

## [The Write Place at the Write Time](#)

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Come in...and be captivated...

  


"Grace in Full Bloom" by Claire Perkins; <http://claireperkins.com>

*Editor's Note: I had first glimpsed "Grace in Full Bloom" in its earliest incarnations on Facebook while we were running the Roots Challenge. I had written to the artist to encourage her to send the image in as an entry. The image had its own 'graceful' evolution as things in both art and nature do, so rather than be rushed for the Challenge, "Grace" was shared*

*with me just as we were about to release the winter-spring issue in February, slotting it for the following issue.*

*I knew that the image was finding its right place at the right time, because I knew from the materials I was gathering for the anniversary, including an interview whose subject had just released a novel centering around the symbolism of trees, that growth and transformation would be amongst our themes. This artwork is one of the enchanting seeds from which the spring-summer anniversary has grown. As we got to witness its various stages and learn how it came to be named, we invite you to also share in the understanding of its process by watching the video below where the artist acts a gracious guide to the germination of her creation.*

### Grace in Full Bloom - Art & Process



## *Poetry*

### **Father Ocean, Mother Land**

by Katie O'Sullivan

I am a water creature created by a capricious  
ocean which by temper, caresses or rapes

the curving body of the land's seductive shore.

I am a water creature whose father once becalmed, placed upon my mother's smooth bosom, a necklace entwined of sun-sparkled foam and the blue sapphire of waves.

My playground lies deep within the water's swells where dolphins and nymphs play hide and seek between ancient columns and crabs scramble to weave floppy strands of seaweed nets to anchor all the long-forgotten ships.

But when I rest, it is with my mother who plies me with turtle eggs and spiny starfish and places a seashell against my ear to hear my father's voice.

She braids a crown of kelp for my head, and puts a flowering sea urchin behind my ear. And when I lie within her sheltering dunes, she covers me with a sandy cloak until at last, I fall asleep.

Bio- After leaving UCLA and getting married, Katie O'Sullivan followed her husband's career to the Middle East where she lived for 15 years. There she graduated from the American University of Beirut while raising her seven children. Back in the U.S. her family moved between California and Texas several times before her husband retired. Following several previous attempts, Katie began her creative writing career at the age of 75. Her plan was to write a memoir, but it was pushed aside for the publication of her poetry, flash fiction, essays and the staging of one play. Some of the publications that have included her work are: The Knoxville Writers Guild, the Adams Media Corp., Silver Boomer Books, *Writers Abroad*, *The Texas Poetry Calendar* (5 editions), *Cell2Soul* and *The Write Place at the Write Time* among others. She published her memoir last year on her 90th birthday.

### **One Summer Day on the Number One Train**

by Anne Whitehouse

When the doors of the express opened at 72 Street,  
the local was waiting. She entered with me,  
tall and angular as a crane, her expression alert,  
violin poised against her clavicle like a wing.

The train was half-empty, the passengers dozing  
or absorbed in their smartphones.  
She stood at one end of the car, her gaze  
swiftly appraising us, while the doors slid shut.

Closing her eyes, she lifted her bow  
and dipped her chin, and into that pause  
went all the years of preparation  
that had brought her to this moment.

The train accelerated in a rush of cacophony,  
her music welled up, and I recognized  
a Bach concerto blossoming to fullness  
like an ever-opening rose. Suddenly

I was crying for no reason and every reason,  
in front of strangers. I thought of the courtroom  
where, an hour ago, I'd sat listening to testimony  
with fellow jurors, charged to determine the facts

and follow the law. But no matter how we tried,  
we couldn't reverse damage or undo wrong.  
The music was contrast and balm, like sunlight  
in subterranean air. The tears wet on my cheeks,

I broke into applause, joined by fellow passengers.  
We'd become an audience, *her* audience,  
just before the doors opened and we scattered.  
Making my offering, I exited, too shy to catch her eye.

But she'd seen the effect her music had wrought.  
Its echo resounded in my memory, following me  
into the glory of the summer afternoon.  
It is with me still.

