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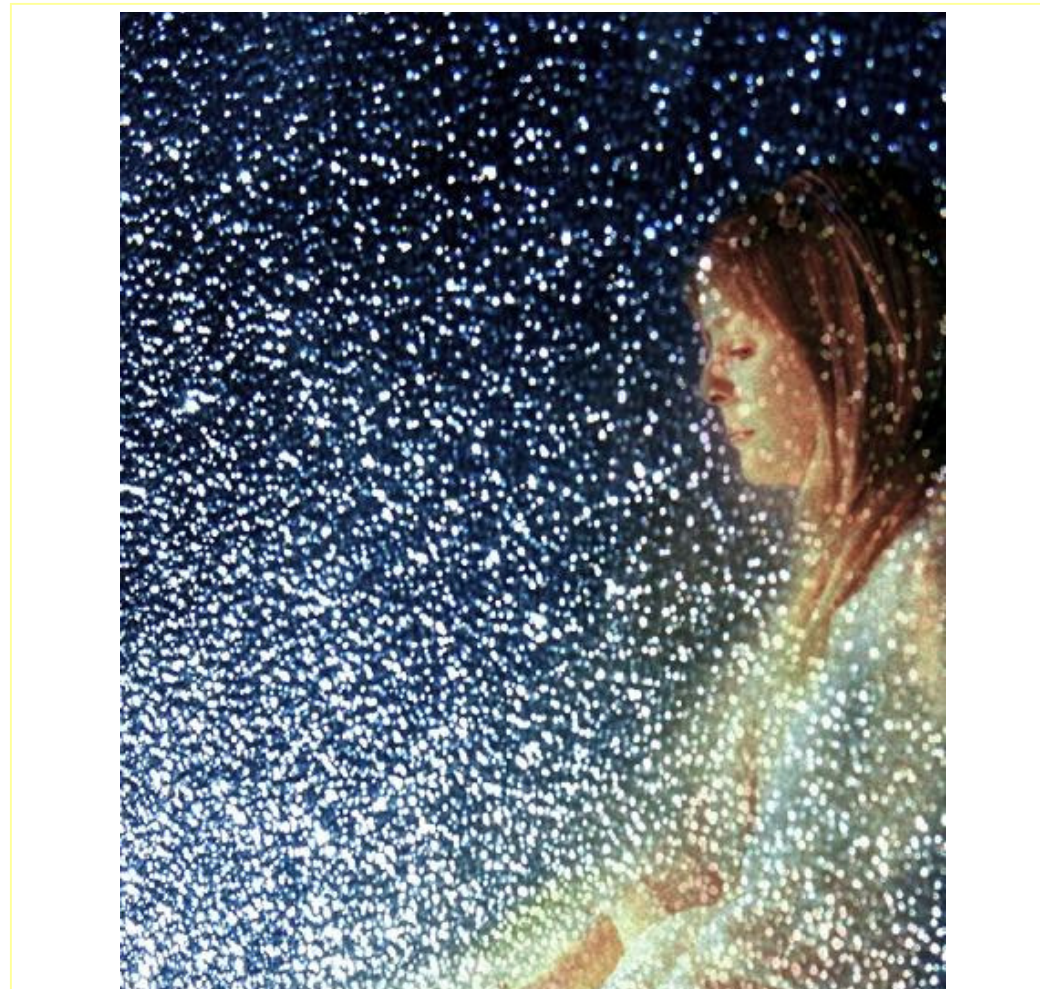
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"Stars" by Patti Dietrick; <https://www.flickr.com/photos/patidietrick/>

*About this image: "I had a dream about holding a glass globe...and inside the globe were billions and billions of stars...it was so beautiful... I lifted the globe to look a little closer and it fell and shattered. I woke from my dream and a glass frame in the next room had fallen from the wall and shattered. I wanted to express it in a photograph." —PD*

### **The Gift**

by M. M. Adjarian

Your face was glowing, a star  
And the lines etched in your skin rays of pure light  
The day I saw to the bottom of your heart.

