

ATOMIC #1



A JOURNAL OF SHORT POETRY

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EDITOR

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CAROL SHILLIBEEER

An old man's pee waters the universe

No more than 6 feet in front of my car,
a cat stalks a bird and
an old man begins to pee.
This moment spirals out
from the small white fruit crook-necked with gravity,
the invisible splashes, the tiny rainbow that exists,
the sudden kiss between miniscule pear-bottomed spherelettes and
the day's light
bolting from sun to soil. This is the unseen road back to the sky
through the roots, xylem'ed and phloem'ed,
the old man's pee achieves a larger pendulousity,
less than a bird's peck of water, millions of them
making up a branch leaved against the unsmooth sky.
In later days, or perhaps the slow dampening of night,
there will be a turbulence and a moving,
slants the heavens back down to hermetic earth.
All in an old man's pee
and of course
the chickadee who saw it all,
the cat, who intent, remains
unimpressed by our joint ecology.

SHLOKA SHANKAR

Unsaid

This inability to write what I can't speak of.

This inability to write what I can't speak.

This inability to write what I can't.

This inability to write what I.

This inability to write what.

This inability to write.

This inability to.

This inability.

This.

CAROL SMALLWOOD

Galaxies

Just a hundred years ago we thought the Milky Way the only one. We know little about the dark matter holding galaxies together or dark energy pushing them apart: but we do know when two collide— one survives.

KYLE J. SKOVIRA

My Mother by Her Father, His Urn, On the Mantel Above the Fireplace

The living room a pasture, you the farmer
hushed & patient in the recliner, indented

still. If I said anything to try to lull
anxious air surrounding her, my words

would hang alone in the closet
with his tweed jacket: a sun waiting

to dim dried rows of alfalfa, but still too large,
too bright, too pronounced—

its light announcing itself only
bringing more emptiness into emptiness.

LUISA A. IGLORIA

Three Poems

Imperfect Triolet, While Listening to the News

Books stacked in the corners, books by the bed—
What we lack in courage, we make up for in our heads.
On the radio, news of a mall shooting; or of refugees that fled—
Impossible to find enough solace from books stacked by the bed.
A boy watched his mother and sister killed: they had no hijab on their heads.
In the window box, wasps attack the flowers as if to behead.
Books stacked in the corners, books by the bed—
What our hearts lacked in courage, made up for in our heads.

Atlantis Rising

We live on the coast,
where it floods each time
a hard rain falls—

Streets turn into rivers,
rivers push past front doors,
enter through garages and mews.

At such times, a boat or kayak
comes in handy. So when they read
the news about the imminence of ice

melting far up north,
at the pole, the locals shrug:
the whole planet's self-winding.

The clock's set to alarm. Come
shuck an oyster, raise a glass
topped off with foam.

We'll all put our bones to bed one
way or another— salt marsh,
wet clay, turf, ocean floor.

Vigil

*“... every dead thing,
In whom Love wrought new alchemy.”*

~ John Donne, “A Nocturnal Upon St. Lucy’s Day”

O loves, o little ones, tonight
we see the sliver of a moon—

impeccable stain of milk
on saucer’s rim,

last tapering cursive
letter on the slate—

and as the dark speeds up
some more into the deeper dark,

Orion’s belt floats high
above our heavy hearts:

O sorrow, you
have changed us all—

ALYSON MILLER

Planarian Worms

Under the floorboards in a womb-space, there are four children, hunched and translucent like planarian worms. Trapped in the weight of the dark earth, they sing lullabies and recite fairytales in the heavy air, always in half-breaths as they listen for the sound of movement on the stairs. The odd flicker of light speaks maybe of food or some new game to play, or those other things too large for words. Their mother-sister hums an old Austrian carol, remembering the voices of the choirs her children and siblings might never hear: *still, still, still, weil's Kindlein schlafen will*. As she sings, she thinks of her eldest, who has taken to plucking out her hair and shredding her dresses, stuffing the fabric into the toilet until its porcelain throat is choked. She cannot help her. *Wenn wir einmal sterben müssen, wir, wir, wir, wir rufen all zu dir*.

HOWIE GOOD

Two Poems

Prowling Wolves

Where would you like to be in 10 years? It's a standard interview question and deserves a standard response. Discussing lamb chops, I answer. The interviewer nods as if he understands. I have a presentiment that the two ee's in "feeling" have begun to coagulate. The best thing for me to do under such circumstances is repeat a Russian proverb (in English, of course) and then go look for an open video store. By the time I return my widowed 89-year-old father has decided to become someone else, though still complaining that I don't visit often enough.