Bio- Anne Whitehouse is pleased to appear in *The Write Place at the Write Time* once

again. She received the 2015 Nazim Hikmet poetry award and the 2016 *Songs of Eretz* poetry prize. Her sixth poetry collection, *Meteor Shower*, is forthcoming from Dos Madres Press, and her novel *Fall Love* will be appearing in Spanish translation as *Amigos y amantes* from Mundi Books.

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### **Wind, a Revolution**

by Tim Gavin

*“Even as Haiti struggled, the ramifications of its revolution reshaped the world around it.”* –Laurent Dubois from *Avengers of the New World*

The shapeless mouth of it opened  
 And breath swept through the river valley  
 Like rebels on horseback, swinging swift swords  
 Cutting away the shackles that held them captive  
 Until their cry rose to God. Thirteen years,  
     It scurried from one  
 Mountain to another waging danger, with  
 Shout and shriek. It was a lethal weapon, neither  
 Wearied nor worn out. Its shapelessness  
 Spooned through the river and swooned  
 The banks of the Artibonite where,  
 Among reeds and trees, captors sought refuge  
 From bloodshed, but the wind, feeding itself  
 With each whirl and tilt, advanced  
 As its shapeless body hung among  
 Clouds and brought escape to slaves.

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### **Dirt**

by Tim Gavin

The moon is rotting in the limbs of the banana tree  
 And Daphne howls into the night, which covers the deep  
 Bruise of her soul as she wrings her hands in the dirty bucket  
 To wash herself from the dirt of the day and the dirt of her lover  
 And the dirt of the horse she walked behind, coming up  
 The mountain from the market and the dirt of her children

Who suck her milk till it's gone and the dirt of the foreign  
Missionaries who believe because they say *Jesus* as *Jezi*,  
then they are somehow soul mates to Daphne and her kin.  
She lifts the rag to the sky and sees the many holes which have  
Filtered the dirt from her body to the air and into the river  
Of her mother country where one mountain  
Rises up after another ranging into infinity.

Bio- Tim Gavin is an Episcopal priest, serving as chaplain at The Episcopal Academy, located in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania. He oversees the school's partnership program with St. Marc's School in the Central Plateau of Haiti, which he visits three to four times a year. He is working on a full-length manuscript of poems entitled, *Lyrics from the Central Plateau*. His poems have appeared in many journals and most recently in *The Anglican Theological Review*, *About Place Journal*, *Digital Papercut*, *Screech Owl Review*, *HEArt On-Line Journal*, and *Blue Heron Review*. He lives with his wife and sons in Havertown, Pennsylvania.

### **The Never-ending Now**

by Len Kuntz

I suppose you are thinking this  
would be a good time to blame the moon  
or raise a glass  
slice a finger  
make confessions  
do anything but live  
here in the never-ending now  
but there is a flock of starlings  
writing names in the aquamarine  
a baby smelling of homemade bread  
cooing and pawing air  
some girl somewhere is getting her first kiss  
from a boy she's been writing poems about  
a mother has kicked cancer's ass  
refugees have found a home  
Nina Simone is crooning on a phonograph  
in an old folks home while a couple dances

please stop and ask yourself if  
you really want to miss so much beauty

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### **Home**

by Len Kuntz

Today I am grateful for the fallow fields  
Where as a child I'd fly kites  
Imagining them angels sent to save me  
From my war room home  
The wind was a good friend then  
Soil smelling of chaff and barley  
The ghosts at bay for once  
Returning here after all these years  
Feels a bit like victory  
Or forgiveness  
And when my wife asks why I'm smiling  
I tell her I'm ready to go home

Bio- Len Kuntz is an editor for the online magazine *Literary Orphans* and the author of the story collection *I'm Not Supposed to Be Here and Neither Are You* released this March from Unknown Books. You can also find him at [lenkuntz.blogspot.com](http://lenkuntz.blogspot.com)

### **A Hard Man**

by Ion Corcos

A sculpture cracks  
like clay in a dry river,

stands skewed in a gallery,  
where life is exhibited.