Caught in streams of human locomotion,  
The afternoon rush of lives caught between lectures, buildings and  
banalities,  
You called my name. I looked for you.

Your gravity, outstretched arms, pulled me near.  
Man named for the patron saint of travelers and bearer of Christ,  
You guided me across that flow of anonymity.

Your words were automatic: "Hello. How are you? I'm fine."  
But your smile—*that smile* was new as spring, open as a child's,  
A joyful sliver of moon that scooped me up and swung me round the sky.

We stood a minute, maybe two: it didn't matter.  
Nothing else—neither the insistent hands on campus clocks  
Nor the stream of students moving by us—dared move or breathe.

Blue wells, your eyes alone anchored me to that place outside time.  
But then a breathless vertigo,  
Urged my body to bend at the waist and dive

Down, down, down  
Past all your suit and tie formalities—  
Past Byron, Shelley and Keats, past Wordsworth and everything you knew

To that shimmering at the center of the world  
My toes could brush against, where water would become the air I breathed  
And drowning a surrender to love offered without fear.

---

### **A Requiem for Ophelia**

by M. M. Adjarian

Water flings itself against the land  
And ripples bear this love-swamped body away.

We are one, the water and I, the flagellant and the wanton suicide—  
Masochists remade in an ecstasy of pain,

Sister captives caught in the eternal tug of war  
Between a traitor earth and that bitch-goddess moon.

Once, breathing was a ritual compulsion  
so like the desire—my desire—doomed to die in virgin silence

A devil congealed behind my lips, condemning me to hell,  
But still demanding dissolution in you, my insubstantial prince.

Who knows about the push and pull of love: I don't.  
I'm just the mad girl who sang of rue to welcome death,  
her flowered corpse on full collision course with someone else's dream.

---

### **The Return**

by M. M. Adjarian

In the aftermath of winter's unmaking  
They come again, the feathered phalanx,  
To repair a broken sky.

With bodies like needles they pierce the air  
Threading lines invisible, so like the hidden seams  
Upon your face, my face, the face we make like love.

What cracks the sky and splits the stars  
And rips and tears the landscapes of the heart  
They mend, their innocence as cruel and blind as Eden.

Bio- M. M. Adjarian received a BA in comparative literature from the University of California and a PhD in the same field from the University of Michigan. She has published her creative work in *The Provo Canyon Review*, *The Milo Review*, *The Baltimore Review*, *The Prague Revue* and *RaJAH: Rackham Journal of Arts and Humanities*. Her articles and reviews have also appeared in *Arts+Culture Texas*, *Bitch Magazine*, *Kirkus Reviews*, and the *Dallas Voice*, as well as in several academic journals and compendiums. In 2004, she published a literary critical study entitled *Allegories Of Desire: Body Nation And Empire In Modern Caribbean Literature By Women*. At present, she is working on a family memoir provisionally titled *The Beautiful Dreamers*.

### **Emerson Avenue**

by Yvette A. Schnoeker-Shorb

Silhouetted against twilight's disappearing lavender-blue, Emerson Avenue sulks like an abandoned teenager lost somewhere in the pulsing heart of Los Angeles.

I returned on a whim, noticed the girl old enough to be my granddaughter sitting on the concrete curb beneath the opaque globe of a street lamp, thin golden light

pulling her shadow away from the narrow, cracked sidewalk separating a small, chain-link-fenced house on its patch of lawn from raw street over forty years ago when summer days fanned

into the future like cards predicting a life, and a hedged path to the front door supported deep coral roses and sparrow calls, color and sound that drifted away like dreams of the aged.

