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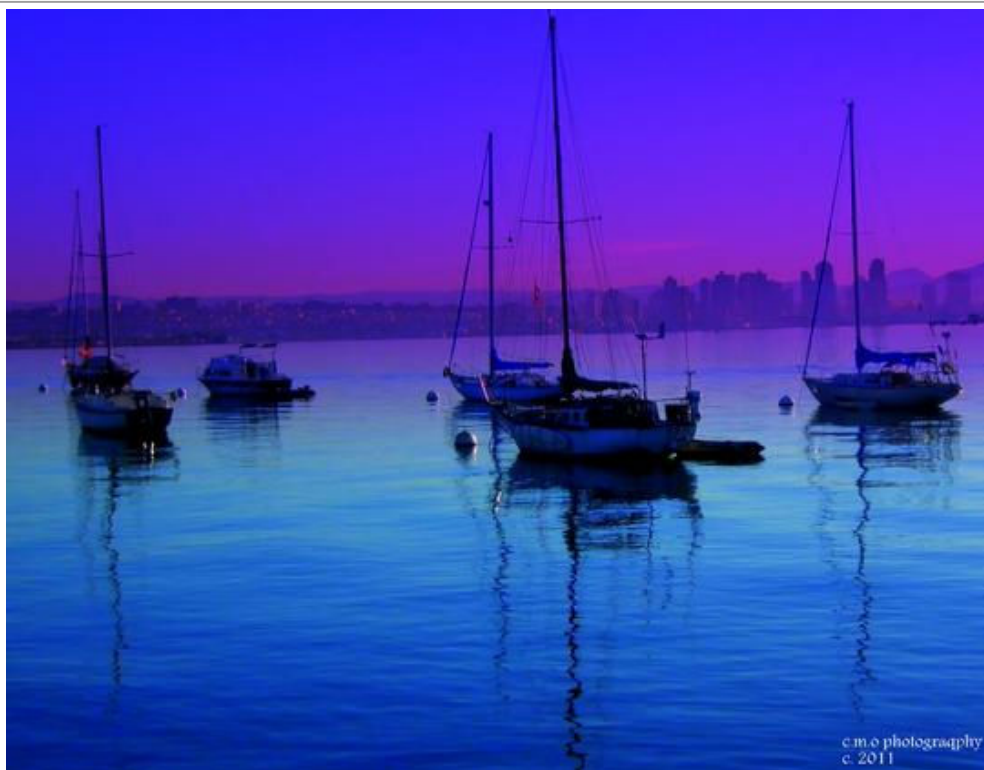
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Come in...and be captivated...

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"Shelter Island" by C. Michelle Olson; www.cmichelleolson.com

### **Home**

by Michelle Kennedy

We sit on the rooftop  
peeling oranges  
watching the painted skyline  
blend, then fade away  
into silver-coated dust  
on ebony silkscreen

All the memories  
fit neatly into our pockets  
You take my hands, lift me  
up into your arms  
We stir like honey and milk

Citronella candles  
line our dance floor  
You hum softly, we create  
a natural rhythm borne from time  
The fireflies recklessly dance  
above our heads, close to the flame

It's always nice to go back  
to the home that built us

### **Ripples Creep Over Our Feet**

by Joan Mc Nerney

Should we stand shivering or  
dive in? Lose our footprints?

The sun is a giant beach ball.  
See it splashing through

waves all red violet blue.

Weaving around this ocean

my legs encircle your waist.

You are so massive and wonderful.

Perhaps we can discover some

great canyons where stars

fell one billion years ago.

I see beams of light in

your hands touching their

cool luminosity now.

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### **Rendezvous**

by Joan McNeerney

Rendezvous was the name of a paint can  
from Main Street Hardware.

With sweat lingering on her  
face, she colored her room.

Tinted now like insides of  
ripe plums, like perfect grapes.

When the sizzling lemon sun  
dropped from heaven... night  
became moist and black.

Her fan whirled thick air

stained with cigarettes  
coffee, turpentine, white wine.

She sank into her wicker couch  
as fog horns trail the horizon.

Lotus screech relentlessly for water  
always wanting more more more water.

Closing her eyes, remembering him  
now tasting the feast of his smile.

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### **Sequoias**

by Gary Beck

I walk a lonely path past dying trees,  
their limbs outstretched in supplicating pleas.

Their tale of woe I do not know  
of desolate years alone.

They stalwartly stand, in vigilance grand,  
embracing the wind with a groan.

The path unfolds, in awe I catch my breath,  
all splendor gone in such majestic death.

Their prime has passed, I view the last  
impressive monarchs made  
and now I attend their tragical end  
and watch nature's handiwork fade.

