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Come in...and be captivated...



"Taking Flight" by Claire Perkins; <http://claireperkins.com>

About this image: *"This piece was inspired by both the round shape of the canvas and the lines and colors in the beautiful blue and gold Japanese Chiyogami Yuzen papers. The flying cranes suggest sky and the gently curved floral designs represent earth. The repeating circular and*

spiraling forms pay homage to Van Gogh's "Starry Night" and the vertical lines emphasize the theme of breaking earth's gravitational bond and taking flight into the night sky." —CP

Still Life: Old Man with Mockingbird

by David Anthony Sam

In threes of mocking
in flights of brown
and slate and flash of
wing white stripes
the mocking bird

high silhouetted black
against stark blue sky
calls and calls and calls
always in threes like some
sacred bird trinitizing—

I hear in threes
and recall in threes
and see mockingbird
feather and call
bird and bobbing branch

I am an aging song
trilled together
by the trinity of bird notes
my aches my sagging face
my gray hair whitening

my frame and flesh
thinning like hollow
bird bones—until
I become light enough
for heavenless flight

flitting my salvation
in white flashes from
blue sky to hidden

branch in three
promises of feathers

Bio- David Anthony Sam is the grandson of Polish and Syrian immigrants. He has written poetry for over 40 years and has two collections, *Memories in Clay, Dreams of Wolves* (2014) and *Dark Land, While Light* (1974). He lives in Culpeper, Virginia USA with his wife and life partner, Linda, and currently serves as president of Germanna Community College. 2014-2015 credits include poetry accepted by *American Tanka, Artemis Journal, The Bacon Review, The Birds We Pile Loosely, Blue Heron Review, Buddhist Poetry Review, Carbon Culture Review, Clementine Poetry Journal, The Crucible, Empty Sink Publishing, FLARE: The Flager Review, From the Depths, Heron Tree, Hound, Literature Today, On the Rusk, Piedmont Virginian Magazine, The Scapegoat Review, Spirit Wind Poetry Gallery, The Summerset Review, These Fragile Lilacs, The Write Place at the Write Time, and Yellow Chair Review.*

www.davidanthonysam.com

Grout Pond

by Anne Whitehouse

In a bowl between mountains
the pond mirrored the sky:
reflections of clouds
and the blue dome of space

on the wrinkled fabric
of the water's surface,
where the wind raised whitecaps,
and the sun sparkled like sequins.

Down a road nearly 200 years old
meandering through a forest,
I saw a moose munching apples
in an abandoned orchard.

Witness to secret silences,
a pilgrim to forgotten places,
I listened carefully to what
was not heard elsewhere.

My Last Spring in My House and Garden

by Anne Whitehouse

I planted my sanctuary
for a future I will not see—
where I lived for 35 years,
where I'd hoped to grow old.

I sit motionless under the trees
and watch my blossoms falling
and bruising on the ground.

If I could, I would slip
into the soil like a buried seed.
Instead I am being blown far,
far away—I, who always
clung so close to home.

When he walked out of the marriage,
it was as if lightning struck our oak,
splitting it in half, not cleanly,
but with spikes and jagged edges.

No more soaring trunk,
no more roots in this fertile earth,
watered by my tears,
sparkling in the spring sun.

Elegy (For Wendy)

by Anne Whitehouse

Your expressive brown eyes
with their faint tinge of hurt,

on a blue-and-white island in the Aegean,
on a beach honeycombed with caves,

one summer in your reckless youth—
no clothes but a caftan, a rock for your roof.

Lulled by breezes, rocked by waves,
you danced in the sea, water sparkled on your skin.

In the film that your friend made of you,
you seemed more alive than I will ever be.

There are other films—yours, too—
all the films are now your ghosts.

Of films that took shape from your editing touch,
I am drawn to the Tibetan throat singers,

how they trained their vocal cavities to produce unearthly tones,
like the growl of a bull united with the song of a child.

Watching, listening, I am shaken to the core
by the tantric voice vibrating in rhythm with the universe.

On Vacation

by Anne Whitehouse

The lifted white tail
of a deer glimpsed at dawn,
whoosh of raised hooves
and uneven thuds
as it vanishes into the brush.

