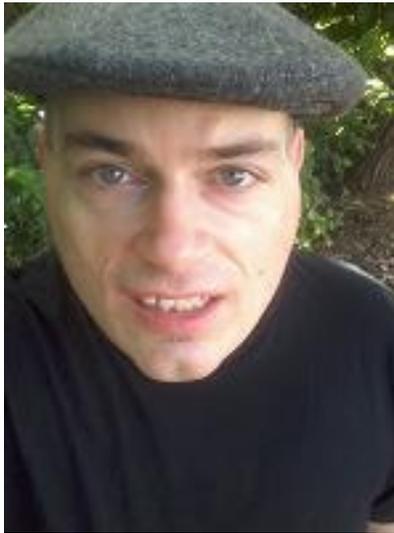


On Becoming a Sir

I held the hotel door open for the brunette in the teal t-shirt schlepping a Samsonite suitcase as she might've dragged a corpse through a cut-rate slasher flick. After she'd coughed "Thank you, sir," the same phrase sputtered from the lips of her scowling satellite lugging pale ale with tattooed arms. I realized I'd slipped into slumber limber on a comfy sofa like one of the Friends at Central Perk and awakened just a few wrinkles short of the youngest Golden Girl on the lanai, with under-eye bloat and a lower back stiffer than the Purity hard bread in Newfoundland larders. Grieved is the death of "Hey dude!" once doled out to a convincing swagger and sexy elasticity now evicted by sprawling silver chest whiskers and a gut begging for antacids to quell the rebellion instigated by a weak cup of Pot Noodles while it takes longer and longer to locate my birth year in drop-down lists.



*Frequently crossing the Canadian/US border, **Adrian Slonaker** enjoys jangly folk-rock music, guava juice, wrestling, Google architecture and rain. Adrian's work has appeared in *The Pangolin Review*, *Credo Espoir*, *Algebra of Owls*, *WINK: Writers in the Know*, *Aerodrome* and others.*

The Pangolin Review, Issue 11, 8 July 2019

storm in a teacup

It's no worry if you live in a place
where there is *so* much bitterness around
desalination. Where Hindu priests get
a piece of the beach to build non-veg snacks.
Where the word clothes doesn't rhyme with the word loathes.
It's no worry if you live in a place
where people promised to live to be a
hundred are diagnosed with fake cancer.

It's no worry if you live in a place
where children kick a football and have to
look for it in the grass. Where the police
cannot act due to gross lack of paper.
Where people drive to go and walk in gyms.
It's no worry if you live in a place
where politicians stand on your shoulders,
and pee on your head, with your permission.

It's no worry if you live in a place
where universities are less equipped
than kindergartens. Where fat lightning strikes
when gay sunrays are predicted to shine.
Where heroes and villains sell heroin.
It's no worry if you live in a place
where mighty Apollo and immortal
Phoenix are the two most consumed legends.

It's no worry if you live in a place
where there is water everywhere, except
in your tap. Where (macho) drivers have crushed
courtesy dead on roads full of stitches.
Where leaders lead, and err, like all humans.
It's no worry if you live in a place
where people have egos healthier than
their health. Where women deliver babies

in public hospitals with one leg in
their coffin, each. Where two persons notice
they have the same identity card and
one suddenly ceases to exist. Where
everyone wants a job but few do the
job. Where a storm in a teacup or a
teacup in a storm makes no difference.
It's no worry—it's no worry *at all*.



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.

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I Remember Her

I remember her
standing there,
outstretched arms of love.
Taking in all our sins,
she paid the penance,
saying her Hail Marys.
Forgiving all forgiveness,
in her martyr way.
Her quiet strength
filled the room.
Keeping all pain to herself,
no one knew she was there.
Present, yet unperceivable
was her whispered prayer.
She held no malice,
spoke no hate,
though tortured was her lot.
She faded from existence
just as she arrived,
alone and unnoticed,
by all but me.
I remember her
standing there,
outstretched arms of love.