Bad for the Heart

Somewhere near here a boy and his twin sister have taken the wrong trail. The notion of time just got harder to understand. In what seems like a sign of some sort, light drains from the sky, and the wind begins counting backwards. Soon it's completely dark, with no way to know whether it's the frightened mouth, or the stranger's hand clamped over it, that's most like a dead rose.

GLEN ARMSTRONG

Three Poems

On Mr. B's Triptychs

Those medieval figures
balancing Mr. Bosch's triptychs

are not the sort of
doll flesh that we'll beat

each other up for
next Christmas.

Thin and strangely hairless,
unhappy yet hypnotized

by ancient pleasures,
they somehow sprout

delicate wings as they frolic
with small, pale animals.

They are still their own children.
They are still their own toys.

Scapegoat

Stoned again without bees
or distilleries or magazines
yes the angry villagers
roam the streets

but this is different
this time some other scapegoat
roils the rivers
I feel weird and Egyptian

and orange and impermanent
pressed into the scrapbook
of some sideways god who God
forbid wants to take me home.

Quarters

Some quarter of each city
offers quarter to the wild
always idling within
always up for false idol

some of the circus settles
here to grow stranger
3 plays for a quarter
1 sexual 1 to remember

the fang and claw
of predators and 1 to rekindle
the breath against clay
the thrill of a world taking shape.

CHRISTINA MURPHY

A Dream of Circular Design

A dream of circular design is
disappearing into familiar horizons:
a rebus, a nightmare, a soft ascendance.

In a baffling forest overgrown & without bearings,
The sorcerer's furnace gives birth to the hero
And the water wheel becomes a loom of stars.

In the not-so-distant night, yesterday's longings
Flow like a stream into the patterns that define us.
The dream will begin again; that much is certain.

JOHN PISTELLI

An Incarnation

The Blessed Mother stumbled off a pedestal on Wilshire Blvd.
She lowered arms once raised in hysterias of praise.
A band of schoolgirls bought her Korean barbecue
and pink drugstore flip-flops for feet no longer stone.
She told me all this the other day when I found her sitting alone
in the back of a café, drinking black coffee and then chai tea.
She snaked a pinkish strand of hair
around one God-pointed finger while staring at her phone,
trying to bring into focus a text of Saint Paul's.
She said, I'm just crashing from the Adderall.

DEAN KRITIKOS

Two Poems

Sun Net VII

Pome residing at the tipping point where
Quirk becomes Neurosis
I set an alarm special for the lunar eclipse
And missed it awakening
Sweaty in a fit
I put clothes on and showered in that order
Began to cook an omelette
I ate one pound of celery
My car would not start:
I ate a tomato
It was not rotten but turning
There was no magic only medicine
I could not acquiesce to living
 thusly

Sun Net XX

Jewelry you didn't take off that was the thing
bought the watch six months ago, peeled it off only
to run but what about the bands you didn't abandon
it is such a weird thing in theory, in practice
I am such a weird thing: such I theorize and practice
what was the meaning of a coffee ring
what was the story of spine cracked to oblivion
what were the reasons for the geese congregating outside my building
Pens you didn't throw out that was another thing
bought mine three years ago, yours less than one
the ink runs out it takes months to replace
not the labor but the thought of it is so strange
scrambled eggs are easier than omelettes
but neither is easier than snoozing next to you

ALLEN BERRY

The Seven Day Man

Monday: I'm not as excited about entropy as I used to be.

Tuesday: My plans for defenestration have gone out the window.

Wednesday: My copy of Houdini's biography has vanished.
Well played Houdini. Well played.

Thursday: I dreamed I was real, or I was real dreaming
that I was imaginary.

Friday: My love is abstract, my heart is concrete.

Saturday: All my news is old.

Sunday: I'm dying a wise man, like... what was his name?
Grundy?

MIKE BIEGNER

*The Stars Are Either A Giant Word Hoard of the Universe or Venerable Ancient
Monks*

Into
The
Taciturn
Blue
Black
Sky
Speak
Your
Piece
Stringless
How
We
Were
Meant
To
Pass
Through
Unafraid

Automatic
As
Swallowing
Face
Them
Stars
Child
Them
Yellow
Winking
Monks
That
Glare
Back
At
Our
Gelatinous
Monkey
Brains

ALEC SOLOMITA

Fantastic Star

Fantastic star,
speak to me in the low moonlight
where the trees shaped like flying saucers
are ready to abscond with their seeds
and greens, leaving birds bereft and
lawn chairs untouchable.
Fantastic star!
Sing to me the morning blues,
the weird no-notes on the
keys of a child's xylophone.