A ribbon of fog
lies over the marsh
like a vestige of a dream,
dissolving so rapidly
in the wakeful sun
it seems it never existed.

Like an empty vessel
the day waits to be filled
as we did half our lives ago
biking up and down hills
bumping over stones
skidding over sand

and not falling
swimming in the sea
and resting in the sand
our bodies alive to each other
and to every living thing.

Bio- Anne Whitehouse is pleased to be appearing once more in *The Write Place at the Write Time*. She is a poet, fiction, and non-fiction writer who was born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama, and lives in New York City. She is the author of five collections of poetry—*The Surveyor's Hand*, *Blessings and Curses*, *Bear in Mind*, *One Sunday Morning*, and *The Refrain*, as well as a novel, *Fall Love*, to be published in Spanish translation as *Amigos y amantes* in 2015. Anne is also a winner of the 2015 Nazim Hikmet Poetry Festival.

www.annewhitehouse.com

After the Divorce

by Robert Joe Stout

Somewhere in the darkened room
something alive, a voice, not audible
but interrupting where he was. He reaches out

—nothing there. Coffee pot and flowers,
walls, car, images, impressions
in a world of movement, change

and all around him beings like himself
—or ghosts, or angels, dreams appearing
and dissolving, whispers, laughter,

lives like rain descending, rising
to descend again, inchoate, changing,
mere illusions like the wind, the rain.

Accounting

by Robert Joe Stout

The pencil moves, the page absorbs
the squiggles, debits, credits, symbols,
a language, meaningless except to those

who comprehend x or pi, yet people die,
they starve, they kill themselves, they steal
to change this squiggle into that,

bread no longer wheat and yeast,
fruit no longer growth and harvest,
just loops and lines like those zigzagging

through hospital charts, substitutes
for breath and want—and meaning less
than rocks or sticks that point the way
to water. Point the way to life.

Bio- Robert Joe Stout, freelance journalist and author of eight books, has published a new look at Mexico-U.S. relations, *Hidden Dangers*. His most recent book of poetry, *Monkey Screams*, came out in 2015 from FutureCycle Press.



"My North" by Sarah Rehfeldt; www.pbase.com/candanceski

Cloud Song, November

by Sarah Rehfeldt

Just over the hills,
a scattering of wings
and white fog—
all the time in the world
to piece yourself together—
gray on white,
white on gray—
there is no pattern, clearly,
how brokenly the mist,
it pulls from branches,
its slow walk up the mountain
going, for the most part,
entirely unnoticed.
In this land of hushed giants,

in my still standing,
I remember,
I, too, once was part of sky.

Bio- Sarah Rehfeldt is a recent Pushcart nominee and author of *Somewhere South of Pegasus*, a collection of image poems. She lives with her family in western Washington where she is also an artist and photographer. Her book can be purchased from her photography web pages at:
www.pbase.com/candanceski

One for All

by DW McSweeney

Hands wrapped,
With rope to pull
The weight of a single heart

Eyes clinched,
Effort unseen
Of those on either side

Free hands,
Enable the stretch
Of arms to clasp one another

Open eyes,
To find the truth
Not a soul ahead, nor behind

Bio- DW McSweeney is a loving husband, step-father and grandfather. He owns and operates a dog boarding/pet sitting business, to satisfy his passion for animals and give caring pet owners peace of mind. This also gives him the freedom to spend more time with his two Shelties, and write. He writes for the reward of the final edit. Knowing he's captured the perfect words, in the exact order, to convey what he is feeling; and then hoping his words resonate with others.

Vale, the Author

by John Grey

"My strength is fading," she said.
It was so dark in the room.
It must have been
like death already to her.
He pulled back the curtains.
It was January.
With the sun at such a flat angle,
the light was reluctant to enter.

She was surrounded by
a mish-mash of gifts and relics.
Flowers represented
what some people thought of her.
The notepad and pen
on the bedside table
were there to encourage
but ultimately taunted.

"Fading," she softly repeated.
Her face so pale,
body thin and squeezing in on itself,
lungs barely registering
the oxygen around them,
the blanket and mattress
were like the mouth of a whale
sucking her in.
No way her feeble fingers
would ever grab that pen.
There was nothing new in her.
Nor would there ever be again.