A woman notes tears in its eyes;  
he is alive, she proclaims,

followed by reporters  
looking to find the right angle, quickly.

A scientist arrives,  
 assesses the sculpture,  
 decides there are no tears;  
 merely moisture  
 reacting with the minerals  
 of the stone.

Not everyone believes this;  
 some believe it could cry,  
 that behind the façade,  
 it was human, all human.

Bio- Ion Corcos has been published in *Axolotl*, *Bitterzoet*, *Every Writer* and *Ishaan Literary Review*. He is a Pushcart Prize nominee. He is currently travelling indefinitely with his partner, Lisa. He is also working on his first poetry collection, *Like Clouds*, and a chapbook inspired by Greece.

Ion's website is:  
<http://www.ioncorcos.wordpress.com>

### **Concert**

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

The stamping of feet,  
           hands slapping  
 together and shouts  
           of *bravo* or *brava*

seem a barbaric custom.  
                           Rather,  
           stunned silence  
 barely daring  
 to breathe, not moving



a muscle would be  
    a more fitting tribute,  
        absolute quiet  
until  
    the spell is broken  
  
when a chair squeaks  
    as someone shifts  
  
in his seat      a cough or two  
  
        a few whispers  
a purse falls to the floor,  
  
someone stands up  
and then,  
yes, then  
    let the applause  
        begin.

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### **The Sea-like Longing**

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

Is there ever a moment  
as the tide turns  
when the drag of the moon  
checks completely the pull  
of the sun and earth,  
a moment of equipoise?

Or is the sea like longing  
ponderous and deep  
endlessly rocking  
from shore to opposite shore  
claiming, then releasing  
holding but never keeping.

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### **Language**

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

In the mimicry of the sound  
of sounds, some scholars think

language began, that early  
lexicographers once culled grunts

and shrieks, hissed  
to name the wind and conjugated

with universal moans.  
To put the cant of animals

in a looser tongue  
they later conversed as birds

whistling before they formed  
a word but after doing that

they needed more  
to say of, say, their fear

of darkness before the fire  
was discovered

until they had a grammar  
that could denote position

at a feast, recount a tense  
hunt or give a meaning

to dying. I would not  
wish to go back to that

excellent vocabulary  
yet what a hearing

that first must have been  
for them crouched

cross-legged in some dim cave  
staccato pits of rain

upon dry leaf beyond  
when those elements combined

to thunder suddenly  
out of the mouth of a man.

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### **Longing**

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

Whether in music or words  
or what is viewed  
beauty brings an ache  
familiar to women  
an emptiness  
we cannot explain exactly  
except that we yearn  
away the years  
wanting *something*  
we may never find.  
While men express  
what beauty does to them  
quite differently—oh, how  
I'd like to take *that* home—  
still they have moments  
of epiphany when they see  
the way a branch strays  
down to make a pattern  
of shade on the surface  
of a pond in a painting  
or note a strain of melancholy  
in a phrase of music  
or glimpse beauty of bone  
and cartilage turn  
the corner of their possibility  
then they too may long  
for something  
they cannot even name.

Bio- Sarah Brown Weitzman has had work in hundreds of journals and anthologies including *The North American Review*, *New Ohio Review*, *Thema*, *Rattle*, *Mid-American Review*, *Poet Lore*, *The Bellingham Review*, *Ekphrasis*, *Spillway*, 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 Knight and the Lady of the Well**

by Beate Sigriddaughter

Like a proverbial house cat never forgets  
that she was once worshipped in Egypt,  
a goddess never forgets.

An ancient story tells of a knight  
(with long dark hair, of course)  
who rides by a well, and a lady  
offers him water in a chalice, and later  
some wine. Soon they are married  
and live in long and loving partnership.  
She is a goddess it turns out.

One day the knight gets restless, asks  
for leave to travel and find new adventure  
and she says: Go. (What else could she say?)  
So he rides off into enchanting distractions  
and after some time he forgets.

Imagine being married to a lady,  
a goddess, and you forget.

