doing one handed
push-ups and flexing my
tattooed phalanges in the
mirror and waiting for "lights out"
so that I may dream
the well of inspiration full
a g a i n .

***Jeremy Szuder** is a born and bred California native, raised with a tender and dedicated loyalty to the arts. His poems have been published in The Metaworker, Harbinger Asylum, The Hungry Chimera, Fine Print Literary and Visual Arts Publication, as well as the 15 years of self published offerings he has created, most recent, The Huckleberry Finn Effect, released in 2017 and 12 Poems To Uplift, released in 2019. Jeremy lives in Glendale California and can be reached at jeremyszuder@gmail.com.*

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The Referee

she comes bruised
from her game
a dark shadow
in the late night
needing to sleep

scores jumbled
sticks and lines
tangled with limbs

she sleeps
dreams dekes
slap shots blue lines
wakes to a new game

*Joanna M. Weston, married, has one cat, multiple spiders, raccoons, a herd of deer, and two derelict hen-houses. Her middle-reader, *Frame and The McGuire*, published by Tradewind Books 2015; and poetry, *A Bedroom of Searchlights*, published by Inanna Publications, 2016.*

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Send the bailiffs in

Send the bailiffs in,
I could use the conversation.

Do bailiffs like flowers?
Which ones are of the grave?

I will put them on the table
out before arrival,

to be planted all they like, I am,
growing up to feel like them

judging not the people whose homes I gracefully examine;
gracefully me, the bailiff with the ballerina past life —

with dainty little steps I examine the homestore.
When is closing time and when will everyone concerned just want to go

home?
Small talk was never my forte and the job is a job that's just a job

all that is mine.
I long for an example

set by the tenant
with

no possessions,
no possession

over
herself

the day her work is done.



Joel Schueler has works across nine countries in over thirty publications, including *Pennsylvania Literary Journal* & *The Brasilia Review*. He is from London and has a BA(Hons) in English Literature & Creative Writing from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. He is a zealous writer of music, lyrics and comedy. For more visit him @ joelschueler.com.

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Katie, Dear

Katie, dear
So quick to anger,
So reticent to trust

I promise you
Nothing more
Than that I will think
Only of you
When I touch you

And that your eyes
Are a color I adore
And have never
Seen before

And they make me
Happy
And weak
In my soul

My sad
Wooden
Translucent
Soul.

***John Tustin** is currently suffering in exile on the island of Elba but hopes to return to you soon.*

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Stepping Towards Blue

Piles of mashed potato clouds hover over shattered columns
Someone's God whispering *what are you waiting for?*
Postmodern folk peep through chain link, phones up like Lady Liberty's torch
Snapping shots or video of yellow Deere dinosaurs gnawing on building bones
Soon only chunks of sheetrock, stucco, window trim, glass shards, wire curlicues
Somewhere surely a few faded hall passes, hardened gum wads, forgotten essays

In the end, change wears jagged edges. After the basic demolition
The stunted front stairs are what remain of the school's structure
Steps leading to blue. A portal to cloud canyon, dreamland, the hereafter
We are lazy with analogies, may compare the demolished high school
to a battlefield, though the only battles transpiring here are cultural
Socio-political debates over taxes, development, the unfurling inevitable

Step up. Rise over run. Point slope formula.
The math formula every teen is supposed to learn.
Climb, enter, descend, depart, reach change, breaking planes
Misstate the obvious, fall somewhere different.

Such staircases encapsulate entry to the binary world
Inside, outside, up, down, naive, mature, left, right
Adolescents slouch striding toward change no wall collapse can erase
The yellow machines continue moving earth, rearranging matter
Thump, whish, rumble, clatter, thump, whish, rumble, clatter, thump
It is easier to destroy than to create, easier to complain than envision

Every time I see one customer in the neighborhood, I ask how he's doing
He eyes construction on two sides, shrugs. *What do you think?*
Yellow plastic ribbon speaks warnings in all directions.
For weeks, a stunted stairway leads only to blue sky
One day the steps are gone, the space now dirt seemingly plowed
As if a crop has been planted to nourish the world. Rise. Run.

Joshua H. Baker lives in Oregon, where he works for the U.S. Postal Service. His writing has appeared or will appear in *Cirque*, *The Opiate*, *99E*, and *Bending Genres*. In his spare time he enjoys hiking and taking photographs at the seams between civilization and nature.

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Family Reunion

elders all sit together as a rule
borne from the gray air
they are the best that death
has to offer

we are next to sit at the table
stricken with our own ailments
stiffing Satan out that last penny
our own pale horse always rises

and falls like the tide when we've
swept past the lifeguard's sight
floating with the seaweed—limbs
caught in the nets of morning's catch

i watch as he talks about bygone days
his lips move as ghosts living among us
we are gods for a short while
after which we must surrender

and become as humans
broken boughs among the reed
like the time he almost drowned
pulled into the boat by the hair



Kevin D. LeMaster lives in South Shore Kentucky. His poems have been found at *The Lakes*, *Appalachian Heritage*, *Praxis* magazine, *Rockvale Review*, *The Rye Whiskey Review*, *Silhouette*, *Jellyfish Review* and others. He has had recent work published in *Plainsongs* and *Coe Review*, and has work forthcoming in *Birmingham Arts Journal*, *Dragon Poet Review*, and *Constellations* and was a finalist for the Mahogany Red Lit Prize. He has served as poetry editor for Shawnee State's literary magazine *The Silhouette* and has been on the selection committee for their woman's literary magazine, *Tapestries*. His work in *Rubicon: Words and art inspired by Oscar Wildes De Profundis* was nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

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Summer Drive

The inarguable utility of the headlamp.

The semi-circle similar to the eyeball.

The curved surface.

Basketball, tennis ball, football,
shotput, baseball, hockey puck:

certainty of the glide.

Rubber bands,
the eraser head,
the paper clip.

Many design elements depend on the curve.
Snails, the elephant's trunk, the pangolin,
the worm, the snake, the avalanche.

Boxer's glove spreads the surface
of the impact. The tip of the pen.