Ann Christine Tabaka was nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize in Poetry, has been internationally published, and won poetry awards from numerous publications. She is the author of 9 poetry books. Christine lives in Delaware, USA. She loves gardening and cooking. Chris lives with her husband and two cats. Her most recent credits are: Ethos Literary Journal, North of Oxford, Pomona Valley Review, Page & Spine, West Texas Literary Review, The Hungry Chimera, Sheila-Na-Gig, Synchronized Chaos, Pangolin Review, Foliate Oak Review, Better Than Starbucks!, The Write Launch, The Stray Branch, The McKinley Review, Fourth & Sycamore.

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Scarecrows

If anyone on the verge of action should judge himself according to the outcome, he would never begin. — Søren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, 1843

Will Coppe, sitting on a lichen slab, spits
on the earth, grounds the spittle into the dirt
with one boot sole, takes a bite of a biscuit
hands John what's left, neither of them speak.
Since conscription they have both destroyed
many straw men with blade and musket balls
in the training grounds of Scarborough Castle
but with Edgehill's mowing an oft whispered
Hellmouth of sinners shovelled into Doom's Mill,
the prospect of destroying folk made up of skin
and bone sticks in the craw like biscuit crumbs.
Yet convincement is signed in each fellow's
Book of Conscience for The Lamb's War you
must know before you witness his Kingdome.

***Bob Beagrie** has published seven full collections of poetry and several pamphlets, most recently *Leasungspell* (Smokestack 2016) and *Nobody* (Hunting Raven 2017), *This Game of Strangers* – written with Jane Burn (Wyrd Harvest Press 2017) and *Remnants* written with Jane Burn (Knives, Forks & Spoons Press (2019). His work has appeared in numerous anthologies and magazines and has been translated into Finnish, Urdu, Swedish, Dutch, Spanish, Estonian and Karelian. He lives in Middlesbrough and is a senior lecturer in creative writing at Teesside University.*

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The Common Hours

The books on the shelves,
the lamps still unlit,
don't respond to a summer sun,
nor do the afternoon clouds
change them.

But I am intemperate,
turn this way and that
in search of light,
then shadow play,
then evening colors as the sun
acts painterly.

I am moved and changed,
frequent in my delights
with the common hours
of the season, as though
another may not be.

Books and lamps and shelves
cannot perceive
no future.

Cleo Griffith lives in Salida, CA in the midst of many orchards, farms and poets! Writers are abundant as are artists of other kinds, many painters. There is so much in nature to inspire her. She has been widely published and is always looking for the next subject of inspiration.

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This Love

I enclose my hand
around the blade of you,
your serrated edge slicing flesh,
releasing blood
to flow from my hard palm
to my already scarred wrists.

But I refuse to let go,
my love for you
compelling me to endure your edge,
no matter the cost,
no matter the pain;

I already know
I cannot live
without you, just as I know
I cannot exist
without the scars that tattoo my body
and my being.

Edward Lee's poetry, short stories, non-fiction and photography have been published in magazines in Ireland, England and America, including The Stinging Fly, Skylight 47, Acumen, The Pangolin Review, Iceberg Tales and Smiths Knoll. His debut poetry collection Playing Poohsticks On Ha'Penny Bridge was published in 2010. He is currently working towards a second collection. He also makes musical noise under the names Ayahuasca Collective, Lewis Milne, Orson Carroll, Blinded Architect, Lego Figures Fighting, and Pale Blond Boy. For more: <https://edwardmlee.wordpress.com>.

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Tattoos

You'll just be another string to add to my bow
of sadness
when I've traced all your tattoos with my fingers
and got mad at the one of the ship on an ocean

because ships run on oceans
and
you run from them



***Ella Turner**, 24, from London: “For better or worse I’ve always been a very passionate person. And so, since before I can remember, I’ve used writing as a form of expression and to process my thoughts and feelings. Whether it be through poetry, short stories or anything else, writing has become something I’m able to both lean on and love all at once.” Find more: <http://www.ellaturner.com/>.*

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First Funeral

I sat in the backseat
of an old Mercury sedan,
with my brother Mike
while Mom paid
her respects.
Dad stayed with us;
we were too little
to walk through
the funeral home,
to see the dead body
of a stranger
in an open casket.
To pass the time
Dad leaned over
the front seat of the car,
told Mike and me stories
about Frankenstein,
the Wolfman, and Dracula.