FRANCINE KAYE HENDRICKSON

Two Poems

Two Truths and a Lie

When I was small
I used the sharpest knife
to gouge out the eyes of
fish my father caught
because I saw myself in them.

“Help me help you”
actually helped some
one once

People you love
will begin to look like
the pain they've witnessed
in you (and so you leave).

White Bones

I never understood why lovers
carve each other's names on trees.
I'd rather spit my name into a river
and watch it carve through walls of stone.

GLEN WILSON

Four Poems

Maud Lynne

She always crying,
for the tears employ her
at short notice.

Purity

One man thoroughly
washes his hands, the other
wrings out his heart.

Summit

In your peaks I make
love, but it is in your
valleys that I sleep.

Wound

You may have been the one
who cut me but I never
let the blade exit.

KERFE ROIG

Two Poems

Counting
after Robert Creeley

They begin with one.
But what if on a different day
we started. Not after,

but before. Another
opening even more perfect
than something. If they

saw emptiness, nothing at all?
Anything would fit.

Charming Billy

Where have you been? Sing
the forgotten song, remembered
long after the question
is asked.

NETTIE FARRIS

(Wrong Cicero, Darling)

Squirt. Noun or verb? Let's go with verb. *Squirt. Squish.*
Squid. Why are we back to noun? Because I
like nouns. More than verbs. *Squirt. Squish.*
Scandalous. Damn it. I don't even like
adjectives. *Squirt. Squish. Cicero. Lipschitz.*
Shit. That's "Cell Block Tango." What is "Cell Block
Tango"? It's a little number by Bob
Fosse. You're not familiar with it? Just
as well. What's it about? Murder. *Squirt. Squish.*
Squash. No. We are not back to noun again.
(Stop interrupting.) I am not talking
about the kind that grows on a vine, which
is fruit, not vegetable. (Wrong Cicero
darling.) *Pop. Six. Squish. (Uh-Oh). Cicero. Lipschitz.*

DONNA MUNRO

Pause

In the layers
between sand and horizon,
there are some things you know.
You know stones will turn as the tide ebbs.
You recognize the sound of their turning.
You know another wave will follow.

LAUREN CAMP

The Heavier Life Becomes

Day lengthens with heat.
Then the orchestra of light on the sill.

A small lamp is clicked.

The book, on the couch,
closes its tired eyes
for a moment and dreams,
in that senseless way books always do.

TRAVIS CHI WING LAU

Quarrel

Wisteria slow,
we tussle:
blush through
pale fire –
this he willed
me to do.

Strong-armed
into dancing
currants,
I flow
fruitful in
his palms.

RODRIGO DELA PEÑA, JR.

Three Poems

Prelude to Icarus

At the ridge of the cliff
The hero's rosy hands
Grip the edge, facing rock
Sheer drop and rip tide

The urge to yield to flight
Flickers for a breath, then fades
When the sun-bright sky appears
And his father waits with wings

Myth

In the story of the boy who fell
from the sky, it is apparent

that I am him, tragic figure blinded
by light, disobeyed his father's warnings

of getting too close to the sun. Sometimes,
not often, I think of myself as

the father, devising ways to escape
a labyrinth that I myself had built.

It occurs to me now that I might have been
the beast all along, whose animal

hunger drove father and son away
and apart, doomed to wander inside

the maze, searching for an exit.

Father, I've Come Back to How We Started

our many quarrels, the way words sparked your rage
and fed the anger that stoked your heart all these years.

I left home, returning from time to time,
the wayward son. When you barely spoke to me,

I felt invisible, written off and gone.
You harbored hurts, unable to forgive while

the seismic faults between us grew.
You harbored hurts, unable to forgive while

I felt invisible, written off and gone,
the wayward son. When you barely spoke to me,

I left home, returning from time to time
and fed the anger that stoked your heart all these years:

our many quarrels, the way words sparked your rage.
Father, I've come back to how we started.

HEATHER J. MACPHERSON

“Homeless”

Photograph, Chan Kwok Hung

When I was pregnant we went to our parents-to-be classes. The nurses told us that skin-to-skin contact was the best way to create a lasting bond.

I don't want to look at you, either of you. See the bond between baby clinging to big brother, a little hand grasping tight the short-sleeve of his dirty

shirt. It doesn't have to be this way. The sun reaches you both, warming the top of your head, baby's soft skin on lower back, baby's bare legs resting

like the letter N against big brother's naked thighs. They look not outward on a sea of trash bags filled with garbage and shit, fingers and toes. Baby

looks past me, brother straight over the little one's head, wondering, *how did we land outside the wall? What is the air coming off the mist?*

Is our new name a synonym for debris?