I will confess in my life I have  
forgotten you at times while out  
in the vast mesmerizing  
world. I understand these things.

But my heart is mostly with her,  
as she perhaps places a damp cloth  
on the forehead of a feverish child,

or the trees around her grow tall,  
unknown and unnoticed.

When will you remember? The well  
has changed since you last saw it.  
The wind tugs at its walls.  
A goddess never forgets.

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### **Aubade**

by Beate Sigriddaughter

Dawn is again, somehow  
that is significant.

Dawn is again,  
perhaps it always is.

Dawn is again,  
and I still hear you.

Dawn is the hour  
of children grown too old  
to sleep through a peace like this.

I say: *Your shadow is exquisite.*  
You say: *But in this shadow is no face.*  
What would you want with a face  
at this hour?

All enemies are unconvincing  
and strangers live only by daylight.

But this is dawn,  
and I know you still.

Bio- Beate Sigriddaughter lives and writes in New Mexico, the Land of Enchantment. Her work has received four Pushcart Prize nominations and won four poetry awards. In 2015 ELJ Publications published her novel, *Audrey: A Book of Love*.

<http://www.sigriddaughter.com/>

**Secluded Vista**

by Lew Caccia

Seclusion draws crowds. Sandstone cliffs extend picturesque as do yellow poplars through hemlock branches. The vista reveals goldenrods, violets and pink asters. Sunset fingers its signature unique to each evening, tracing shadows around lucky pebbles.

The barred owl waits on high perch toward dusk. He drifts toward stringed summer light and entreats, "Hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo hooooo-ah!" Foragers near the plateau feed the campfires; the owl too looks westward.

**Before We Are Fully Aware**

by Lew Caccia

Over the falls ribbons of water torrent after spring rain. Vernal pools fill with salamanders. We wade up creek on compressed sediment. The seasonal mood exposes stone layers, yellow-brown looming over deep red. Even fossils revealed further into the slippery walk.

Into the gorge we are drawn wandering, quiet and unassuming is the vibe forgotten by time. Treacherous become the careful yet solitary steps. A light snow shower sprinkles over the still-green woods.

Bio- Lew Caccia serves as a professor at Kent State University at Stark, where he teaches courses in composition, rhetoric, professional writing, and literacy. His poetry has appeared in *The Storyteller*, *The Shepherd*, *hedgerow*, *The Write Place at the Write Time*,

*The Penwood Review*, and most recently, *Praxis*. He enjoys writing poems about the Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio. "Secluded Vista" is based on the park's Ritchie Ledges Overlook. "Before We Are Fully Aware" is inspired by Brandywine Falls. When asked if 'lucky pebbles' refers to some particular pebbles, Lew explains that he calls them lucky in the sense that they happen to be in the right spot to receive the twilight; he also thinks of them as lucky in the sense of the positive feelings that onlookers often take away.

*National Geographic* offers a background on Cuyahoga Valley National Park:  
[http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/national-parks/cuyahoga-valley-national-park/#/autumn-lake-cuyahoga\\_92541\\_600x450.jpg](http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/national-parks/cuyahoga-valley-national-park/#/autumn-lake-cuyahoga_92541_600x450.jpg)

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### **Original**

by Howard Winn

Forget everything I have told you.  
I can repeat it, more or less, if  
I am required to, or I can forget  
it myself, because others may  
have said it before me.  
Who can be that novel,  
except when one has to be?  
If we can figure out how to be.  
Human experience has been  
repeated with different stage settings  
that may alter the meaning,  
or maybe not.  
Who writes the script and to what  
end?

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### **Surface Tension**

by Howard Winn

Staring down through the stream's surface,  
I see the slick rocks,  
the green waving water plants,  
and the occasional blue-gill searching  
for food or another sun fish.  
The sun glints along the countertop

of the slowly moving creek  
and I strain against the glare  
to see what lies at the bottom  
Water bugs skate along,  
disturbing the flatness  
and my vision as I seek  
these images in the deep,  
and find them distorted  
by the rushing water,  
the trails of darting insects,  
the angle of the sun.  
I give up the search for accuracy  
and acknowledge the bends and twists  
of what I perceive.  
We may pretend we can see clearly into the depths  
but all we can do is accept  
the break-up of surface tension  
as we both look into these distortions  
and find they are confused with the reflections  
that mirror from the surface.