At first Mike and I
shrieked with delight
while we huddled together,
delighted with the special
attention from Dad,
but as the yellow
street lights
cast long shadows
on the threadbare upholstery,
as we peered through
the fog-shrouded windows,
saw dark shadows
surround our car,
we begged Dad to stop,
cried for Mom
to come back.



Frank C Modica is a retired teacher who taught children with special needs for over 34 years. His writing is animated by interests in history, geography, and sociology. Frank's short story Homemade was selected as an Honorable Mention in the Midway Journal 2017 -1000 Below Flash Prose and Poetry contest. His work has appeared in Slab, Heyday, Cacti Fur, Black Heart Magazine, The Tishman Review, Crab Fat Literary Magazine, and FewerThan500.

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Symbiosis

This lifetime of addiction
Is entrenched
but - I am good at giving up,
until - finally -
I give up giving up.

Always, you draw me in,
like Jesus drawing his stray sheep back
into the fold
with soft appeals,

“Come, come, you know you want to.

I know
that we are in a deadly symbiosis,
No way to win
till I am free of this
destructive bind.

Finally

No more pub door huddles.
In ten years my lungs have become
near as clean as new, but

I am still trying to forgive you.

Janet Cameron has an MA in Modern Poetry and has been published in Acumen, Equinox, Logos (Open University) Connections, and several other quality literary journals. Mostly she has earned her living writing on history, philosophy and for women's magazines, as well as lecturing for the University of Kent and Adult Education.. Now retired she wants to devote herself to her first loves - and try to be as good a poet and short story writer as she can.

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insecurities

a cat knows the best

consumption of biscuit
with inferior critter
such cats are sensible,
and make dangerous glue
can you think of a day
without smile or glue?

you have only two cats,
pity,
no pity

you don't know
when they make love,
but see them play dangerously
with each other's asses

you love to watch them
leave you never
and walk to you as if old scant species
cats know in a house where
the dark seems like a skeleton of goddess

I enquired about cats
if they like cookies with gainz

twirling in murk

alert like a gnome

pass through a shadow
as I start opening your strap



Caribbean

I had first heard this word when I was seven
a word its head undulates and becomes close
to the cranium of a boy
you can dive into such word and find a blue mermaid
gold in her shells, platinum flows out of
her eyes as she flutters glassy lids

all these errors in folktales not bonded worldwide
Not two such trees entwined like destiny with

destiny

I was once a tree for my friend Jay
together we had heads, – certain words fell
in love with our heads, and became tattoos
on the inner sides of skin
if I were a man like mermaid,
Jay would have liked a word like bromance

In our thickset city, a word suddenly a plaything
more animating than a boy or a girl,
when I'd heard one other name sounding like
Caribbean can't recall anymore
what if it was no land?

Where does smoke go when
 words burn words for us?

Jayanta Bhaumik is currently based in Kolkata, India. Basically from the field of Metaphysics and Astrology, Jayanta also finds time for literature. Poetry is his passion, experiment and quest. A Research Member of American Federation of Astrologers, he has recently self-published a book that is available on Amazon.com (Remodel Your Soothsayer). He spends long periods in Singapore and other south-east Asian countries for professional assignments every year.

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Please Arrange this Woman in Alphabetical Order!

A morphous daylights
Break between temperatures.
Could she ever smell the
Diameter of dreams marinated in the kitchen?
Even her nerves are swollen, with codes, not meals.
Flowered by white noise she waves at the
Green burden of equality, it
Heaves and reduces her expanses into millions.
IVF whispers/ the bitter tongue of truth
Jazzed summersaults under corporate noonshine.
Knowledge of follies
Lure her skin, once meant, only to be refrigerated.
Muscles replace sweet juices/ and she/ forget/ she
No/ never/ not/ will not go back to the
Obfuscidity/ the publicised halo of innocent galaxies
Poised at her feet. Ripening the flesh between distances,
Quickened at the loss of movement, she
Rowes through streams of salt and turns into a
Stone. They chant laws to dig up her bones-
The only way to hide
Underneath her nails the
Verbs she had always slept with. Oh, to
Wash herself cold after days of fever with a man-soap
Xeroxes of something imagined- a
Yawn through a tense night, an un-coming
Zibet chewing sound among noiseless zebras.