STEPHEN MCGUINNESS

Define Me

Mother buy me
a badge.
The silvered tin star.
The other kids
will be so jealous
in the playground,
as they gather round
to plot my fall.
Of them all:
the one with a hand
in my hair,
the one with a fist
in my face,
the one laughing
standing behind,
none have a tin star,
a badge to wear.

EUNICE BARBARA NOVIO

My Friend, the Shadow

I have a friend, Mother,
sometimes he sleeps with me,
but oftentimes stays under the bed
even when you sweep underneath
he lays there;
a sleeping shadow.

He has white eyes
and always smiles,
but he makes me happy
because he does not talk or argue.

We just lie down together at night,
dreaming of what lies ahead of us,
when I grow up and how long
he would be a shadow.

LORI GRAVLEY

Memoriam

Driving from town, tunnel of yellow.
Your neck skin bruised from the noose, yellow.

I bite Ginger Gold, its sweetness bursts
sparkles there, taste of yellow.

My son's hair, the texture of corn silk,
his breath labored, my hand buried in yellow.

In the woods boys drink on daily runs
water-stained rocks, granite turned yellow.

In the raptor cages, hawks ruffle feathers
look away, their eyes rimmed yellow.

No matter how I avoid it,
the pine coffin glows warm, pale yellow.

JANELLE RAINER

The Fall

The cathedral is on fire.
The walls struggle against
an avalanche of flame.

Townpeople gather
in the weed-choked streets
to witness the fall.

The grief is wonderful.
It doesn't matter. The town
has been dead for years.

White skies and white landscape—
it's not easy to live
under such clean light.

MICHAEL CASE

Two poems

Moss

So primitive no veins so fragile
Yet with left handed hardiness grows and takes over
Like a bookstore or a bakery in a bad neighborhood
Somehow it thrives
Out of place and beautiful
The verdigris of stone worked and wild
Covering brick and boulder as living rust
A mantle for the roots
A beard of age
A fairy hoax backdrop
A Permian footprint
Relying on the kindness of chance to propagate
But here you are framing the gray slate
Glowing pale viridian in the late sun

Hands

Raw and hardened hands interfering with rock and earth

Crevassed and cut

Worn and dully polished

His palm a winter count of burns healed burned and healed

Scars risen and fallen

Mortar and pedestal

Inelegant weathered columns and rough topography

Whetstone and sandpaper

Flint and steel

WILLIAM SPEER

Two Poems

A Marriage

The fence has been repaired where the coyotes
came through. The house has been repainted
with your color. Jeffords helped. He offered
and all he wanted, occasionally, was a beer or two.
Rob is running free again. He is a brave dog.
We reset the headstone since the frost tipped it,
planted wildflowers, and set a bench facing
the hills. I still have to organize your things
as you asked but for now I will sit alongside you
while the whippoorwills chant and watch the hills
tumble into blue and black. I'll still be here
when they ripen to orange.

On the Road with Basho

We left, walking east
to follow the route he took,
anticipating wonder —

a butterfly eyelash-soft.
a spruce bough coughing birds,
a shrine burnished by sun and hands,
a monk resplendent in a frugal robe,
a rainbow of gold, lilac and robin egg blue,
a banana plant in flower.

We stopped to honor Sadako Sasaki who was two years
old when the bomb struck. She folded over 1,300 paper cranes
before she died. We folded twelve, one for each of her years,
and placed them under the radioactive bananas.

KENNETH POBO

Three Poems

Right Now

As warming waters
deplete their food
sea lions wash up
on California's shore
ribs
of scrawny pups

the poisoned sea
a sniper
taking aim.

End Times

The lake, a giant puddle,
no bays. I thought I could
get from one end to the other
and back. Until the storm.

Waves tripled in size. I can't swim.
A few vague lights blinked
from shore. Some say you see
light at the end of life. Water,
maybe that's what I'll see.

A tipping over.
Then nothing.

Standing Around at the Cemetery

You stare at the spot
where your dad lies,

I stare at two deer
eating flowers left
to honor the dead—
still hungry,
they bound off
to back yards
and lilies just about
ready to bloom.