Flat surface of paper. Flat surface
of the basketball court.
The plane of the net.
The plane of the backboard.
Glide of the rounded front of the sneaker.

The knee as a magical cushion for
leaping and landing.

Parallelism of five on five.
Arced curve of the pass.

Elements of Italian Renaissance painting:

The X.
The A.
The C.
The T.

The excellence of the letter Q.
Quality as a mathematical equation.

Lovely face of Mona Lisa.
Angelic greens of mountains.
Receding beauty of perspective.

Headlights pierce the gloom.
Swallows swoop over rushes,
eating gnats and mosquitoes.

As the eyeball in its socket
assesses the nutrition on display.

The eyeball in its socket
assesses the nutrition on display,
as Monarch butterflies hover over milkweed.

Kirby Olson is a professor at SUNY Delhi in the western Catskills. His first book was published in 2015 by WordTech Press. It is called *Christmas at Rockefeller Center*. His poems have been in *Poetry East*, *Aethlon*, *Partisan Review*, *South Dakota Review*, and many others.

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Nope Ropes and Ornaments of the Worst Types

That medical palace, that place filled with the worst types of wall ornaments
For religious folks, spewed ceruse-faced attendants, stern janitors, on top of
Exculpatory lunch matrons vetoing the surcease of tray-carrying patrons in
Their domains. Taken together, as impecunious or otherwise, publics vilify
Laggers, contrariwise, proffer little eunoia; they're Úlfhéðnar, never chums.

Still, given certain sacred icons, populations that get stymied from praying,
Resort to not pretending they're unaware; instead, the scoff relative worth
Of outlier faiths, buildings teeming with armaments, also untutored guards.
(Esteemed verbal sops, all shiny and fresh, remain ordinary administrative
Appeasements, simple facets of mentalism, mots unbearable to spiritualists.

On the other hand, beyond medical staff, the board of directors' emphasis
On commodification ruins locals for generations, equally destroys civility.
Even allowing for assiduous nurses, few fully avoid institutional treachery,
Elsewise, sanguineous follows warble beyond their tessiture and bleed out
Any and all audiences who tend their ansaphones, parrot them stertorously.

Like olden-day oubliettes, uniformed termagants cavil when beds' lodgers
Incantatory commissioners require bigger portions, further attention, other
Juvenile tosh, until orderlies can't be held negligent when failing to suborn
For access to crash carts, barriers between them and bacula, pellucid brains.
Big bribes, solely, bring salubrious patients, cull puerile assignments, teas.

Consider, outside one patient's window, an elderly costermonger shouts;
Yet, his perishable wares won't abate suffering until canaries sing operas.
See, neurosurgeon's exploits become neither automatic nor inchoate when
Assessed. There remain too many archetypical métiers for docs to deviate
(dyspeptic inhabitants remain in words' bedsits without mental diadems.)

In the end, as long as animosity exists between marrieds, adults derogate.
Nature will continue on, subjugated by passion fruit, feelings, fidgetiness.
Nope ropes, as pets, will get snuck into hospitals to clear resident rooms.
Coaming the wood on halls' starboard side will remain monstrosously fun.
Exemplars for implacable souls will pass on neither petulant nor rasping.

Until humanity turns a corner and poetry's underlay's exposed, probably
Most ill-formed feelings will be expressed without chuffing. See, we're
Destined to embrace stupid choices since it's easier to construct trenches
Than fill landscapes with huge swaths of beauty, or koto, or electric bass.
A quick check of libraries' hinted patterns or whatnots reveal abnegation.

Despite the Krill in Their Freezer: Penguins in Space

Despite the sufficiency of krill in their freezer, the
Majority remained quite contemptuous of putrefied
Food stuffs. Anonymously, Jacks and Jills litigated,

While the colony's anthem droned on loudspeakers
(Some even failed to stand, salute, muse over gain.)

Accordingly, kindness continued to be as irregular
As Jupiter diamonds; intentional, but irrecoverable.
Altruism got misread as: solecisms, balusters, coin.
Most fowls, finishing Antarctic's form of medical
School, countervailed scout cookies, struck elders.

Their princes, too, lacked fruitfully revealed feelings.
Over vast spans, no unsullied, verdant sorts certified
Charity, compassion, the sharing of mackerel rations.
Rather, those feathers coveted rocks, frozen beaches.
As a result, they questioned all noncarinate standing.

Intransigent parties, resolute per: candidly answering,
Quoting online sources, maybe advising rescue, were
Shunned, else hurled beyond large precipices' edges.
(No "flyer" tolerated truth handed round in squawks,
Nor accepted that unity could, sometimes, triumph.)

Rather, their inculcated, waggy notions of outdated,
Inflated ponderings (vs. stochastic processes), reined
In how various vertiginous tests, bordering on flight,
Failed, again (it's one thing to complain, conversely
It's "extra" to lack fresh means of scaling ice flows.)

See, cold water birds' cockamamie schemes protect
Against unsavory problems, get culled when facing
Ills, hurts, chances to escape plumage despondency,
Frequently rehash arguments' planks, release moist
Misnomers. Penguins decide quickly, may chance,
Winning at torpor brings neither peace nor pleasure.

*Life is precious. Our words need to reflect this verity. Accordingly, **KJ Hannah Greenberg** tilts at social ills and personal evolutions via poetry, prose and other forms of creative expression. Her books and short works evidence these values.*

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Stirrings in Tribeca

My girlfriend is an anarchist
collecting history books,
cutting out the photos
using them to make obscene collages
to paste over the glass doors of banks,
the brick walls of town halls.

On thick summer nights
she smears herself with the blood
from canned beets,
lies in the street, arms outstretched,
telling the cops that she's a wounded
kitty, a stray camouflaged in black leotards
and a leaf patch button blouse,
that hit-and-run drivers are all
one-way sociopaths
who never look back.

After she's released from the state mental hospital,
she tells me that she wants to run for mayor.

Cat People Again

They yearn for love
while avoiding the rough surf,
they find dead fish
under a stranger's bed.
It's enough to get them
to the next unsuspecting lover,
memories of starvation
obscured by fur balls,
the both flying through hoops
over the dark waves of night
before they realize
they're beginning to crash.