A nurse came by
to force pills down her throat.
The doctor popped in.
"Your nephew tells me
you've written books,"
he said to her.
She tried to smile
but the irony of the situation

wouldn't cooperate.
They were all out of print.
That goes with out of breath
in some circles.

Date Night

by John Grey

Saturday night marks
the disappearance of rationality
in a fog of failures and lies—
the weird takes over,
illuminated eliminations,
shadow-swamped truths;
I'm a night creature now,
all conspiracies and duplicity,
celebrating the reign of passion
over the body's realm—
I venture forth, fuelled by daydreams,
and loose inexplicable intentions,
mismatch, mix badly, dangle and deceive,
all to a raucous beat on pace to be my heart
before retreating to my house,
alone or with someone,
drifting into the available caskets
of sex or sleep,
reserving my conscience for nightmares
and the bright bromide bluster of morning.

Bio- John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in *New Plains Review*, *Perceptions* and *Sanskrit* with work upcoming in *South Carolina Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Owen Wister Review* and *Louisiana Literature*.

Before the Storm

by Janine Lehane

Gusts of wind add fever to freshly-cut grass.
The neighbors arrange their day, make ready:
a storm is predicted.
Unsteady, I have no heart for it,
have lost the art
of parrying vast gray provocation.
So many friends, aspirations, have gone
this summer, cut out: the confrontation of colors,
line rhythms, disordered, amiss.
What will I do, here, without you?
The wind, low-pitched, gains force, direction,
drags at the eaves,
scatters
gouache flowers.

The Dance

by Janine Lehane

Almonds, pears and cranberries baking
ten thousand miles away. There has been snow.
She has a sepia tint: her portrait framed
by the house where I lived, six years or so.
I cannot envisage another year like this.
She shows a photograph she's taken:
Matisse's dancers in the glare of mountain lights
on Halloween, a wooden shed, a woman's flashing legs.
We talk about coming back, about a debt forgiven,
about spirit and release, about her latest brew:
green tea, red clover, nettles, milk thistle, orange.
Ten thousand memories compact, produce a single child
roused from sleep, damp-cheeked, bewildered, obliged
to cry: Are you here? Am I?

Bio- Janine Lehane is an Australian poet, artist, and horsewoman. Her poetry has been published by Telling Our Stories Press, along with her cover art; *The Write Place at the Write Time*; *Hawaii Pacific Review*; and is soon to appear in an anthology out of The Poetry Society of New Hampshire (November, 2015). She also co-edited a volume of selected writings by eminent teacher and community organizer, Suzanne Radley Hiatt (2014).

The Yardstick

by Janet I. Buck

Greeks believed the first created man
came from the ash of a tree.
Oaks are symbols of indelible strength.
Pine, remaining green all year,
seals friendship in adversity—of course
we crave its native scent.
Cedar trunks mean paradise.
Persimmon for the chairs of gods.

Now, take a whisk for morning eggs—
mix truth with myth—explain
how having a stump for a leg means
anything besides an inconvenient life
that comes with pressure sores,
with going joints, war-torn by the fact
of walking through a challenged life,
just one side to hold you up.

Were my crib and baby cradle made of birch,
assuring health, protection from the Fates?
I'm guessing not.
My disks are flat as sweet pralines,
muscles, melting caramel.
Sweet additives have left my tongue.
I've tried every lotion sold—
scar tattoos refuse to fade.
Noah's ark was made of cypress.
Remember that capricious flood?

This yardstick has no lines on it.
Compared to trees, I'm just an ant.
That one I get; I've met the boot.
Forty oaks sat near our home.
It never made three flights of stairs
an easy task. There were leaves and leaves

to rake, until my back refused to bend.
Trained to be some Hercules with ovaries,
in Father's eyes, I had to stand
both tree and stone, nothing soft,
no ivory pearls netted from an ocean wave.
Weeping willows didn't count—
they drooped in sorrow all year long.