**Seasonscape**

by Changming Yuan

Spring: like a raindrop  
on a small lotus leaf  
unable to find the spot  
to settle itself down  
in an early autumn shower  
my little canoe drifts around  
near the horizon  
beyond the bare bay

Summer: in her beehive-like room  
so small that a yawning stretch  
would readily awaken  
the whole apartment building  
she draws a picture on the wall  
of a tremendous tree  
that keeps growing  
until it shoots up  
from the cemented roof

Autumn: not unlike a giddy goat  
wandering among the ruins  
of a long lost civilization  
you keep searching  
in the central park  
a way out of the tall weeds  
as nature makes new york  
into a mummy blue

Winter: after the storm  
all dust hung up

in the crowded air  
with his human face  
frozen into a dot of dust  
and a rising speckle of dust  
melted into his face  
to avoid this cold climate  
of his antarctic dream  
he relocated his naked soul  
at the dawn of summer

### **Tsunami Stone**

by Anne Whitehouse

*High dwellings ensure the peace and happiness of our descendants-  
inscription, tsunami stone, Aneyoshi, Iwate Prefecture as reported by Martin  
Fackler, Tsunami Warnings Written in Stone, The New York Times, April 20,  
2011.*

The four-foot high stone  
stands beside the only road  
of the small village  
lying in a narrow, cedar-filled valley  
leading to the ocean.  
Downhill from the stone,  
a blue line newly painted on the road  
marks the edge of the tsunami's advance,  
127.6 feet high.  
Below the painted line,  
the valley's a scene of total destruction,  
its walls shorn of trees and soil,  
leaving only naked rock.  
Nothing is left of the fishing harbor  
except huge blocks of the shattered wave walls  
strewn across the small bay.

The tsunami stone was a way  
to warn descendants of the next century  
that another tsunami will definitely come  
but the nation believed in new tsunami walls  
and other modern concrete barriers,  
which the waves easily overwhelmed.

As time passes, people inevitably forget,  
until the next tsunami.

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### **Dancing in Water**

by Anne Whitehouse

*for Eiko and Koma*

A frame of driftwood  
in the current's ebb and flow—  
clinging to the frame,  
the dancers, stiff as driftwood,  
curve slowly into stones  
while water runs over  
their stilled forms.

In time they come alive,  
are rippling reeds,  
swaying stem and buried root,  
variously wind, tree,  
flower, naked breath  
that swells behind  
the push to give birth.

The dancers are in the river,

the dance is in the river,  
the dance is the river.

From outside in I found this story:  
she almost died,  
and he brought her back to life.

Dried leaves, discarded and scattered—  
let them go; new ones will grow.  
A cricket perched on a twig,  
graceful and humorous  
at the close.

### **Cold Gray**

by Michael Lee Johnson

Below the clouds  
forming in my eyes,  
your soft eyes,  
delicate as silk warm words,  
used to support the love I held for you.

Cold, now gray, the sea tide  
inside turns to poignant foam  
upside down, separates-  
only ghosts now live between us.

Yet, dream like, fortune-teller,  
bearing no relation to reality-  
my heart is beyond the sea now.  
A relaxing breeze sweeps  
across the flat surface of me.  
I write this poem to you  
neglectfully sacrificing our love.  
I leave big impressions  
with a terrible hush inside.  
Gray bones now bleach with memories,  
I'm a solitary figure standing  
here, alone, along the shoreline.

---

### **Leaves in December**

by Michael Lee Johnson

Leaves, a few stragglers in  
December, just before Christmas,  
some nailed down crabby  
to ground frost,

some cracked by the bite  
of nasty wind tones.

Some saved from the matchstick  
that failed to light.

Some saved from the rake  
by a forgetful gardener.

For these few freedom dancers  
left to struggle with the bitterness:  
wind dancers  
wind dancers  
move your frigid  
bodies shaking like icicles  
hovering but a jiffy in sky,  
kind of sympathetic to the seasons,  
reluctant to permanently go,  
rustic, not much time more to play.

---

### **I Feel Lightening in Your Wind**

by Michael Lee Johnson

I feel light in a thunderstorm

I electrify the touch of you through my veins  
I'm the greenery around your life  
that breaths your earth into your lungs  
I challenge all your false decisions  
with the glory of my godliness  
I'm your syntax, your stoic,  
your ears, your glory.  
I walk daylight into your morning breath  
allow you to breath.  
I let the technique of me into your brain cells;  
from the top tip to the bottom  
of small baby feet extensions.  
I'm the banquet hall of all  
your joys, damnations;  
your curses, your emotions  
and your breathing with the wind.

### **Perfect Getaway**

by C. Michelle Olson

Visions of a perfect getaway  
Sweet charm to disarm  
Surrendering to an ocean view  
Sweet ocean's melody to hear  
Starting anew  
A beaming full moon casting a giant light  
Drawing one near  
Blankets of thick sand  
To sparkle in the night  
A picture perfect haven  
Sighs of a carefree existence  
Melting to this charming Victorian beach getaway  
Worries, fears, and regrets dissipate  
Never feeling resistant  
For happy times take control of the mind  
Bursting with excitement in this grandiose place  
Bustling activity surrounding her everywhere

Many choices to make  
A mood surely elevates  
My, one may have the time of their life  
Guests flocking to the beach  
Bars filling the seats to take a break from the record heat  
Chatter heard as everyone rallies to speak  
Aromas escaping eateries tempt your nose  
Passion is in the air  
Like a butterfly captivated by his favorite flower  
Drawn by her sweet scent and dazzling beauty  
He invites  
Does she dare  
Within this haven, happiness takes over  
A perfect dream retreat  
One never wants to leave

### **Losing Eli**

by Vince corvaia

Eli grew a tumor behind his left ear  
when I was ten.