Birds of a Feather

At work, the bird women
pretend they don't know me.

but during the night
they scrape their nails

against my tongue. I know
it's them. I wake up with sore gums.

At work, on a stairwell,
I kick off my suede Dockers

outstretch my arms and prepare to fly.
I yell out the name of each woman

who, the previous night, undressed me down
to eggshell heart and dusty echo.

I keep falling without the chance of a flutter
or a soft vowel.

I keep falling until one of them catches me.

Kyle Hemmings has been published in Unbroken Journal, Sonic Boom, Right Hand Pointing and elsewhere. His latest collection of text and art is Amnesiacs of Summer from Yavanika Press.

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Finding Water on Mars

(Oil on wood by Bob Kanyusik)

In a glass canning jar, half-full of water,
The stem of a fully-leafed, but flowerless datura
Rooted in a submerged human heart,
Appears to be drinking the only water ever found on Mars.
In the distance, an arid ochre mountain range, afire.

The idea of a god might be useful when contemplating mystery
Although I can't tell if a god is involved in this riddle.
He could have taken the guise of a gardener.
I have heard a minor god lives in Wisconsin,
Painting scenes on tiny seeds,
Planting some carefully, heedlessly scattering others.

***Larry Schug** is retired after a life of various kinds of physical labor. He currently volunteers as a college writing tutor and as a Naturalist. He lives with his wife, dog and cats near a large tamarack bog in St. Wendel Township, Minnesota. He has published eight books of poems and is a former Loft-McKnight fellow in poetry.*

The Pangolin Review, Issue 13, November 2019

Thanking You

Did we remember to thank you
For all you have done for us?
For all the times you were by our sides
To help and support us?

Did we remember to thank you
When you celebrated our successes,
Understood and fixed our problems
And accepted our defeats?

Did we remember to thank you
For all you have done for us,
For teaching us by example values,
Hard work, good judgement and integrity?

Did we remember to thank you
For all you have done for us?
For the sacrifices you made,
To let us have the very best?

Did we remember to thank you
For all you have done for us?
And for the simple things
Like laughter, smiles, and times we shared?

Did we remember to thank you?
If we have forgotten to show our
Gratitude enough for all the things you did
We're thanking you now.

And we are hoping you knew all along
How much you meant to us!
Thank you!

***Lou Marin** was born and raised in the western hills of Maine, then spent 20 plus years wandering the country and world in the United States Air Force. He is a photographer, published poet and short story writer who now also pens faith based devotionals. He lives in Rumford, Maine. His five poetry anthologies, published by Publish America and entitled, *Awash With Words*, *Old Waves, New Beaches*, *Whisper of Waves*, and *Sea To Shining Sea*, Version 1 and 2, are available in print and online.*

The Pangolin Review, Issue 13, November 2019

Survival Song

Who are you, little beach bird,
your double-time tiptoe across the sand?
Your quick stick legs chasing each succeeding wave,
reversing shoreward to flee
when the foaming surf pounds too near.

Wave upon wave, it looks like play.
Until your beak shoots out like a bullet
to slay in the wash a bit of fish,
tip your head skyward to gulp
whatever it takes to survive this day.

And who are you, limping with aching feet,
villager bedecked in your fiesta best and smiling?
Poised at the docks where cruise ships
spill forth wave upon wave of wallets
and wads of cash. Looks like play,

to catch an eye, risk a quick step forward
offering your wares — blankets and sombreros.
The rush of crowds pushing you aside
if you approach too near. Then a beckoning.
Fistful of pesos. A swift sale.

Gracias, El Señor, you say, lifting
your head heavenward.

Whatever it takes to survive this day.



Lowell Jaeger (*Montana Poet Laureate 2017-2019*) is author of eight collection of poems, most recently *Earth-blood & Star-shine* (Shabda Press in 2016). He is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Montana Arts Council and winner of the Grolier Poetry Peace Prize. Most recently Jaeger was awarded the Montana Governor's Humanities Award for his work in promoting thoughtful civic discourse.

The Pangolin Review, Issue 13, November 2019

What is Beautiful

Beautiful is the Heart
Always in love
Wishing on raindrops
And the stars above

Beautiful is a smile
Kind and true
Given from the soul
When the world
Feels blue

And beautiful
is the hug-
that lingers...
Just enough,
to know your
loved

Lynn Long (<https://zolanymph1.blogspot.com/>) is a poet, writer, aspiring novelist, daydreamer and believer in the impossible. She has been published namely in *Antarctica Journal*, *Duane's PoeTree*, *In Between Hangovers*, *Stanzaic Stylings*, *Poetry Poetics Pleasure* and *Whispers*.

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The Sitter And The Sat

His niece arrives with smell
and lolly stickiness.
She says, *I'm aw a mess.*
N'kay I kiss the glass?

He'll sit a demoness
that likes to spit and tell.
She kicks the television
and now requires cake.

His power cord's her snake,
a lamp her popsicle.
She yuks as toons rip off
their pants, hers start to trickle.

Explaining the handkerchief,
that nose does not feed mouth,
he sings a nervous hymn,
she pirouettes for him.

This siren loves vibration
and hugging big big things.
When mama comes he says,
my, time had big big wings!

Her hugs have rub-a-dubbed
him a toy of princeliness.
His sister asks, *you trying*
for children of your own?

Wiping a phlegmy glob,
he says, *I will some day,*
but now it's hard just being
a fetus in the bathtub.

Marc Darnell is a custodian in Papillion, Nebraska and received his MFA from the University of Iowa. He has published poems in *The Lyric*, *Ragazine*, *Skidrow Penthouse*, *Jam & Sand*, and *Blue Unicorn* among others. He has forthcoming poems in *Fine Lines*, *The Collidescope*, *Runcible Spoon*, and *Backchannels*.