Jhilam Chattaraj has authored two books: Corporate Fiction: Popular Culture and the New Writers (2018) and the poetry collection, When Lovers Leave and Poetry Stays (2018). Her writings have been

published in journals like Cha-An Asian Literary Journal, Frontier Poetry, Guftgu, Voice and Verse poetry magazine and World Literature Today.

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portrait of a girl

| | |
|--|----------|
| as a child she picks flowers and plays in the dirt | happy |
| as a young girl she is thin, lanky | insecure |
| as a teen, curved, passionate, awkward | insecure |
| as a young woman, she is a goddess, | |
| beautiful in her own right, | happy |
| confident, bold | |

Lily Oetting is a university student with a passion for the arts. She resides in the South Eastern United States. She has written several poems, a novel, and has multiple plays in the works. In her spare time she enjoys practicing aerial silks and getting lost in music. She has previously been published in issues 3.5 and 4 of The Pangolin Review.

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Mud

if you promise to not laugh
i will scrape my skin raw with words
the ones that are hard, and true
peel flesh back to see
muscle, fascia, bone
blood, sweat, and
no, not tears
my jaw clenched tight

if you sit awhile on this earth
i will dig deep into our humus
formed of rejection and redemption
of being wrong in all the right ways
and just plain wrong
of moments of tenderness
of illness and death, of holes in our hearts and of healing
and mostly of the love that binds our humanity in humility

if you listen for a bit
i will wash in soil and stream
unclench my jaw and keep peeling...
I'm not enough
I'm hurt and scared
I'm sorry
I need help
I ache with loneliness

if you stay with me on this patch of new growth, born of old
i will grab fistfuls of dirt to salve the places now raw from trying
raw from confessions and words
the ones that are hard, and true
this is how we open without hemorrhaging
how we stay open without retreat
this is how we become kind and brave
how we love courageously, together
please stay

Lindsay Ballew is a native Texan, now breathing in the New Mexico desert while raising two boys with her beautiful soulmate. In her spare time, she works as an occupational therapist.

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Grandma's Stories

Something about death on the bridge:
fighting skeletons revealing a place of murder.
Something about death symbols:
a scythe, a crooked frame, a bird in the house.
Something about death warnings:
a comb, a woman, a cry – news over the miles.
Something about death in sounds –
a siren in the night, but no ambulance, no car.
Something about death seen in the leaves
at the bottom of a porcelain teacup.
Something about death in the knock at the door –
nobody there but a cold rush of air.
Something about death, but not told
for fear of death.



Lorraine Whelan is a Canadian writer and visual artist based in Ireland. Her published writing takes the form of poetry, memoir & fiction (USA, Ireland, Canada & online) and art criticism & commentary (Ireland, Luxembourg & online). As a visual artist, she has exhibited both in solo (Ireland) and group shows (Ireland, Canada, China & France). She has appeared namely in New Irish Writing, The Salmon, Canadian Author & Bookman, Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme, The Scarlet Leaf Review and Tales from the Forest.

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Memorial Day Memory; 1983

There's a Memorial Day Parade
in Rumford today.
The whole town will go
the way they always do.
With smiles of anticipation,
we are ready to go.

In Rumford today,
Al, Digger, Lois and me
crowd into the cab of the truck
and head down the highway.
We want to see the sights
and share the fun.

The whole town will go.
They can't stay away.
Somehow Al and Digger find money
to buy Lois and me flags.
We watch the soldiers march by,
and try to stand tall like them.

Shriners ride their motorcycles
the way they always do
and clowns pedaled tricycles too.
One sneaks up
and pinches Lois's nose
and hands me a balloon.

With smiles of anticipation,
Digger brings over
plates full of watermelon
and red skinned hot dogs,
We eagerly dine;
a meal made in heaven.

We are ready to go
after all the soldiers have marched,
the trucks and tanks have rolled.
We share the memories
and practice marching;
Lois and I, a two-person Army.

There was a Memorial Day Parade today.

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.