KRISTINA ENGLAND

The Call

*Caitlin has lymphoma, you say.
I'm going to propose next week.
You, her boyfriend of four years,
await my timestamped approval.
I am her best friend for ten short.
My ears, malfunctioned bullhorns,
bleat her name, wet in the stale
air of my parked car. The digital
clock, ticked, blinks out loud.*

ALICE GRAVES

I Am Not a Bowl

My card is The Fool
Standing on the edge of a cliff
eyes fixed on the sky
dog at his side, barking a warning.
The Fool believes there is unlimited potential in every moment
Faith rules if I follow my heart

Yesterday I left a bowl on the table's edge
It toppled and shattered.
Now I hover over a precipice
The edge of new beginnings

I am not a bowl.

KELSEY WARREN

Two Poems

[Untitled]

tell me that ghosts can't find us here
that the dead are dead
won't be coming through the walls to watch
what they no longer have
where they no longer exist

that the moves that we make
aren't followed by shadows
lurking just close enough to sense
forgotten but still painfully felt

that the excitement of your touch
isn't chased by shivers
mistakes, down my spine
regrets, across my neck

tell me that ghosts can't find us here
[lie to me and say they aren't real at all]

Erasure Poem of a Love Letter

I feel it necessary to apologize.

My fault
let's face it.

Whatever the reason
we need to find time to talk.

I do value our friendship—
no intention of hurting you.
I needed some time alone (by which, I mean away from you).
Our relationship isn't healthy.
I needed to make some changes—
I'm glad I did.

I need you to understand.
I'm sorry that you were hurt.

I can't keep assuring you.

JOAN MCNERNEY

Virtual Love

A
long
slim
poem
full of hyperbole
& alliteration drifted
into the wrong e-mail box.

There she met an erudite
rich text format file.
They became attached.

Her fleeting metaphors
lifted his technical jargon.
They were a word couple
spinning through cyber space
giddy with inappropriate syllables.

SUZANNE BAILIE

The Origin Story

The origin story is within me
I too have a pedigree from stardust
Classic super hero melodies flow in my blood
It's the same for you too
Slogging through the day, then

BANG SMACK KABOOM

The opportunity for change
or the need for change...

Heroes allow it to wash through them
embrace the discomfort of transformation
Molecules tickled their DNA improved
Me?
I fight it, deny it, and sabotage it
Being a super hero is stupid.

BRUCE TAYLOR

The Christmas James Brown Died

No snow, no cold, no
halleluiahs until
we heard the news

“Can we get it and quit?”
He says on the only CD handy

“Can we get it” – four times
“Can we get it” “Can we get it”
“Can we get it and quit?”

CAL FREEMAN

Two Poems

Fight Song of the White Moth

This afternoon I boated over
the thickening air.

Tonight I suckered to
a windowpane and waited

out the storm, then waited
for my wings to dry—

this waiting, like sewing
myself in silk again.

*Fight Song of the Plectum
for Carl Henry*

To dull like stain on old rosewood,
to militate against this gleam of finish,
to tick reticular hashes into the body,
to pluck and strum the strings bridged
taut over two wedges of bone, to empty out
a space for the lament, to put a blank
in the conversation and drink my fill,
I'll drop into the sound hole's well and be cursed
then rescued. I'll bend their ears toward
the nonsense of death and heaven, that rat-tat-tat
of strum and mute. To stand perpetually
baffled as the guitar's toothy grin files away
at copper, I'll scrape the metal splinter
of the popped string like a thorn.

ALAN NEFF

Two Poems

It's always darkest

It's always darkest just before the feature starts,
Right before the curtain rises, and the actors hit their luminescent marks.
This is yearning time, when hope is highest.
Audience waking in a painter's dream, a sculptor's dream, a dancer's dream of how a world begins.
It's always darkest just before a world begins.
It's always darkest just before we dream.

Boarding Pass

Here's the fine print on your boarding pass.

All schedules are subject to change without notice.

Arrivals and departures are only estimates - advanced, delayed, undone like the winding on a silken rose.

Pack lightly, because you leave who you were with us.

You leave who you were.

You leave.

LEA DESCHENES

Two Poems

A Beached Fish Speaks to the Ocean

You skimmed my flanks,
then slapped me onto shore to gasp—

left drying in my own stink.
I could beg to return

if you had an ear I had not inhabited,
deafened by your own roar.

What I know of you, you are
too huge to see yourself,

a cleaner fish
who serenades its shark.

What do you know of love,
whose breath cannot be taken?

What I'm Here to Learn

Don't call me girl, I'm over 40. Don't beam fatuous tolerance
and straighten my hat. Don't hand me a moral compass
as if I were a cub scout that couldn't find True North
with Polaris in my pocket. Don't say it's for my own good.