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crazy for loving you

I walk miles
just to whisper in your ear
hoping you'd feel the same
then our dreams could intertwine
with scented themes
records playing sweet melodies
saving memories

Night Thief

tick tock
the sound of my heart
stealing away time
time playing with the drum
drum drumming in my brain
pounding away thought
thought mixed with sleep
sleep that never comes
night passing
time passing
heart effect
effect heart
stolen time
time gone

For You

because deserve is served best warm
because leaving the last slice of pizza was thoughtful
because the daily 'how do you do?' means more than hello
because having a heart so big keeps hope afloat
because attention to quirks makes feeling special a new term
because being one of a kind seems to be a delicacy in a world consumed by hate
because love is spelled Y-O-U

***Maria A. Arana** is a teacher, writer, and poet. Her poetry has been published in various journals including *Spectrum*, *Peeking Cat Anthology*, *Cholla Needles*, and *Nasty Women's Almanac*. You can find her @m_a_Arana.*

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Clay

Rain trailed off the backs and legs and faces
of the elephants who gathered to stand over
their dying great-mother; She-who-gives-
but-can-give-no-more.

Years they stood, for it took years for her to die,
and years it rained, for the sky wept as it could
hear her happy cries no more.

They stood and sank down, down into the ground.
The ground swallowed them as it swallowed the sky's tears,
as it swallowed that rain. It swallowed the elephant's bones
and tusks and hair and ears and skin.

It swallowed their great-mother.

And now the ground gives as she gave.

The bricks of our homes and streets, the clay of our roofs
and our bowls and our necklaces and rings.

Great-mother is with us, her children
are with us. We must thank them as
we must thank the rain, thank the sun.

And who gave us the skill to work the clay?

Thank your mother, child.

and I sit here

The cat stretches on the heat vent,
the dog gnaws on an old yellow bone,
birds fly on a smooth current toward home,

and I sit here stuck in this old place with you.

As you eye me like a hot cat,
I growl like a yellow dog.
I want to fly smooth to a warm new home.



Michael A. Griffith began writing poetry after a disability-causing injury. His chapbooks *Bloodline* and *Exposed* were released in fall 2018. Mike was nominated for the Pushcart Prize in October 2018. He teaches at Raritan Valley Community College in NJ and is Poetry Editor (USA & Canada) for *The Blue Nib*.

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Stroke and Ego

She attempts to rise in the river, but she is rust,
The banks neither steep nor slippery, only ladders of air.
Gravity is not a toehold.

She struggles to open her eyes,
Her body a book left outside soaking itself dry.
She is heat thunder in summertime.

A feeding tube down her throat, than her nose,
Finally an installation piece at her stomach.
Hysterical vomit on sheets, on the floor.

How can we live this life we live
When the one man we gave our life to
Tells us he is not coming back to visit?

Earthquake hollow, earthquakes of muscle,
Freezing fog,
A sudden avalanche of biting insects.

The TV drones on and on, visitors extinct.
You can hear, but not see,
You can rest, but never fully wake.

He will get over himself, you imagine,
But he does not, day after day,
So you find yourself playing with your fists alone.

Michael H. Brownstein’s first book of poetry, *A Slipknot Into Somewhere Else*, was recently published by Cholla Needles Press (2018).

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School Holidays

Always a charm
With no alarm
Just the thinnest light trap
The smallest gap
In curtains that are torn asunder
No sound of thunder
Just the song of birds from afar
And occasionally a car
School holidays
Time to play
To stay away all day
A football match, three hours each way
With just a small rest in between
For squash as orange as grass is green
Then cricket, fancy that?
Tennis racquet for a bat
Stumps? A lamppost standing tall
Peering down at urchins small
Breathless, and thin as rakes
Making friends and some mistakes
Chasing dogs
Collecting frogs
In streams that could hold a paper boat
And sticks that float
Climbing trees
Scabby knees
Scrub them clean
Coat with plasters and Germolene
Getting late the sun fades
The end of days
Time for tea
A bath a book, a bed, now sleep
Rest well, but have no cause for sorrow
Oh, no! We'll do it all again tomorrow



***Michael Madden** has worked for many years in the IT industry, as a result of which he has been quoted in publications as prestigious as the New York Times. In 2017, he created *Elvis Under The Covers*, exploring the legacy of Elvis Presley through the artists who have recorded his most often covered original songs. Originally from Sale in Cheshire, Michael now lives with his wife Sally in the more peaceful surroundings of Whaley Bridge, in the Peak District.*

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Now We Have Phones

Silent at every boring party
the pager would sit on my belt like a bad elf—
one of those little men shoveling chairs
catapulting felons into the air
in a drawing by Rogier van der Weyden

During dinner or sex or at the climax
of a movie or television show,
I let its aggravated beep speak
but at concerts, I set it to vibrate
in the hope I could reach the end of a piece
before feeling it rub on my leg like a cat,
the bridge of a cello
or the toe of your shoe.

Even when my elf slept in a drawer at home
and I was safely out of town,
any electronic sound made me reach down
and pat my empty belt like a forgetful father
for a misplaced child
or a Pavlovian dog pricking his ears at a bell.

Michael Salcman, poet, physician and art historian, was chairman of neurosurgery at the University of Maryland and president of the Contemporary Museum in Baltimore. Poems appear in Alaska Quarterly Review, Arts & Letters, Hopkins Review, The Hudson Review, New Letters, Notre Dame Review, Poet Lore and Ontario Review. Michael is the author of four chapbooks. Books include The Clock Made of Confetti (Orchises, 2007), nominated for The Poets' Prize, The Enemy of Good is Better (Orchises, 2011), Poetry in Medicine, his popular anthology of classic and contemporary poems on doctors, patients, illness & healing (Persea Books, 2015) and A Prague Spring, Before & After (2016), winner of the 2015 Sinclair Poetry Prize from Evening Street Press.

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Of Winter

Of last rays of the fall sun.
Of eloping souls on the run.
Of bare feet and weighing hearts.
Of crimson love being torn apart.
Of glimmering radiance on thy face.
Of making peace with distaste.
Of falling leaves and fading hues.
Of the oncoming solitary season blues.
Of dusty mantel being dusted clean.
Of winter arriving on a submarine.
Of the depth of whiteness in the garden.
Of the frosted feet of the distressed maiden.
Of beauty in all dead things to sing.
Of a happy song that they don't call spring.
Of the verity of harsh cold-winter breeze.
Of brazen tales naked of crease.
Of the celebration and joys that give some reason
Of Odes sung to this dead season.
Of the summers and monsoons and all that is bygone
Of happy winter figures forlorn.