Silent Nights

by Janet I. Buck

L'amour was never meant to take the job
of babysitting china dolls, cracked and broken,
locked in dreams of shuffling feet.
I wish demise were shutter clicks,
aneurisms, heart attacks, quickly
moving cancer cells, anything with
speed to move the dragging clock
closer, quicker to the end.
Digressing bones and organs just
not playing right because of pills
keep pushing on the same revolving door.
Vertigo and wistfulness are synonyms.

You place your back to face my face.
We used to be the spoon cliché.
I tell you, *I'm in agony—I cannot sleep.*
You say, *Uh-huh.* Subject closed.
Pity with detachment ploys dishevels me.
Remember what nirvana was?
A country dance floor, double spins—
shoes like tongues that met and kissed.
I hide behind a laptop screen. You hit the couch.
I hear you slap two pillows down,
sure you'd rather strike my cheek.
We tread the house, even though I cannot walk,
two stalking cats, lions in our clammy mouths.
You've practiced hard at smooth escapes.

Silent Night is not the hymn it used to be.
 I think we could have weathered
 shrinking lemons of a sun, common
 tunes of poverty, this legless waltz,
 if not for me—my constant craving for a life
 of promises made and kept—a body
 that cooperates to let me stand and move.
 An edgy voice says, "I suppose you want more tea?"
 Your eyes betray the thoughtful words.
 You set it on the bed stand hard enough to crack the cup.
 Grass is green, but heartlands need a watering.
 Quiet is a deadly nomenclature
 marking tumbling out of love.
Touch-me-not's are more than flowers.

Bio- Janet Buck is a seven-time Pushcart Nominee and the author of three full-length collections of poetry. Her work has won numerous literary awards and she has published roughly 4,000 poems and non-fiction essays in print and on the internet. Janet's recent work has appeared in *Antiphon*, *Offcourse*, *Zombie Logic*, *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Vine Leaves*, and *River Babble*; more of her poems are scheduled for publication in forthcoming issues of *The Milo Review*, *Mistfit Magazine*, *The Ann Arbor Review*, *PoetryBay*, and other journals worldwide. In July, Janet was a featured author in *PoetryMagazine.com*.

An Old Address Book

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

At the bottom of a box stored for decades
 a dusty address book, its cracked spine
 sprinkling a confetti of dried glue and loose pages,
 the name in the Ex Libris one I no longer use,

a Rip van Winkle waking to a changed world.
 That theatre was torn down for a multiplex years ago.
 Exchanges like PENNSYLVANIA 6000 or NEW YORK 4243
 now numbers that translate to XFR or GJN.

Who is Richard E. circled twice and underlined in red ink?
 Or Buzzie followed by three exclamation points ?

Or just A Didn't they use last names back then?
A registry of strangers in my own handwriting

like starting a classic novel I'm sure I never read
to find my copious notes scribbled down the margins.
This is a mortician's long list of those
who can no longer be reached through AT&T.

Ex-lovers crossed out with thick black lines, names
to say incantations by, I imagine a host of the lost
like ghosts seated in a quiet room waiting for my call.
Not a working number. Disconnected. No answer.

February Flowers

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

Unusual warmth forced them
in February, long celadon leaves

cupped a brood of small, white bells.
A day later an all night snow

had buried those flowers.
Sun the next morning flashed

with its usual dazzle and glitter
but by noon it dimmed slowly

like houselights in a theatre.
All day gray cold glazed the cotton

snow to satin. Rain the following night
melted open archipelagoes where

those small, white unassuming flowers
stood up as though they were scarlet.

Port Washington Woods Redux

(At the bottom of North Maryland Avenue)

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

A tangle of maple, elm, sycamore and ash
with vines and ivy creepers knots
an overhead thatch the sun weaves through

mottling the plush mat below, spongy
with moss and layers of leaves.

A run-off from Beacon Hill streams

over gray pebbles flashing sequins of sun
as it rushes, headlong in spring,
to spread through cattails and skunk cabbage

into a marsh where starlings and red-wings
hunt fat beetles and glittering flies
as iridescent as oil on water. After a rain

tracks of field mice, squirrels and birds
hatch mark the mud flats. Along the banks
each in its season: nettles, wood lilies, cowbane,

ironweed, bluets, goldenrod and thistle,
the squawks of jays, the thrum of cicadas
and crickets. Each fall the air smelled fresh

as the hay laid out for the farmer's horses.
In winter the ground froze in pools
to a thin glaze of ice like whorls in bullet glass.