Step down into this littered street
and throw your kidskin gloves into the gutter.
Give me whatever's lain under your skin
that itches, a piece of your mind:

that last frontier, that underworld
circled by a river that makes men forget.

NICHOLAS OLIVER MOORE

Clarity

What we need are prophets.
What we have is a farmer.
What he has is a shotgun.
What he has is an angel.
The angel has claws.
The claws clutch the rafters.
They both
have eyes. One of them
has breath.
I think you know how this ends.
I think he muttered something.
I can always smell sulfur
and dogwoods.

jeffrey reid pettis

near-calm

summer breeze
sweeps
through grass

as through
silk curtains.

i imagine
wind chimes
are the sound
of death.

CONTRIBUTORS

Thank you, beautiful poets:

Alan Neff is a writer and performer in Chicago. He appears in storytelling shows and, from time to time, *The Paper Machete*, a weekly live newsmagazine. In the early '00s, he wrote and performed poetry at the Uptown Poetry Slam in Chicago. He's the author of a novel, "*Blauser's Building*," published in 2005. His prose has been featured in the *New York Times* (2013) and *Washington Post* (2008). *Story Club Magazine* published his non-fiction piece "Lost" in 2014. He's writing plays now, focusing on politics and/or humor. He will teach creative writing at Benedictine University this coming fall.

Alec Solomita has published fiction and poetry in *The Mississippi Review*, *Southwest Review*, Ireland's *Southword*, and elsewhere. Most recently, his work has appeared in *theEEEL*, *Turk's Head Review*, *MadHatLit*, *Truck*, and *3Elements*. Several of his poems will be published in the forthcoming *Fulcrum: an anthology of poetry and aesthetics*. He lives in Somerville, Mass.

Alice Graves is a writer and librarian living in Woodstock, NY. Her work has been published in *Chronogram*, ducts.org, junoessq.com, *The Tampa Bay Times*, writingraw.com, and *Weston Magazines*. She is working on a memoir about life in a cult.

Allen Berry is a poet, teacher, environmentalist, and avid fan of Jazz and Film Noir. He is a 2013 Ph.D. graduate of the Center for Writers at the University of Southern Mississippi and the author of two collections of poetry: *Travel for Agoraphobics* and *Distractions and Illusions*. Prior to attending USM, he received a Master of Arts in English Literature from the University of Alabama in Huntsville. In 2001 he founded the Limestone Dust Poetry Festival and served as the president of the Board of Directors until 2006. His work has appeared in "Steel Toe Review," "The Birmingham Arts Journal," *Whatever Remembers Us: an Anthology of Alabama Poetry*, "Amarillo Bay," and other publications. In 2013 he was nominated for a Pushcart Prize for the poem "Pauli's at the End." He currently lives, works, writes, and hikes in Huntsville, AL, his adopted hometown.

Alyson Miller is a lecturer in literary studies at Deakin University. Her short stories and poems have appeared in both national and international publications, as well as a work of literary criticism, *Haunted by Words: Scandalous Texts*, and a collection of prose poetry, *Dream Animals*,

Bruce Taylor is a Professor Emeritus at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

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Cal Freeman's writing has appeared in many journals including *Commonweal*, *The Paris-American*, *Drunken Boat*, *The Cortland Review*, and *Birmingham Poetry Review*. He is the recipient of the Howard P. Walsh Award for Literature, The Ariel Poetry Prize, and The Devine Poetry Fellowship (judged by Terrance Hayes). He has also been nominated for Pushcart Prizes in both poetry and creative nonfiction. His first book of poems, *Brother of Leaving*, has just been published by Antonin Artaud Publications.

Carol Smallwood's most recent books include *Divining the Prime Meridian* (WordTech Communications, 2015); *Women, Work, and the Web* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); *Writing After Retirement* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014); *Water, Earth, Air, Fire, and Picket Fences* (Lamar University Press, 2014). Carol has founded, supports humane societies.

After a wildly productive life as an alchemist, **Carol Shillibeer** retired to read tarot, stalk *Hierocholoë odorata* in the lands west of the Pacific cordillera, and consider the implications of post-human materialism.

Christina Murphy's poems have appeared in a wide range of journals and anthologies, including, *PANK*, *Dali's Lovechild*, *Hermeneutic Chaos Literary Journal*, and in *The Great Gatsby Anthology* and *Remaking Moby-Dick*. Her work has been nominated multiples times for the Pushcart Prize and for the *Best of the Net* anthology.

Dean Kritikos is an adjunct professor at St. John's University. He has poetry and fiction published or forthcoming in *NYSAI*, *Walk Write Up*, and anthologies from Great Weather for MEDIA and Crack the Spine, as well as critical work in *Lehigh Valley Vanguard*, *War Literature and the Arts*, and *Oceanic New York*.