***Mukulika Batabyal** is an M.A in English from Kolkata, India. Besides being a bibliophile and a cinephile, she attempts to give a voice to the unheard and attempts to give words to the unspoken through her writings despite knowing that she will probably go unread.*

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Are you listening?

Are you listening?

The clash was thousands of venomous blades piercing her heart.

The boiling fear swung into her lips.

She kept quiet.

All her words weren't getting through to him.

She was tired of talking to someone who didn't want to listen.

Ouanessa Nana is a 18-year-old aspiring writer, who loves poetry, writing, and reading good books.

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An Existential Dream

A water body, small, round-shaped
At the foot of a hill beyond the vale.

If you scale up the hill there's a shrine
Locked from outside, a deity could be seen

As I looked down the hill, I could spot the
Water body, around which a deer roamed.

And there was a stream beside the hill
A dead snake was floating in it.

I saw elephants and a one-horn rhino
Drinking water from the water body

Are there leopards in the jungle,
Beyond the stream, beyond the hill?

I was inside the locked shrine now
Trying to figure out the deity

My head twirled, I was gasping for breath.
What shrine it is and what mountain?

I am getting late for office. Where are
You? Stop the projector please.

I don't want it to happen to the deer...
A leopard sprang on the deer

The pond turned red. Someone stop
The projector please. There are

Leopards all around now and they
Want to prey on me.

Cold perspiration
Breaks the vision.

I am already late for the 7 o'clock train.
I will have to skip breakfast as I struggle
To forget the dead deer lying in the water body.

Pranab Ghosh is a journalist, writer, poet, translator and blogger. His poetry and prose have been published and accepted by Tuck Magazine, Dissident Voice, Transendent Zero Press, Scarlet Leaf Review, Literature Studio Review, Leaves of Ink, Hans India, Spillwords, The Piker Press, Visual Verse and Setu namely. He has co-authored a book of poems, titled Air & Age. He has to his credit a

translation of a book of Bengali short stories called Bougainvillea and Other Stories. Recently, his second book of poems and first solo book Soul Searching and Other Poems has been published by Scarlet Leaf Publishing, Toronto. He is married and lives in Kolkata with wife, daughter and mother.

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Ganga

Your children play by the banks of the Ganga,
Their tummies grumble for its taste
They are poor and their clothes are soiled,
Behold the land of God!
You are the One Mother,
The giver of life
Full of opulence
Who dares to think?
You are their guide
You fill their hearts with strength
Never forsake them.
They pray with folded hands.
Can You hear?
They love only You.



Ranjit Iyer received his BS cum laude from the University of California, Irvine, and his MS and PhD degrees from the University of California, Los Angeles. His poetry is featured in *poetrysoup*, *eskimopie*, and *Twitter*.

Walk Quietly

I walk steadfast, amid the hustle and bustle, the noise, the uncertainty,
The chaos, the bitterness, the unsuccessful, the misinformed,
The cynicism, the forgotten, the unacceptable, the world creates.
I am that fabric woven in the annals of time.

I walk by myself, searching for that inner peace within my soul.
A voice from within cries, "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?"

Not to count the days of melancholy and despair.
But those of hope and promise.
Not to take one precious minute in vain.
It will slip pass me, like sand through fingers.
Not to count the days of neglect and failure.
But of morality.

I walk through the valley of the disbelieving and discontent,
To appease them because of their selfish motives, a non-issue.
Let the next generation of workers bring their food to the table.
I walk with honor, with purpose, with dignity,
With caution. But I do it quietly.

Reginald Murray

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Ten Stairs

First step, placing my foot
I remember the time when I used to look out of the window
Wondering will there be a Prince Charming or a Knight.
Toe first on second step, rewinds to the sleepless nights.
Left leg on third step, creaks, I shake
Same as my heart used to shake with the fear of being alone.
Fourth step, the first heartbreak
Fear of not being worthy enough cripples.
Heel on the fifth, the turn of rift
From emotional attachment, running away from commitment.
Tip-toeing to sixth and seventh,
Heightens my sensitivity, I pull away.
I see a hand in the darkness of my self-doubt
Assuring me to trust, urging my strides.
Evaluating, carefully step on eighth
Light beams, my heart tugs.
Impassioned, I rush to the ninth step.
Looking up, he stands at the end who completes me
Not afraid to burn or to drown.
Standing at the tenth and last step,
Let go of railing and my own guard,
I let myself free, in the arms of my safety.
I thread my fingers behind his neck
Binding our souls, feel the tingles, sparks and butterflies
Everything I read was now real, irreplaceable.
In love together, long gone was the terror.

*Aspiring to publish her own book of poems someday, **Sagarika Sukul** is a 19-year-old pursuing English Honours at Delhi University. She loves to write about feelings inspired from real life incidents or her favourite characters from fictional novels.*

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Of Inspiration

'I't is only through inspiration,
'N'ew thoughts give birth to a notion.
'S'oon, it puts you into action,
'P'aving the way for a new invention.
'I't gives life a new ambition,
'R'aises your courage of conviction,
'A'nd removing each and every inhibition,
'T'akes you away from the convention,
'I'nto a world of higher realisation,
'O'nto the path of satisfaction,
'N'igher to the heavenly destination.



Salman Sowdagar is a poet and author from Hyderabad, India. He completed his graduation in English Literature from IGNOU, and is currently doing MA in English from Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. His poems have been published in The Criterion: An International Journal in English, Verse of Silence, CultureCult Magazine, The Bombay Review, The World Anthology of Poetry 2016 (released as a part of The 32nd World Congress of Poets in Taiwan), and Wordweavers, among others.

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Seeds

Three women in a row,
Cardinals,
I mistake for poppies.

The field is usually empty.
Only visited by those,
With maps inside them.

I've been here before.
All the trees look
Caught in praise.