My parents didn't want  
the vet bills.

"Take him out and lose him,"  
my mother said one Saturday.

So there we were,  
I on my ten-speed, Eli

running to keep up  
through new developments

that reeked of tar and sawdust.  
I heard the flap-flap-flap

of playing cards against spokes,  
a cacophony of innocence,

and I knew no matter  
how hard I pedaled,

I would keep growing older  
and Eli would not.

Now, sure enough, I am older,  
and every blank page I confront

reminds me of a vast landscape  
broken by a boy on a bicycle

and, ten feet behind,  
a dog running for its life

past the pastel houses.

### **The Peels**

by Valentina Cano

You've acquired a sticky lacquer  
to your skin  
that traps dust and panicked flies  
as they roam by.

I don't know if it's a new thing,  
an appendage that has  
overgrown its sheath,  
or if it was always there  
and I was too convoluted  
like oily water to see it.  
When I touch you,  
my fingers jerk back  
ragged, ripped like torn notebook paper,  
bleeding in silence.

You carry my skin on  
your flytrap covering.  
You carry it as you shower  
and tie your shoes,  
always swirling around you,  
trying to catch your  
misguided attention.  
One day you'll glance  
down at the flap of suffocating skin  
and realize I've probably  
bled to death.

### **The Dust Bowl**

by Michael Ceraolo

*"I think I'll miss you most of all, [Scarecrow]..." - The Wizard of Oz (1939)*

"I do not hesitate in giving the opinion  
that it is almost wholly uninhabitable  
by a people depending upon agriculture  
for their subsistence"  
the on-target original opinion  
that was all-too-soon subsumed  
by a public/private partnership in greed  
that connived to populate this area  
far in excess of its carrying capacity:

"The High Plains continues to be the most alluring body  
of unoccupied land in the United States"

"No purer water ever came out of the ground"  
"The supply is inexhaustible"  
"the best damned country God's sun ever shone upon"

"The soil is the one indestructible, immutable asset"  
"the one resource that cannot be exhausted,



850,000,000 tons of topsoil  
all told,  
    more than dug up in many canals  
and none of it under human control,  
was gone from an area of  
at least a hundred million acres  
over parts of six states,  
    gone due to  
"a mistaken homesteading policy,  
the stimulation of war time demands  
which led to over cropping and over grazing,  
and  
encouragement of a system of agriculture  
which could not be both permanent and prosperous"

"In no other instance  
was there greater  
    or more sustained  
damage to the American land"  
though  
out of the huge dark dust clouds  
came the silver lining of realization  
that ecosystems transcended,  
were no respecters of,  
man-made boundaries of any size,  
and  
legislation creating new entities  
called soil conservation districts  
that acknowledged this fact was enacted,  
and spread all across the country,  
a small step away from cancerous individualism-----

### **Morning Meals**

by Cheryl Sommese

Assorted beaks pecked beneath the see-through cylinder  
feasting on the morning fare  
with dignified diligence.  
Seeds soon scattered about  
the porch  
decorating random slats  
with vibrant colors,  
while furry forms scurried over  
munching  
on the spillage  
with apparent glee.

I gazed in wonder at it all—  
the different creatures cordially sharing  
a simple meal.

And  
as the air resounded  
like a hundred playgrounds filled  
with happy children,  
everything  
became quite grand.

**Death of The Past**

by Carl Scharwath

Enlightened moon an abortion of nighttime creation,

cries energy in summer's final luminance.

Grave yard headstones manifest elongated shadows.

Cement souls embedded in the humid grass,

the distant, lonely house exhales the past.

History impregnates the air through tiny stucco cracks.

Curb adorned in one broken old television set,

the future anchored in its rusted satellite dish

No one ever dies here anymore, where have they gone?

Displaced suburbia manifests abandoned dreams,

a neighborhood raped in shuttered factories.

Polluted smoke replaced with the whiteness of lonely clouds.

**Missouri Spring**

by Mary Earls

Cold, rainy,  
not good for gardeners.  
Too soon to hoe.  
Tomato seedlings sit sadly  
in too-damp pots.  
We sit stolid  
frowning at dank skies.  
Before we can hoe  
we must plant.

### **Changes**

by April Avalon

I'm looking around and searching you there,  
The bright prospect lights only frown as I stare,  
My heart's getting lost in the shatters.  
I know you'll pick them all up when you come,  
And I'll never mind if you steal at least some,  
Just keep them, and nothing else matters.

Those white and green lights got my secret revealed,  
I'll write it all down and cherish it sealed,  
One day it will find destination.  
Whoever discovers the mystery penned,  
They won't guess a word, I have got it all planned,  
This madness becomes my salvation.

The eyes of the suburbs will warm and appease  
My heart, ever-aching, with evident ease.  
Your look in the window still shows.  
It's fixed in the soul, it's fixed in the glass,  
This moment can linger for good either pass,  
It's changing. Well, destiny knows.

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