All the seasons of my childhood played out,
an endless cycle, in those woods.
Now years later I've come back to find

the brook buried in underground pipes,
the marsh drained, the trees chopped down
for rows of brick houses and manicured lawns.

Everglades: River of Grass

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

You'll hear the symphony at once:
the whining hum of clouds of mosquitoes,
competing choruses of frogs, bird calls,
a splash as something out of sight
struggles with death in the water.

Tunneling through a channel
of tall sawgrass that can cut like a razor,
you will smell the swamp: salty
and fecund. The air wavers in the heat.
Pitcher plants and orchids abound.

A devil's garden of quick hungers:
a colorful twig suddenly whips around,
a cottonmouth swims close by, two eyes
level with the scummy surface of the water
watch and wait, a log moves.

Who knew green could be this black
or beauty so dangerous?

Bio- Sarah Brown Weitzman has been widely published in hundreds of journals and anthologies including *Miramar*, *Poet & Critic*, *Art Times*, *The North American Review*, *Rattle*, *Mid-American Review*, *Ekphrasis*, *Poet Lore*, *Potomac Review*, *Poem*, etc. Sarah received a Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. A departure from poetry, her fourth book, *Herman and the Ice Witch*, is a children's novel published by Main Street Rag.

The longest serving temp at Data Entry Solutions keeps a synthesizer under their bed

by J. E. A. Wallace

High heels and office shoes
Clatter on the overpass
Above centipede trains at Clapham Junction

We are shuffling pelicans in an empty reservoir

And if David Attenborough
Were to crouch by the wall to talk
In a hushed and soothing voice
Of our thoughtless, gut-fuelled purpose

I would stop to ask 'Could I do the soundtrack for your programme?'

Because I would like
To spend my mornings
On the way to something good

Bio- J. E. A. Wallace's work has been published in the UK and the US, including right here
in *The Write Place Place at The Write Time*.

Near Hills

by Nels Hanson

Brown hills contain their red and
purple crests and creased gold of
arroyos until display at evening,

peacock's fan spreading to reveal
each feather's blue eye of heaven.
Yellow fold at sunset and at night

black flanks and shoulders darker
than starry and moonlit skies rest
sleeping in noon-white grass and

whisper in shadow of clouds from
the sea as in den and burrow, shade
of broad-leaved trees all nocturnal

creatures wait. A scarlet morning,
tonight's green dusk, then pure jet
wake from August mountains' dun

straw, rich veins of rivers flowing
secretly in a dull rock but always
present from beginning to the end.

Orphic

by Nels Hanson

After you wake from this
sleep you will come soon
to a place others reached

where two cypresses grow,
each by a different stream.
In your great thirst choose

the far one and as you kneel
to drink from that cup say,
“I am a child of earth and

starry heaven. I am as a kid
fallen in milk.” Then taste
its pure water to remember

who you are and where you
were before falling to sleep
while the morning sun rose.

Irrigating

by Nels Hanson

Walking that long alley way
to the far field beyond the dry
pond to shovel furrows to let
the parched grapevines drink

I look down at my laced boots
and see my grandfather's boots
walk for the same field to slake
the same vines' old thirst along

the way his father walked 100
summers ago. This step, that,

quartz crystals, flecks of fool's
gold ignite, flaring an instant

to dim, forgotten jewels asleep
in hot sun's blonde dust until
rabbits pass. From the concrete
round valve cold pump water

rises from one deep lake under
the Valley's asphalt streets and
towns, houses and barns, rushing
up in bright jets sending clean

sand grains spiraling like waking
stars turning, trail I could follow
down to wide sea and lit shore
where the first ones are waiting.

Bio- Nels Hanson grew up in California's San Joaquin Valley and has worked as a farmer, teacher and writer/editor. His fiction received the San Francisco Foundation's James D. Phelan Award and Pushcart nominations in 2010, 12, and 2014. Poems appeared in *Word Riot*, *Oklahoma Review*, *Pacific Review* and other magazines and his poetry received the 2014 Prospero Prize from the *Sharkpack Review* and a 2014 Pushcart nomination.