Came here with my brother.
When he offered his voice,
Left it in this field,

Among seeds,
To be gleaned,
To be polished by birds.

Because

Death did not stop
To exert the sharpness
Of a blade,

He sent my brother to war.
He kindly taunted –
Kindly tested me.

I dread
The carriage, the coffin
He could come home in.

Watched Death pin
Labor and Leisure
In one place.

I grew tall searching,
For the tip of a small world,
For clovers, in a barren lot.

It's a barely remembered thought
Yet feels shorter than a day,
I felt cold metal on my wrist.

Toward Eternity

The lilac blossom,
Looks more like a violet pinecone,
As it pauses before Death.

The Violent Smell of Lilacs in May

Framed by a window
is a lilac tree
A cross

The blossoms
their purple skins
Godly the stubborn warm smell

This is a tree that will never die
This is a tree that will live on even when the city comes tearing through
the land

The land
belongs to deer

They made circles in the field
beds for their families

Can't find them
still warm from closeness

You can't find chestnuts
only their skeletons

***Sarah Heffner** is a poet, bartender and creativity coach living in Philadelphia. About a decade ago, her biological brother found their birth mother. This discovery catapulted her to South Korea to build a relationship with her birth mother, her birth country and mostly herself.*

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The Fall

In the closet, some old suns are trapped
for nothing. 'Are we busy?', asked the table-cloth
to a flower vase
Conclusion is a vague group of letters
like an anaesthesia detail without a report

We are not busy for nothing. We have seen
clothes stitching
men and women into their shapes like an opera house
measuring the depth of the wall
It is again a mitosis of soul
We waited half a decade for some excitement
in our neighbourhood. We again want a fall

Foretold

There would be a big Chestnut tree near your house
In one spring, it would shed its leaves – golden brown,
It would confide you something most dire
Inside your gum, there would be a Gingivitis scar
It would be your first taste of defeat
The tree would die with only a hundred leaves

Your earliest grandfather would be a Neanderthal
He would be drawing fighting scenes on cave walls
Of women, mammoth and such other necessary things
Down the generation, a few millennia later
Your uncle would be an expert of fake paintings

You would marry an immigrant with sharp teeth
She would have the smell of the stinking rich
You would be happy for ten seasons of spring
She would be caught between demons and angels by then
Your son would be an idiot since the days of cradle

Your relatives would leave one after another
Your family would consist of only albums and old furniture
You would return to your old town house before death
You would be writing more moribund poems then

You would be buried in your mossy courtyard
By some fake poets and guest lecturers
Grasshoppers would be forgetful about your tomb
Your son would be your only true follower
He would place flowers on your grave every December

No epitaph would be written for you in any case

because you would shun everything by choice
Near your grave it would be serene and cold
Common ants and your stupid son would only roam

Sekhar Banerjee is a bilingual poet. He has three collections of poems and a monograph on an Indo-Nepal border tribe to his credit. His poems in English have been published in some of the major literary journals in India and abroad. He considers poetry as a spurious medicine which, if administered sincerely, can cure even the deceased. Poetry is divinely therapeutic for him.

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The Godforsaken spot-

Is a myth like a man
Crucified for humanity.
Is where we bury the bestiality
Of lesser beasts.
Is where the saintly and
Insane purge each other of the same sins.
Is where the devils delve deeper
Than deadlier depression.
Is where you and I coexist
Until our hands touch.
Is a Godforsaken
Spot.

The gentle light

 wrapped around
 the helixes of your ears,
 Crowning your copper curls
Like an olive wreath-
 And, Noor,
 Ah, but Noor and how else name,
The most splendid of splendours-
 To behold such veracity in a visage.
Should you not carry on the gracious archway
Of your narrow nose the gentle caress of the
 Sun stroking the naive earnestness of your
Tender tenacious irises-tie they unwittingly
 My tongue in contemplation
 As my blood leaves my body
And crashes against the walls of my heart,
Or are those your pinkish-hued lips that hush
The cacophony of consciousness and, momentarily, I
Relinquish the rudiments of respiration?
The faint flutter of your eyelids
Ricochets over my reminiscences
Of your fine physiognomy and,
Fleetingly, finally,
My gaze grasps God's grace.

Shruti Woosaree, solitary from Twain's heaven.

Earth, Wind, Fire

Do not touch me
unless the knife
is deep;
I cannot risk
mere surface.

Never face me unless
prepared to take
my place
and continue
taking.

Though all routes be
no more than
the goat's domain;
I'll see you there.
You'll know me.

Space Odyssey

Surrounded by
grey days
you lose

when love's
lost
in the wash.

Scan

Just as light dips its corona
my lodger – an echidna
by any other name,
zigzags the curved terrace
to forage her banquet
leaving furrows
between iris and sage.

Sighted, our eyes interlock.
I blink, make hexagrams
from antiquated toil – shout
 "Eureka..."
The Buddha's been
a long time
coming.

***Stefanie Bennett**, ex-blues singer & musician has published over a dozen poetry books, a novel & a libretto – worked with [No Nukes] Arts Action For Peace, – now known as 'ICAN' – Nobel Peace Prize Winner for 2017. Of mixed ancestry [Italian/Irish/Paugusset-Shawnee] Stefanie was born in Queensland, Australia.*

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Oil and Essence

Like Cleopatra's perfume, your scent lingers;
I yearn to capture, sequester, eternalize
Obsession in a holy vessel—the vial's contents
As precious as clear liquid diamonds, as
Fragrant as rare rain forest orchids.

Early morning hours unmasked all make-up;
Sunrays peeked puckishly through dusty blinds,
Entered the room, rested on your face
Saintly sleeping upon a feather pillow
Lips slightly parted, create a crescent smile;
Slight traces of eyeliner accentuating shut lids,
Frame natural long lashes, quaintly curled;
Rouge that powdered your face alone
Became a dry baptism of talc and blush,
Blended into both our cheeks
dusted our necks and bodies—
celebrated a most singular beginning.

Transforming into shadows—practically invisible—
I watch you apply artifice in front of me
As if I were a long time acquaintance,
A husband, a lover—anyone known for years
Rather than a single night's bliss.