Donna Munro, an emerging poet, lives near the ocean on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. She holds her BA from Regis College. She is a member of the Casa Benediction Poets and reads her poetry during open mike sessions at the Calliope Poetry Series at the West Falmouth Library. She helps with distribution of the Cape Cod Poetry Review.

Eunice Barbara C. Novio is a Filipino and presently an English Lecturer at Vongchavalitkul University in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand. She also writes for the Global Pinoy Section of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Francine Kaye Hendrickson is from Asheville, NC. She received her BA in Creative Writing from Purchase College. Francine got her start in the 2009 Teen Ink Summer Writing Program at Julliard. Since then, her work has been featured on platforms such as The Apollo Theater, Barclays Center, and the Gotham Series of Young Writers. She is a recent recipient of the Gilman Scholarship and a semi-finalist for the Pablo Neruda Prize in Poetry.

Glen Armstrong holds an MFA in English from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and teaches writing at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. He edits a poetry journal called *Cruel Garters* and has three new chapbooks: *Set List* (Bitchin Kitsch,) *In Stone* and *The Most Awkward Silence of All* (both Cruel Garters Press.) His work has appeared in *Poetry Northwest*, *Conduit* and *Cloudbank*.

Glen Wilson lives in Portadown, Co Armagh with his wife Rhonda and children Sian and Cain. He has been widely published having work in *The Honest Ulsterman*, *Foliate Oak*, *Iota*, *A New Ulster* and *The Interpreters House amongst others*. In 2014 he won the Poetry Space competition and was shortlisted for the Wasafiri New Writing Prize.

Heather J. Macpherson writes from New England. Her work has appeared in Pearl, Spillway, Text Literary, CLARE Literary, The Broken Plate, and other fine publications. She is the executive director of Damfino Press. You can follow her blog at scribblehysteria.wordpress.com

Howie Good is the author of the forthcoming poetry collection *Dark Specks in a Blue Sky* from Another New Calligraphy.

Janelle Rainer is a 25-year-old poet, painter, and community college teacher living in Spokane, Washington. Her recent work has appeared in *Harpur Palate*, *The Louisville Review*, *Oddball Magazine*, *Atticus Review*, *Emerge Literary Journal*, *HASH the Mag*, *POPLORISH*, and elsewhere. Her paintings can be viewed at JanelleRainerArt.com. She earned an MFA in Poetry from Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon.

jeffrey reid pettis teaches English, History, and Politics to high school students in Guelph, Ontario. He occasionally publishes poems, short stories, and academic papers. He listens to loud music loudly and strives to be an eccentric slash general postmodern weirdo.

Joan McNeerney's poetry has been included in numerous literary magazines such as *Camel Saloon*, *Seven Circle Press*, *Dinner with the Muse*, *Blueline*, *Missing of the Birds*, and included in Bright Hills Press, Kind of A Hurricane Press and Poppy Road Review anthologies. She has been nominated three times for Best of the Net, Poet and Geek recognized her work as their best poem of 2013. Four of her books have been published by fine small literary presses.

John Pistelli was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He now lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he teaches literature and writing. His work has appeared in *Rain Taxi*, *The Millions*, *Revolver*, *The Squawk Back*, *Winter Tangerine Review*, *The Stockholm Review of Literature* and elsewhere. His novella *The Ecstasy of Michaela* was published by Valhalla Press in 2012. Find out more at johnpistelli.wordpress.com.

Kelsey Warren stumbled across the world of poetry late last year, when a series of tragedies led her to this psuedo-therapy. This year she competed at the Women of the World Poetry Slam in Albuquerque, NM, and will be part of the Visalia team competing at the National Poetry Slam in Oakland, CA.

Kenneth Pobo has a new book forthcoming from Blue Light Press called *Bend Of Quiet*. His work has appeared in: *Mudfish*, *Indiana Review*, *Windsor Review*, *Floating Bridge*, *Nimrod*, and elsewhere.

Kerfe Roig grew up in Ohio and Maryland and has lived in New York City since she was 19. She has worked as a knit designer for many years, and loves color, texture, and serendipity.

Kyle J. Skovira is a poet living in Rochester, NY. His work has been published by Gandy Dancer and is forthcoming in *The Opiate*. He is currently a teacher-candidate at the Warner School of Education at the University of Rochester.

Kristina England resides in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her writing has been published in *Gargoyle*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *Yellow Mama*, and other journals. Her favorite pastime is hanging out with her nephew, JoJo.