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Let Me Fly

Let me fly, fly and fly far to the land of love
Where my hearts soar up high
To the astounding valley of flowers
Where rose petals are ready in the garden
To share her charm with true followers

Let me fly, fly and fly beyond the horizon
To the paradise where soft breeze blows
And nature is nutritious with her pure hands
Showering boons of sweetness and light
Where violet sky is vowing to blue planet

Let me fly, fly and fly beyond the belief
To the abode where clouds travelling,
Sailing with little emotions over green fields
with flowing lake merge human race with kindness
In name of grace and glory, cherishing humanity

Let me fly, fly beyond the walls
To the vale of vineyards, back to my little nest
Where hanging hopes grow in ecstasy and fantasy
To sprout my wings and banquet colours of peace
Let me fly, fly, and fly like a gorgeous fluttering butterfly.



Priyanka S. Raj (Mahi) is a modest English News Reporter working at Public Broadcasting Media Doordarshan News. Author and journalist by profession and an enthusiastic young poet hailing from Shillong, India, her interest and passion for literature and poetry set her apart from the crowd. Her debut poetry book, Social Blues; Beyond Solemn Balladry, was published in February, 2019. She has been published in several magazines. She can be reached on Twitter: @mahipriyankaraj.

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You Taught Me Strange Things

You taught me strange things,
How to hurt without bruising,
How to smile without meaning.
It made me think of you,
In less dangerous of ways.
Or maybe I simply lie.
You never meant to corrupt me.
Trust me I know.
But fatigue occupies me now,
From fighting the seed of infection you lay inside of me.
I can no longer defend you,
If the world must know,
Then only I will inform it,
With drops of my ink.
Your grief is too shallow,
For it to ever narrate powerfully.
If the world must know,
There were bold eyes and tender hearts,
Wounds without scars.
Lies which I discovered too late.
There was elation and trepidation.
It hurt too loudly to ever feel the need to scream.
And now only the sedation of pain really ever keeps me company.

***Mahrukh Murad** is a high school student residing in Pakistan. She aspires to harness the creative streak in human nature and embody it in her work. Her poetry has previously been published in TeenInk and in The Waggle magazine and is forthcoming in Pleiades Magazine.*

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Late Evening

Warm milk circles—
counter-clockwise,
blank as a page.

All else is still
as a black cat
posed and waiting
over wild prey.

Rain waits, ready
to break the peace,
drop in straight lines

to drill small circles
like counter clocks.

*Mark J. Mitchell's latest novel, **The Magic War**, just appeared from Loose Leaves Publishing. A Full-length collection of poems will be released next year by Encircle Publications. Mark studied writing at UC Santa Cruz under Raymond Carver and George Hitchcock. His work has appeared in the several anthologies and hundreds of periodicals. Three of his chapbooks— **Three Visitors**, **Lent**, 1999, and **Artifacts and Relics**—and the novel, **Knight Prisoner** are available through Amazon and Barnes and Noble. He lives with his wife the activist and documentarian, Joan Juster and makes a living pointing out pretty things in San Francisco. For more: <https://www.facebook.com/MarkJMitchellwriter/>*

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Recreationalism

Recreational sex,
not intentionally setting out to wreck creational sex,
or to dispossess romantic sex.
A perfect stopgap measure
with optional friendge benefits.
For some their own worst enemy.
Usually funner, but rarely funkier than homoerotic locker room grabbing and jabbing.
Guilt free?
More like hope free.
Illusionless—maybe not really happening at all.
Just the low down, lying down,
eternal emptying out and replenishing
of the essential human spirit.

Michaeleen Kelly is an Emerita Professor of Philosophy at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Her poetry has been published in Grey Wolfe Press, Dunes Review, Main Street Rag anthologies and Blue Collar Review. She has won the Dyer-Ives Poetry Contest twice and is working on her third poetry-instrumental CD.

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Feigned Freedom

We have learned to feign freedom
Too much, that we do not feel
The pains of shackles on our ankles,
And the whiplash of bondage on our skins.

We have learned to swallow silence
Often times, that we no longer complain
About the bitter crumbs of servitude
Served on the platters of democracy.

We have learned to forget our past
So fast, that the days of severe tortures
Are cursed corpses buried in the graves
Of years, long dead in our hearts.

We have learned to master our fate
So well, that we massage the fist
Of slavery, under the guise of patriotism,
And we cry for freedom in muted murmurs.