Onus

Coerced by delirious desire, piercing ice packed peaks of
Mountains ravaged by a blizzard's furious bombardment,

Induced by a firestorm of perfect passion where purpose plays me
Like a violin, draws its bow across my body tuned in perfect fifths,

Obliged as any apostle to spread the saintly word of love's
Spiritual transcendence intermingled with physical lust,

Compelled by beauty's wintery commitment to smoother
Naked promises with kisses, avert dissembling romance,

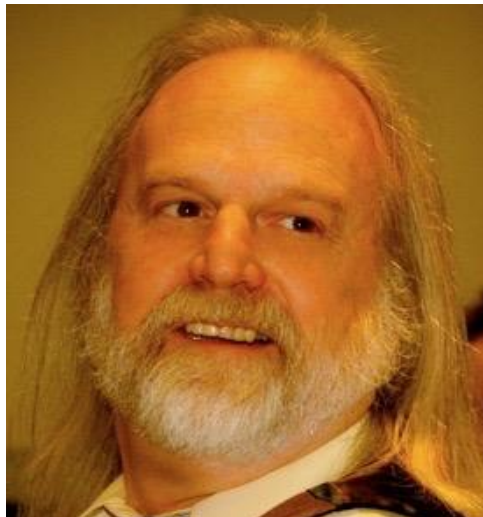
Required to honor amour, traverse submission's maze, trace

Devotion's future footsteps through snow tracks from the past.

Musical Maestro

full
moon
waxing
evening star 's
nightingale songstress
ribaldly sings sacred refrains
nocturnal notes float through tall trees and grassy meadows
conserving its rarified voice to herald dawn's light
raise intercity decibels
reach eager ears of
commoners
to hear
its
tune

roll
car
windows—
commuters
do appreciate
the feathered diva's arias
while wild wheels jam in traffic and patience becomes nil
As soon as sunrays blister night's skies radiating
bright beams that warm, dry, shrivel, they
mute mellifluous
melodies
silence
bird
songs



*An award winning author/poet, **Sterling Warner**'s poems have appeared in dozens of literary magazines, journals, and anthologies, including In The Grove, The Flatbush Review, American Mustard, The Chaffey Review, Leaf By Leaf, The Monterey Poetry Review, Visual Verse, The Atherton Review, and Metamorphoses. Additionally, he also has published four collections of poetry as well as a chapbook. He currently lives in Union, WA and is working on a collection of fiction.*

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All the flowers fell

Come to me storm,
see how the Jasmine flowers fall off my back and still remain wanting.
I see it trailing from one curve to another and peeping out of the window this dark hour.

Its sickness is perplexing
I can still smell its first rooting
its mellowed afternoon's walking with me
every day – amber to turquoise
slightly sad and mildly exuberant.

I lie down on it
hearing not the overbearing cricket's call –
just the torrential *Kaalboishakhi*.

Feeling the Jasmine soaked drops from the ceiling to my center –
where the lungs cautiously breathe and the shadows of the dancing neighbours
fall on where I believe
I realize myself every day.

Kaalboishakhi - The Bengali phrase for Nor'westers which is the cyclonic pre-monsoon showers in the month of Boishak that is April

ARTWORK









Receiver of The Kavi Salam Award 2018, **Sufia Khatoon** is an author, a performance poet, editor, translator, facilitator and artist based in Kolkata, India. Her poems and short stories have been published in various national and international anthologies and journals of repute. She is a multi-lingual poet and *Death In The Holy Month* is her debut book of poems. Sufia Khatoon is the Co-Founder of Rhythm Divine Poets community Kolkata. She has an MA in English Literature, a PG in Journalism and Mass Communication and a Diploma in Visual Arts and Design. Her works have been exhibited in more than 20 group shows in various renowned galleries in Kolkata.

The Pangolin Review, Issue 13, November 2019

The Rays Never Seemed to Come

Have you ever felt lost, only this time totally?
Stuck between reality and imagination,
Fantasy and the sad echoes of truth
Wherever, you turn a dead end seems to pop
Up but to my surprise, from thin air.

Direction slowly desolates to confusion,
You can only stare in agony at the horror that stood before me,
But is it really there or my mind is playing the most absurd
Game of the century
“Take da’ shot” they all yell...
They don’t even know I’m broken inside.

Expectations slowly transforms me into a photocopy
Of the human nature
Or is that the way we should go about life,
I mean being normal and all
Elation succumbs to my shy nature
Am I the problem or an expectant society?
I do try, the Lord sure knows I do.

But is it enough?
I am haunted

Pulling a one-wheeled cart was a thrust for greater perspective,
Trailing behind people’s bottoms, only to gain a fair share of the spotlight,
Like a mischievous tale without any acknowledgement of the road ahead.
Stepped on and forced into inferiority, association was a non-starter

Seen as invisible,
Perceived as numb
Referred to as an outcast,
And treated as one.

A dark, ghostly cloud hovers around,
My skewed hut in muddy foundation.
The spread your wings philosophy was nothing more than a ghost
Or rather, a fascination long encrypted in my mindset.

Dreaming was the life and living, the nightmare,
Hoping to wake up early but only to realise you can’t
Goosebumps flood my entire body,
Is it anxiety? I don’t even know anymore.

Uncertainty plants gloomy obstructions as,
Dawn Never Seemed to Come.



Tinashe Dorobeni, 22, is a Zimbabwean student at Chinhoyi University of Technology. He has always been fascinated by writing and arts from a very tender age, drawing inspiration from comics and many cartoons.

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On Heroism

Tolstoy's portrayal of history
was like a dream come true,
no individual in control of what happens,
each man monumentally effaced.

And then there was Mark Strand
telling us in a Hilton bar
that he preferred to make the self happen
"in the language of the poem"
instead of basing it on personal history,
a singular past. We perfectly understood.

We were psalmists at heart,
ready with ornate praise or lamentation,
but we would never look as ridiculous as Napoleon
pacing and waiting
by the Kamerkollezhsky rampart
for a deputation that would never show.