Cruising Altitude

by Vince Corvaia

Avoid high places,
their freak proximity
to God.

He invented gravity
for a reason
so why tamper with success?

Still
here I am
30,000 ft. over Kansas,

Ginsberg's hallucination*
(see *Reality Sandwiches*, p. 42, "Over Kansas")
where I once stood

on a bank
of the Little Arkansas
watching the hot air balloons

sever their gossamer tether,
flaunt their heretical freedom
in God's face.

*Hallucination:
perceiving the illusory—

balloons
planes

thinking
there but for the grace of—

you know the rest.

Bio- Vince Corvaia earned an MFA in creative writing from Wichita State University and has published nearly 200 poems. He lives in Boise, Idaho.

Beaver Marsh

by Lew Caccia

Awakening long dormant seeds
in the soil, the beavers restored
natural water levels. Wetland plants
returned. As did the frogs and turtles,
the sea otters and muskrats. In this
recurring bottomland area
microhabitats reintroduce the ferns,
alders, and lilies. Blue herons eat
fish before migrating south.

Mirroring sparse November trees
in the pool, the early eastern sky
seasonally sorts pink from the
purple. Change slowly traverses
by the week. Preparing for winter
beavers repair their dams and
gather willow and aspen into
underwater caches. Turtles on logs
still sun themselves; the horned owl
calls from nearby woodlands.

For time untold swamp sparrows sing
a slow staccato trill. Their crisp call
emphatic, reminiscent of the original
centuries-old marsh. A time before
drainage. Before the dairy farm,
the auto shop, and later a morass full
of fenders and bedsprings. Finally,
the removal, the muddle resolved
cyclically. The opportunistic beaver
relocates. Water perforates the girdled
rotting bark and branches. A nascent
meadow thickens into forest. The beaver
reappears; the forest reverts to marsh.

Bio- Lew Caccia serves as a professor at Walsh University, where he teaches courses in composition, rhetoric, professional writing, and literacy. He earned his Ph.D. at Kent State University. His recent poetry has appeared in *The Storyteller*, *The Shepherd*, *hedgerow*, *The Write Place at the Write Time*, and *The Penwood Review*. He enjoys writing poems about the Cuyahoga Valley in Ohio, and is looking forward to starting another year of teaching.

Peace of Nature

by Ginger Peters

Peace was indeed with me today.
I journeyed on a hike with the sun beaming down,
creating sparkling diamonds of heavy frost covering the pinons, junipers,
and the ground on which I walked.

The dogs with me galloped effortlessly ahead,
jumping rocks, crossing ravines, and climbing the clay hillside that
surrounded my path.
A large hawk startled me in the deafening quiet, as I startled the hawk,
still half asleep in top of a pine.
My heart raced, as the hawk fluttered his soaring wings—
I watched as he flew toward the sun.
My dogs picked up scents that I could not smell.
Coyotes, rabbits, bobcats, mice, or even a mountain lion might have walked
this
trail in the deepest, darkest hours of the night before.
I noticed a granite rock formation extending outward from the hill—
It beckoned me to sit, as it was made like a chair.
I sat, grateful to mother nature for furnishing a dreaming spot just for me.
The dogs ate leftover patches of snow and continued to smell each branch,
blade of dry grass,
and piece of dirt.
I listened in silence and felt a cool breeze pick up, reminding me that aha,
winter is still alive.
I saw rocks shaped like hearts, one that looked like a sailboat, dead
branches that looked like
crosses, spears and some tangled together so tightly, it reminded me of a
desert octopus.
I whispered thank you for the tranquility and beauty this adventure had
given me—
I left the granite chair, knowing it would be waiting for me another morning
when I crave
a peace of nature.

Bio- Ginger Peters is a freelance writer living in Santa Fe, NM. She has published poetry, nonfiction, and fiction over the past few years. Her most recent sales include: "Chewing, Spitting, and Cussing" to *Gargoyle Literary Magazine* (a memoir about her grandmother), and "Unconsciously Teaching Fear" that will appear in *Animal Wellness Magazine*. She's always thrilled to be included in *The Write Place at the Write Time*.