Bio- Howard Winn's fiction and poetry, has been published by such journals as *The Long Story*, *The Write Place at the Write Time*, *Galway Review* (Ireland), *Antigonish Review*, *Chaffin Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *The Wisconsin Review*, and *Tule Review*. His B.A. is from Vassar College, his M.A. from the creative writing program of Stanford University. His doctoral work was done at NYU. He is a SUNY faculty member as Professor of English.

### **What the Gun Eats #62**

by Darren C. Demaree

We always admire  
the first engineer,  
the mind

& the hands  
that can build some-  
thing new,



but almost never  
do they construct  
anything

they live beside.  
These new guns,  
almost none of them

have been pressed  
into the kidneys  
of their maker.

That feels like  
a story to me with  
no good ending.

Bio- Darren C. Demaree is the author of five poetry collections, most recently *The Nineteen Steps Between Us* (2016, After the Pause). He is the Managing Editor of the Best of the Net Anthology. Currently, he is living in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.

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### **Under My Nails**

by Laura A. Lord

I get uncomfortable around the glass-domed  
rotisserie section of the deli,  
as if the contents of that case were going to sprout  
feathers back on those wings  
and beat around in my hair for a while.

As if the lady behind the counter were going to grab  
my hand as I reach for the cellophane-wrapped carcass  
and examine my nails to see  
the leftover bits of skin and grease  
stuck under the cuticles,

grown long from mismanagement and neglect.  
I want to hide my fingers in my fists—  
ball them up and stuff the knuckle between my teeth

so when I scream out his name  
it sounds like, "I'm sorry."

I want to trade in the memory of chicken grease  
and the feel of hot meat pressed,  
hidden against my chest,  
the cold air making a bark in my lungs  
and you waiting, salivating,

hungry. I want to give up poverty  
and bring back the wealth of your laugh,  
the richness of your hand in mine.  
But I was out stealing dinner when the call came.  
I wasn't there when you died.

---

## Ugly

by Laura A. Lord

I was twenty-three when the fertile valley of my womb opened,  
blossomed and unfolded like the soft petals of an Easter Lily,  
and spit out life like some fragile ornament to decorate my arms.

You had a tendency to exaggerate and the truth turned from a petrous,  
stead-fast thing to something fluid. It ran like madness through our home  
and dripped as fat drops of paint quickly smeared across that spot on the  
wall

where your fist shoved through the drywall and the bottle against your lips  
spilled dark amber waves that made a scornful ocean in your ears.  
And still I listened to the crowing of my heart. I let your steady dose of  
white noise

drip drop into my veins, a needle on tap. I held a baby to my chest  
felt his lips pull at my body while you raved about the ugliness of this world.  
I looked down at the crinoline eyelashes, stiff with sleep and the soft

cheeks and pursed lips and thought,  
the only thing ugly in this world  
was you.

Bio- Laura A. Lord is the author of numerous collections of vignettes and poetry and one awesome children's book about a T-Rex screwing up her entire day. It's absolutely a true story. Laura's work has been featured in *The Beacon*, *Mirrored Voices*, *The Collegian*, *Precipice*, *Massacre Magazine*, *Tipsy Lit*, *The Reverie Journal*, and *Whirl with Words*. She is one of the founding members of *The Reverie Journal* and Book Genesis, a book editing and marketing company. Laura is also an editor for *Birth Without Fear*. Laura lives with her husband and three children on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

### **Fait Accompli**

by Cheryl Sommese

It eerily unfolded like never before—  
your tongue flailing  
struggling to revive  
a drowning relationship  
yet grasping  
at some measurable level  
the rhythm and strokes  
necessary  
to make it happen  
simply  
weren't there.