Ogedengbe Tolulope Impact is a Nigerian poet. His poem Tell them was a shortlisted poem at the 7th Korea-Nigeria poetry feast, 2017. His works have been published in Duane Poetree, Words Rhymes & Rhythms, Literary planet, Wax poetry and art magazine, parousia Magazine and various anthologies including the Brigitte Poirson poetry contest, 2018 (Citadels of words). He tweets @fruitfulimpact where he spread himself into a song.

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Sunflowers

Here is the narrow hour in its furrow:
now, before, and after.
The row longing at the end of the light.

Petals wide over wide, edge over edge,
flowers loose in their weights, so much yellow
fastened, swaying, at the bottom of a blue and drifting sky.

Above, the taller, rounder air,
with its bell of stars, so many turning rims,
a rolling, burning wilderness of circles.

Praisers, raise like jars
the small, crude rings of eye and word.
Garish, unsubtle, clear as coins.

*Patricia Nelson has a new book, **Out of the Underworld**, which is due out this year from Poetic Matrix Press.*

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The Tenderness of an Airport

An old man struggles out of the transport van,
finds the ledge too narrow, the gap too steep.
I place my hand under the stranger's arm,
then his elbow, the way I touch my aged mother.

Intimately. Like a nurse. The man pauses
at the airline entrance, says, "thank you,"
and smiles with such warmth I think about it
for days as I trek to pyramids underneath

Mexico's blue skies. Pilgrims dressed in white
walk cobblestoned streets with me. They lift
their palms to the sun in Teotihuacan
to receive its energy. Even airports absorb

the emotion of departures and arrivals. Within
the concrete, love waits like a crocus in March.



Peggy Turnbull has been writing in secret journals since she was in grade school, but did not write poems until she retired from her work as an academic librarian. Her poems have appeared in Poetry Quarterly, Wisconsin Poets Calendar, Rat's Ass Review, Blognostics, New Verse News and other journals.

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Sudden Rain

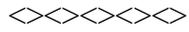
At midnight
summer rain arrives
suddenly—
filling all with a density
a density of sound that obscures
not just rustling of leaves
but pedestrian talk,
a density of sight
that creates a kind of fog
filling the still trees
filling the distance
all way across the bay,
a luminous finger
of electric across the sky
raising earthly odors
lowering temperature—
then it is gone.

*As a poet **Ray Greenblatt** has also written book reviews for the Dylan Thomas Society, the John Updike Society, and the Graham Greene Society. His newest poetry manuscript UNTIL THE FIRST LIGHT is looking for a publisher.*

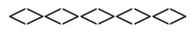
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3 haiku/senryu

old address book
full of
faded kisses



traveling abroad
- falling in love in a
foreign language



his photos
safely out of sight
-recycle bin



Roberta Beach Jacobson is a humorist from Iowa, USA.

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Gemstones

I sling a single handful
across the white linen tablecloth –
celestial while charming, simple
hues, orthodox angles.

Gems reveal their temperaments:
ruby dimensions, fancied by
beggars and the brazen, or diamond's
karats confessing marred glories.

I will edge some with silver,
others lead – bind opaque fires,
harness untamed flames, burning
and burning, gleaming, seeming

all assert mythologies – revel turquoise
veins heaved from hills, scratched
from caves and caverns, predestined
to forge values a slender knuckle flaunts.

I nudge edgy nuggets with my pen's tip –
through a needle's eye, honing them
taut and true, black against blue –
let sparkle spurt, or padlock for duller days.

Pearls ordained to oblige a matron's lobes,
resist the whore's pulse. Baubles
to enliven elapsed misgivings;
untimely arrayed upon scrupulous corpse.



Sam Barbee's poems appeared Poetry South, The NC Literary Review, Crucible, Asheville Poetry Review, Main Street Rag, The Southern Poetry Anthology VII: North Carolina; plus on-line journals Vox Poetica, Sky Island Journal, Courtland Review, and Mojave (He)art Review. His second poetry collection, That Rain We Needed (2016, Press 53), was a nominee for the Roanoke-Chowan Award as

one of North Carolina's best poetry collections of 2016. He serves as current President of the NC Poetry Society.