If Rivers Had Eyes

by Cheryl Sommese

If rivers had eyes
they
would telepathically tell you
the designer covering you're wearing
is too flimsy
for winds whisking over the current
and life blows a chill
under fragile material
so you become neither satiated with coolness
nor own the strength to find warmth
for cold grows familiar—
finding favor
to unknowns that could prove
more daunting.

They would peer at all
your insecurities
and mercilessly magnify each one
so that murky foam piles
buoy about:
driving away lovers fearing they'll drown
in your dread,
exposing the dark side of light in reflecting
uncertainty,
failing to see *spring*
bestows
revitalizing vapor.

But rivers don't have eyes
they have mouths,
fashioned to swallow the residue
of doubt.
Whispering in swift waters and
gentle streams alike,
"Do not worry—
everything will be okay,
life is a voyage we can channel
toward beauty."

Nature's Finery

by Cheryl Sommesse

Feathered forms eagerly
flutter
around the canister
feeder,
while furry figures
dash
from orange-splashed trees,
keen to feast
on leftovers
tumbling aside the redbrick
way.

Uncomplicated living,
rejuvenating my senses
and nourishing
a most favored part
of my soul:
all this splendor
absent of meaningless clutter.

Bio- Cheryl Sommesse penned her first poem in her early teens. Since then, many more have followed. One beloved writing project she has undertaken is a human interest screenplay based on the lives of her spirited, immigrant grandparents: the longtime animal lover hopes to one day see the script come to life. She enjoys French and Italian wines and periodically partakes in one of the ruby treasures while savoring a well-prepared vegetarian meal. Ms. Sommesse lives in New Hampshire with her husband and two dogs.

A bright yellow trumpet

by Lois Greene Stone

How does a daffodil bulb
survive snowbelt winters?
My slender fingers with
unpolished nails nestled
a plump bud into inches
of soil. Unlike me, it
needs no food or love,

beginning
at the street and working back
It seemed like a strange time to begin work,
and
I wondered if the contractor was planning
to actually start building in the winter

The answer to that was no
And
it would remain no during the spring,
during the summer,
during the fall,
during the following winter,
and was still no well into the second year
Did the contractor go bankrupt?
Did the financing fall through?
Was it some personal, not financial, reason?
I don't know the answers,
but
the denuded front lot was an eyesore
with no buildings and no trees
and just mud or dirt depending
on how recently it had rained

Eventually, though,
town homes
started to appear in small clusters,
along with an access drive from the main road
(later given a street name by the city),
a bank (real, not a pseudo-bank),
and to complete the project,
an auto parts store
(any business that promised to be
even mildly successful was welcome:
businesses,
including even an outpost of the country's monolith,
had been fleeing the nearby strip shopping centers
even before the most recent depression had begun;
some occupancies had been empty
for five years or more,

and
are still empty at this writing)

Today,
a fence surrounds the apartment lot,
and
all observations must take place from a distance

The wetland looks to have been
at least partially drained

The teasel is taller than human beings

Birdsong is present and pleasant

Buttercups have poked through the fence in places

There are maples, of course,
and
many other types of trees,
and
some of their leaves are providing
sustenance for other creatures

There are no doubt other animals present,
though unseen

Utility wires shoot through
some of the higher tree branches:
no hazard as of yet,
but
eventually some of those branches
will have to be trimmed

And
it wouldn't have been a reclamation project
without at least one negative human touch:
here
some knucklehead has tossed a pair of tennis shoes
about fifteen feet up in one of the trees

Bio- Michael Ceraolo is a 57-year old retired civil servant and active poet who has had one full-length book (*Euclid Creek*, from Deep Cleveland Press) and a few shorter-length books published, plus numerous magazine publications.

Post Oaks in Winter

by Carol J. Rhodes

Leafless branches
spread spidery shadows
across fields dried by early frost.

Silhouetted against clear blue skies
they stand like dark soldiers
guarding treasures of life-giving sap
to nourish their first buds of spring.