Liquid oozed aside your  
crinkled brow  
as the whole discomfoting scene  
played out:  
words chillingly transforming  
from  
forced reticence  
to earnest desperation  
to manifest rage.

I was perplexed why this particular time  
seemed especially  
poignant,  
perhaps my stare  
revealed

a lasting burial plot  
had been found.

Bio- Cheryl Sommese 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. Sommese lives in New Hampshire with her husband and two dogs.

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### **Rooming House**

by Robert Joe Stout

Awakening from this same bed  
I heard water running  
and imagined it was my wife  
in the next room  
washing her hair. But it was rain;  
the wind bringing it against the window  
shredded her presence  
and I sat with my hopes in my hands  
like a cobweb  
brushed away from a mirror.

---

### **Six A.M.**

by Robert Joe Stout

*Crack!* Abruptly I awakened.  
All was silent  
except echoes  
    then the wispy rustling  
of the wind  
and I stepped through  
  
the dormer window  
onto shingles

twinkling mica-like reflections  
as the cottonwood's huge limb

swayed back and forth  
refracting light  
from a round  
full laughing moon

then slipped into a haze  
of merging bison  
covered by the dust  
they hooved behind them

as sleep and dream dissolved  
and I was who I was  
alone, standing by a window

hand upraised, the moon  
a murky dwindling through leaves  
that fluttered shards of dreams  
I groped but couldn't grasp.

---

### **Phone Call to My Ex-Wife**

by Robert Joe Stout

*Thanks!* A lilt of laughter  
like old times  
and I laughed too  
    and then a silence  
each of us  
with our own thoughts,  
remembrances, concerns,  
connections not like what they were  
but something new,  
a seedling sprouting  
near the old abandoned trunk,  
fresh yet formed  
from what had been,  
familiar yet so far removed

from *then*—she laughs again,  
more quietly, assures me  
she's okay  
and asks about my weight  
and I reply  
as though to any friend  
I might have called,  
the who she is a shadow  
somewhat like a dream.

Bio- Robert Joe Stout is a freelance writer. His work has appeared in *America*, *Eclectica*, *Conscience*, *Notre Dame Magazine* and many other magazines and journals. His most recent novel is *Where Gringos Don't Belong* from Anaphora Literary Press. A new book of poetry, *Monkey Screams*, was released in 2015 by FutureCycle Press. A career journalist, he now makes his home in Oaxaca, Mexico.

### **Busboy**

by D. G. Geis

*"And that was the whole show."* —Charles Simic

Busboy by day,  
Philosopher by night;

This strange world of  
Disappearing tablecloths

And naked tables  
Flashing leg.

A little cheesecake  
For the diners

Or maybe a fork  
Out of thin air.

A brief demonstration  
In four parts

And the metaphysician  
Struts his Stuff.

The cosmology of tableware,  
The ontology of napkins:

There'll be no applause  
When he makes

Nothing from Something  
And hardly a glance

When the diners levitate  
On a cloud of atoms.

*Prix fixe*, the last course  
Is a mystery.

This sleight of hand,  
This aproned magician,

Bending over a table  
Reshuffling the universe

One spoon at a time.

---

### **Modern Dance**

by D. G. Geis

Modern dance is like this.  
It is real, but not.

The dancers move unnaturally,  
the gifted ones the most.

Whatever they are saying is lost.  
In fact, is lost together.

They only appear  
to leap.

They crown dead air  
with vigilante limbs

and chiropractic fervor—  
tight skin stretched

over tighter bodies,  
war drums beaten

to ambush ecstasy.  
The final footfall,

a footnote  
folded into an airplane

loosed cheerfully  
on the void.