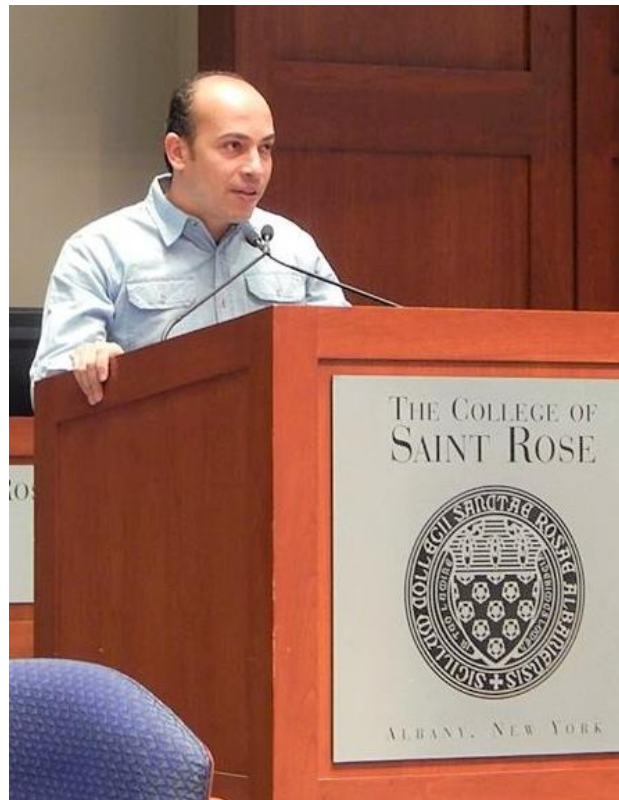
Our poems would be deep water.
Our father would be forgotten.
Our mother and brother too.
Our song was made of a silence only we heard.

Todd Copeland's poems have appeared in The Journal, High Plains Literary Review, Southern Poetry Review, The Wallace Stevens Journal, The Adirondack Review, Sewanee Theological Review, The Antigonish Review, and Columbia Poetry Review, among other publications. He lives in Waco, Texas.

The Pangolin Review, Issue 13, November 2019

Ask Me

Ask me whatever you want, my dear
My heart will answer truly I swear
Ask me why God created the earth
Only to receive your happy birth
Ask me why God created the sun
Only to help you spread warmth, light and fun
Ask me why God created the moon in the sky its place
Only to lighten the universe sharing your face
Ask me why God created the stars so bright
Only to be like your teeth when it is night
Ask me why God created me
Only to fall in your love as forever will be
Ask me why I love you
Only for the life into my veins you flow



Walid Abdallah is an Egyptian poet and author. He is a visiting professor of English language and literature in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Germany and the USA. His poetry includes *Go Ye Moon*, *Dream* and *My heart still beats*. He has several translated poems which won prestigious prizes in the USA like *Cause*, *Egypt's Grief* and *Strangers' Cross*, his books include *Shout of Silence*, *Escape to the Realm of Imagination*, and *Man Domination and Woman Emancipation*.

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Tomb of Carts

Erstwhile images untold
in the ghoul of looted past
crayon and cathode voiced fuss
to the gateway of national Lazarus
in broken ceramics of purpled moon.
Lens of lines lies in love
sweet shades of unfinished blues
for drumming is a great force
that draws the lull into gallery of blood
imprinting scars into naked footprints.
In this our cerebral junction,
ostrich is dreadful in dark mirror
rags and stench are genesis to high-lashes
for those bees are always at the door
to name us the vultures of coming fetus.
Àbíkú is miles away in Igbó Òdájú
breaking palm kernels at gedú's shrine
dancing ancient bits through àgídìgbo
blasting signals of coming again
through the perforated mystic knob-art.
Pay me this honor in game of flames
and let Iyemoja buried her first child
in sepulchre of blooded history
those early hearts have flimsy stance
to yellow marriages of melted homes.
Stones of mystery masters the shadow
calling confession to cube passage
àlùjòdnú breaks caveat of rays
then moon shifts to valley of darkness
self is the standing altar at cobra's rage.

***World Barnabas** is from Nigeria. He is an established writer and a graduate of Literature in English from Obafemi Awolowo University Ile Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.*

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On Reading her Story

She stood at the crossroads of her life for him
she stood there denuded of the poundage of her everyday.

He had asked her to leave her baggage behind
promised her that they would start afresh
that he would always be there for her
she lugged the weight of the moments
she couldn't have left behind.

All the raindrops on her leaves
all his poems they would read aloud
all the coffee bills they could laugh at
all her fresh ferns, spear grass,
train tickets and egret feathers,
a small water-bottle and some money
lipstick and comb,
also memories of scratches on her dry barks
yellow leaves at her feet
in short, her bare essentials and the whole of Sukna Forest Range.

She waited for him there
through all the droplets of water
that formed in the mouth of the taps
fell one by one
she waited for him there
until she was hungry and not hungry anymore
she waited for him there
until the last train left the platform
until the bodies around wrapped blankets
turned dead on the benches
until she was unburdened of all the tearing noises the world makes

until it was time to return home

Zinia Mitra teaches English in the University of North Bengal. Her travelogues and articles have been published in *The Statesman*, her reviews, articles, translations in books and journals, including *Indian Literature*. Her books include: *Indian Poetry in English: Critical Essays*, *Poetry of Jayanta Mahapatra: Imagery and Experiential Identity* and *Twentieth Century British Literature: Reconstructing Literary Sensibility, Interact* (co-edited). Her online articles include "A Science Fiction in a Gothic Scaffold: a reading of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*" (*Rupkatha Journal*), "Master of Science and Non-Sense" (*Parabaas*), "Why does the Negro speak of Rivers" (*Teesta Review*), "Contemporary Indian Theatre: Theatricality and Artistic Crossovers" (*Asiatic IJUM Journal of English Language and Literature*). Her poems have been published in *Muse India*, *Ruminations*, *Contemporary Literary Review*, *Kavya Bharati*, *East Lit*, *Indian Literature*, *Asian Signature* and *Setu*. She is on the editorial board of *Teesta Review*.