Lauren Camp is the author of two collections. Her third book, *One Hundred Hungers*, won the Dorset Prize (Tupelo Press, 2016). Her poems appear in *Slice Magazine*, *The Seattle Review*, *World Literature Today*, *Hobart* and elsewhere. www.laurencamp.com.

Lea C. Deschenes is the Creative Director of Damfino Press, LLC., and has been writing and performing poetry for over twenty years. She is the author of full-length collections *The Constant Velocity of Trains* (Write Bloody Publishing) and *Crocus* (forthcoming on Damfino Press), and was co-editor of the anthology *Knocking at the Door*. Her work has been published in *Spillway*, *Pearl*, *Mas Tequila Review* and elsewhere. She lives, writes, and typesets stanza breaks in Worcester, MA while working with *Damfino*, *Radius*, *Ballard Street Poetry Journal*, *Best Indie Lit New England* and *Trio House Press*. She once found a five-leaf clover during a solar eclipse.

Lori Gravley writes poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. She earned her MFA from the University of Texas at El Paso. She has published poems in a variety of journals including *I70 Review*, *Burningword*, and *Crack the Spine*. She travels the world for her work as a USAID consultant, but her home is just outside of Yellow Springs, Ohio between a meadow and a cornfield. You can see more of her work at www.lorigravley.com.

Luisa A. Igloria is the author of the eChapbook *Bright as Mirrors Left in the Grass* (Kudzu House Press, spring 2015); *Ode to the Heart Smaller than a Pencil Eraser* (selected by Mark Doty for the 2014 May Swenson Prize, Utah State University Press), and *Night Willow: Prose Poems* (Phoenicia Publishing, Montreal, 2014), among other works. She currently directs the MFA Creative Writing Program at Old Dominion University. For more than four years now, since November 20, 2010, Luisa A. Igloria has been writing (at least) a poem a day. www.luisaigloria.com

Michael Case is a 49 year old image archivist. He lives in Forest Glen, Maryland with his wife and pointer dog.

Mike Biegner has been published in *Blooms*, *Poetry Storehouse*, *Silver Birch Press*, and *Silkworm*. His prose poem "When Walt Whitman Was A Little Girl" was converted into a video short by North Carolina filmmaker Jim Haverkamp. He recently received his M.Ed in Education and is currently studying for his MAT and hopes to teach writing.

Nettie Farris lives in Floyds Knobs, Indiana and is the author of *Communion* (Accents Publishing, 2013). In 2011 she received the Kudzu Poetry Prize. Her work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her chapbook, *Fat Crayons*, is forthcoming from Finishing Line press 2015.

Nicholas Oliver Moore is a native San Diegan and east coast transplant, if living in a surreal and maddening city can ever be described as "native." He holds a Bachelor of Liberal Arts from Sarah Lawrence, and spends his time writing about subjects such as the apocalypse, and how broken masculinity is

Rodrigo Dela Peña, Jr. is a Filipino writer based in Singapore. His poems have been published in the *Quarterly Literary Review Singapore*, *Kartika Review*, *The Guardian*, *We are a Website*, and anthologies such as *A Luxury We Can Not Afford* and *The Curious Fruit*. He has won prizes in various poetry competitions, including British Council Singapore's Writing the City.

Shloka Shankar is a freelance writer, editor, visual artist, and online tutor from Bangalore, India. Her poems have been published in over two dozen international anthologies and various print and online journals. Most recently, her work has appeared in Silver Birch Press, *The Rain, Party, & Disaster Society*, *Bones*, *Oddball Magazine*, *Straightforward Poetry*, and so on. She is also the founding editor of the literary & arts journal, *Sonic Boom*.

Stephen McGuinness works as a chef in Dublin, Ireland. Writing simple poetry about life, family and his city, he has had some of his work published here and there around the world.

Suzanne Bailie (Seattle, WA) is a playwright and poet. She drinks lots of coffee and loves to create art with hot glue guns. Her poems are included in several upcoming poetry anthologies, Suzanne's short and quirky plays have been produced in America, Australia, the United Kingdom and South America.

Travis Chi Wing Lau is a doctoral candidate at the Department of English at the University of Pennsylvania. He specializes in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British fiction, the history of medicine, and disability studies. Outside of the university, he maintains a daily blog featuring primarily poetry and short fiction. He is currently working on a short chapbook, as well as a forthcoming memoir about his queerness and disability.

William Speer lives in Arkansas. His poems have been published most recently in East Coast Literary Review and Arkansas Review.