Bio- D. G. Geis lives in Houston, Texas. He has an undergraduate degree in English Literature from the University of Houston and a graduate degree in philosophy from California State University. His poetry has appeared in *491 Magazine*, *Lost Coast*, *Blue Bonnet Review*, *The Broadkill Review*, *A Quiet Courage*, *SoftBlow International Poetry Journal*, *Blinders*, *Burningword Literary Journal*, *Poetry Scotland* (Open Mouse), *Crosswinds*, *Scarlet Leaf*, *Sweet Tree*, *Atrocity Exhibition*, *Driftwood Press*, *Tamsen*, *Rat's Ass*, *Bad Acid*, and *Crack the Spine*. He will be featured in a forthcoming Tupelo Press chapbook anthologizing nine new poets and is a winner of *Blue Bonnet Review's* Fall 2015 Poetry Contest.

### **Mystery Man**

by Fiona Sinclair

No pillow talk, rather he dozes tight-lipped as a spy.  
So she must catch what he lets slip in daily life,  
ELO on the radio whilst they decorate  
*I saw them at the Albert Hall...*  
She repaints the same skirting,  
fighting her need for who with? when?  
settling for *What was the band like?*  
After Jeff Lynne is reviewed,  
*Do you think we should paint the ceiling?*



cueing *that's enough* to her firmly as putting  
the lid back on his chocolates.

Occasionally his history ambushes him;  
a road in Liverpool recognized after 30 years,  
she holds her breath as his dramatic monologue unfolds,  
route to his mate's funeral, a TT race casualty,  
roll call of other biker mourners *Ogy, Tex, Spider*  
a few thumbnails sketched; *Noddy, he was a nutter...*  
no biker chicks mentioned but then  
brothers, bikes, birds, the natural order, she gathers.

*When I was married to: When I was inside...*  
sometimes sudden revelations slap shock her,  
yet he is adamant as a lying child *I told you this...*  
Nevertheless brief Q and A session permitted,  
her questions answered as if she was the prying press,  
then time up, back to work on his laptop.  
But questions persist in her like weeds,  
however much she tries to smother them.

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### **Greedy Cow**

by Fiona Sinclair

At the ice cream counter you reject  
With Malvolio priggishness my attempts to tempt,  
Turn your back on burlesque photos  
of Peach Melba, Broadstairs Surprise, Banana split...  
'I just want a proper frothy coffee,'  
strut off to examine the juke box.  
My diet's resolve this Easter has already  
capitulated into a full blown bender  
so I order Knickerbocker Glory.

At melamine table in Lloyd loom chair,  
I scoff the sundae's whipped cream head;  
ogle pink lit Liberace shell encrusted fountain,  
cornet cast door handles, 99 shaped wall lamps.  
Melted droplets splatter my dress,

I dab with serviette too sugar high to care  
that my occasional eating incontinence makes you look away.

At home, your child sized meals,  
make my adult plate seem free buffet greed.  
Eating, I try to match your dissection pace  
but soon revert to my Labrador gulp.  
Shuffle my knife and fork around an empty plate  
until you have caught me up.  
Shame that our shared sexual appetite  
does not extend to similar desire for food.

Bio- Fiona Sinclair is the editor of the online poetry magazine *Message in a Bottle*. Her first full collection, *Ladies Who Lunch* was published in 2015 by Lapwing Press, Belfast.

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### **The Lessons in Arguing**

by John Grey

An argument drags up  
other, older arguments—  
fighting knows the past  
better than memory.  
We blow off on tangents.  
We find the connection  
between this hurt  
and its long dormant grandfather.  
We're overwhelmed  
like children with too many toys at Christmas.  
Only we break our toys.  
We'd even break Christmas if we could.

An argument needs to be this way.  
It can't be centered.  
It must never be linear.  
A rational argument on either side  
and there'd be no hope for us.  
Irrational is the only hope.

A viewpoint must, for the good of all,  
eventually sound crazy to the person saying it.

So I can't play cards with the guys  
because the iron's cord is frayed.  
Your mother won't visit with us  
as long as there's a nasty noise  
in the Volvo's engine.

You're calm.  
I'm feeling better now.  
We kiss and make up.  
I'd like to see logic try.

Bio- John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in *New Plains Review*, *Perceptions* and the anthology, *No Achilles* with work upcoming in *Big Muddy Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Coal City Review* and *Nebo*.

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