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saturday, june 8th, 2019

under the resplendent
sun a virulent raven
disembowels a carcass

body black as the
reaper on an
excavation site

viscera and gore
daubing into his
macabre filmed cloak



Samuel Guest is a Jewish/Canadian poet, author, and educator who was diagnosed with a non-verbal learning dis/ability at the age of seven. Some of his poems have been featured in Peeking Cat Poetry, Anti-Heroic Chic, and Half a Grapefruit Magazine as well as other magazines and journals. His first collection The Radical Dreams was released back in April of 2018. He lives in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

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Mother Russia

adjusts her pillow folds
she suspects they are no longer
enough to keep her little ones
from straying

she dances shadowy visions
of home across her whiteness
hopeful hopeful

rosy cheeked matryoshkas
symphonies and sleighrides
pickles and propaganda

but still they strain on the tips
of their fine toes
deciphering the beguiling codes
of western winds

they pull on seven-league boots
rehearse audacious leaps
across continents

she watches them
her nimble fledglings

*Your Russian hearts will break
Oh my Natasha Rudi Sasha Mischa*

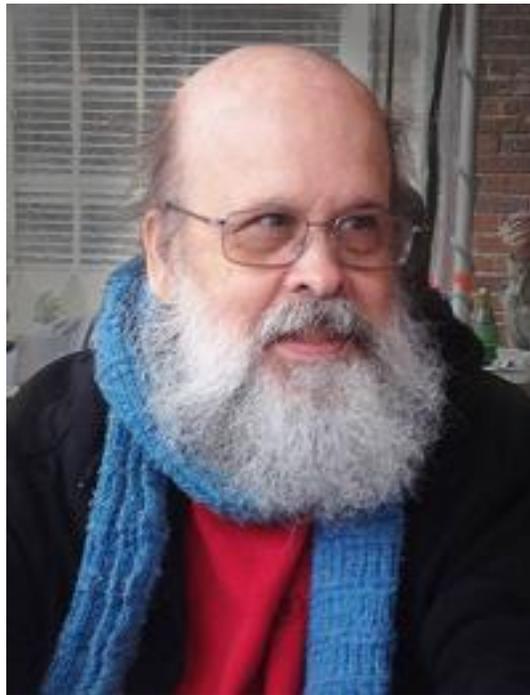
she weeps
tears freezing across her eyeballs
like curtains

***Sue Burge** is a freelance film studies and creative writing lecturer based in North Norfolk. Her poems have appeared in a wide range of publications such as Mslexia, Orbis, Brittle Star, The Lampeter Review, Magma, The French Literary Review, The North, Stride and Ink, Sweat and Tears. Her debut pamphlet, Lumière, was published by Hedgehog Press in 2018 and her first collection, In the Kingdom of Shadows, was published by Live Canon, also in 2018. Sue has undertaken a variety of poetry commissions and has performed and read her work extensively. More information at www.sueburge.uk*

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Tarot Trump XVIII: The Moon

Once in the Borgo Pass
while the moon was shedding the dew of thought
and the children of the night howled their Te Deum,
I came face to face with Dracula himself.
That morning in a wayside inn
a peasant woman had given me a crucifix—
“For your mother’s sake,” she’d moaned,
which seemed irrelevant somehow.
I thrust the cross before the fiend,
and he smiled the smile of some medieval painted saint
all pierced by arrows or with a hatchet in his head.
“Impious soul!” he murmured like the moon.
“Who are you to wield that thing
against one who believes?”



*Wim Coleman is a playwright, poet, novelist, and nonfiction writer. His play *The Shackles of Liberty* was the winner of the 2016 Southern Playwrights Competition. His poetry has been published in *SOL: English Writing in Mexico*, *The Opiate*, and *Dissenting Voice*. Novels that he has co-authored with his wife, Pat Perrin, include *Anna’s World*, which was the Silver Medalist in the 2008 Moonbeam Awards, and *The Jamais Vu Papers*, which was a 2011 finalist for the Eric Hoffer/Montaigne Medal. Wim and Pat lived for fourteen years in Mexico, where they adopted their daughter, Monserrat, and created and administered a scholarship program for at-risk students. Wim and Pat now live in Carrboro, North Carolina. They are active members of PEN International. Blog: <https://playsonideas.wordpress.com/>.*

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