First Winter in Connecticut

by Carol J. Rhodes

Three o'clock in the afternoon and already dark
on this snowy winter day
Still four more hours until he would be home.
While my son and some friends played in the basement,
I sat by the window, crying and wishing I was back in Texas
With family, old friends, and balmy weather.

At a little past seven, he walked in and gave me
a hug and a kiss.
It was then I realized this was the exact place
I was meant to be.

Bio- The widely published works of Carol J. Rhodes, including short stories, essays, poetry, non-fiction articles, and plays have appeared in numerous newspapers in the USA and England, in prominent magazines, cookbooks, journals, anthologies, and on-line publications. She has won many literary awards for poetry and prose, and one of her plays, *Comin' Home to Burnstown* was showcased in a summer play festival of an off-Broadway theatre.

Carol presents business writing seminars at two Houston universities, and for several corporate clients. She is a native Texan, has visited and lived in numerous states and countries, and is fluent in Spanish. Now a widow after forty-five years, her spare time is devoted to four cats and two Poodles.

My Grandmother's Garden *(originally featured in the spring/summer 2014 issue)*

by Tim Reed

Fingers...deep in the rich soil
taking life in order to
breathe renewed life
into the forgotten...the overlooked.
Pulling, tearing and tugging
at the snarled and tangled roots
which have been choking the beauty
that has always been held within.
Overgrown with neglect
grown in, pulling back...
being pushed in...from all sides
to the point where
blooming seems pointless.
The seeds she planted lay
dormant in the decay,
of time, of life, of lies...
It has become far too draining
to pass by...to look the other way
in "busy" indifference. So...

I plunge my heart, my soul,
my hands, fingers deep into the rich soil
taking life in order to breathe...
breathe, new life into the forgotten
the overlooked, and the denied.
Remembering the warmth and beauty
that filled me, not just by gazing
upon the floral grace of this
blossoming garden, but of
the Love, the joy, and the

simple beauty that not only
she put into this garden,
but that this garden in turn
put into her.

I will recover it, resurrect its beauty
allowing it to freely blossom.
Not because of how hard
she worked to create it,
but because I, now understand why...I
was planted, in my Grandmother's garden.

Bio- Tim Reed hails from Fall River, MA, a start to finish carpenter and father of four. Tim started writing in 1990 on a journey of discovery and recovery. On that journey he embraced the gift of poetry within him as an outlet for expression, explosion, and healing, as well sometimes, purely for humor. Tim draws on the vast education he has earned as a "student" of life experience! In his words, "When things touch or move me in some way...I write." He has had work published in various anthologies including *Rhymes of Greatness*, *A Poetic Pulse With Friends*, and *It Happened Under Cover* as well as in the online literary journal *The Write Place at The Write Time*. Tim has featured at, and regularly attends, several of the area open mic venues and events, and feels that his writing has benefited greatly as a result. Tim is also the co-host of the venue, Poetry: The Art of Words, the Mike Amado memorial series, and helped with the 2015 Visual Inverse program in Plymouth.

Snow Day

by Randall Nicholas

Remember the snow
mid-February before Valentine's Day,
the three inches or so overnight
followed by a foot more
throughout the day, the ceaseless sifting,
ever mounting white, juncos'
intermittent rush to the trees
to hunker under the branches,
trains going past with a wake of glitter,
people at work wondering if they could get home?

Remember, though, the sense of security
inside this other world building up,
the woolen feel of the snow itself
indoors where you were minding your business
with only one eye, or even outdoors,
if you had to be, clothing you in your coat
with its own soft muffler, or in your car
learning its rules of gunning or swerving
caution whereby your mind was always
on the road adjusting to its discretionary grace?

Remember the deep sense of self
it gave to you amounting in its lifetime
the way you would like in yours,
sticking to everything you know
grander and more significant, or perhaps,
if you see yourself the other way, supporting
same in everything else, the feeling both
there is something more out there than you alone
and also nothing so special as you
coming to know yourself so gradually yet fully?

Bio- Randall Nicholas is a regular contributor to *Haggard and Halloo*. He has conducted a poetry workshop for inmates of the Indiana State Prison and read at Valparaiso's Front Porch Music open stage, both weekly for ten years. He lives in Ogden Dunes, Indiana.

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