But the adolescent girl is still there in the dimness. Shoulder to shoulder, she sat with the lanky boy who owned snakes, who was a few years her senior, who was sincerely innocent,

who kissed her because he was curious and because he could  
and because she was nice—rooted in ignorance. He was, after all,  
my best friend's brother, older than most boys on the block

who had already been smitten with the mysteries of breast  
which led to the body south, hormones provoking desire  
to explore. It was a good thing that he chose me—the familiar,

a disinterested tomboy. For, while he didn't know then,  
as it turned out, he preferred his pleasures from men. Still,  
I was game to break the boredom of that slow, sultry evening.

Ghosts, they are now on the avenue, shifting the window of time  
without a care who might peek from behind closed curtains,  
or what might reflect back from opened closets within.

---

### **The Shadow of a Swallowtail**

by Yvette A. Schnoeker-Shorb

The shadow of a swallowtail  
reminds me what the world is  
about—fluttering, flitting,  
lifting, floating, and grab-able.

Fragile, like all organic life,  
I sense presence, a wing tip  
brushing by, hushing my  
blue mind, a butterfly

attracted to native ash  
and imported elms crying  
sap into the breeze.  
Does she see me

among the trees, all of us  
lingering somewhere,  
our cells profoundly  
patterned with memory?

Black and gold, her shadow  
unfolds onto my hand  
as I watch her land—and  
my life is transformed again.

---

### **Maternal Boundaries**

by Yvette A. Schnoeker-Shorb

Where do I hold my mother?  
From the depth of my soul,  
formed by her once living body,  
she embraces me  
until my dream sheds her memory  
in the fallout of waking.

Don't go, don't go, not yet.  
There are too many unresolved  
stories that played out before us.  
Will you come back again  
as you have in the past—  
old and struck mute  
by the vessels in your brain  
or the vibrant age you were  
when I sat in your lap  
as you taught me to count  
the rose patterns on your skirt?

If we could just rerun one day,  
it could be the day I tell you  
how much I loved you,  
though it was usually whispered  
dutifully under my breath  
after slamming the phone  
into its cradle. You understood  
my anger as we both changed—  
so wise to accept the life cycles  
of mothers and daughters.

For all the assurance  
and closure you attempted

to give me in those confusing years  
before you died, I still pushed away  
from your warm bosom, one last  
pathetic rush for independence—  
as if Fate wouldn't notice  
I was next in line—  
when what I really wanted  
was to hear your steady,  
beautifully beating heart  
just one more time.

---

### **After [My] Life**

by Yvette A. Schnoeker-Shorb

One day I awoke to realize  
there was nothing I could do  
to change the course of cells;

life would go on without me.  
Seasons would trespass  
over memories of my existence.

Winds would still whisper-whine  
and cause this aging house to creak,  
but someone else would be

listening, maybe stuffing rags  
or socks between double-paned  
windows to stop the rattling.

The town square would be empty  
of my footsteps—the urban savanna  
void of some forgotten woman

doing her routine laps—one less  
walker whose cells could no longer  
relive themselves, DNA unraveling.

For all the attitude, positive  
or other, and attempts to extend life,  
it's hard being old, knowing,

while the universe may yet offer  
a place for a soul to go, the promise  
of participation is vague—at best.

Bio- Yvette A. Schnoeker-Shorb's poetry has appeared in *Aji Magazine*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *Spectrum*, *Kudzu House Quarterly (Kudzu Review)*, *Split Rock Review*, *Dark Matter: A Journal of Speculative Writing*, *Wilderness House Literary Review*, *Concho River Review*, *The BlueLine Anthology* (Syracuse University Press), *Red River Review*, *The Voices Project*, *Terrain.org: A Journal of the Built and Natural Environments*, *Pedestal Magazine*, and other journals and online forums, with poetry forthcoming in the anthology *Talking Back and Looking Forward: Poetry and Prose for Social Justice in Education* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2015), *Blue Heron Review*, *Caesura*, *Bird's Thumb*, and others. A past Pushcart Prize nominee, she holds an interdisciplinary MA from Prescott College and is co-founder of Native West Press, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit natural history press.

### **Love goes downhill**

by Morgan Bazilian

He runs  
And I alight  
The corner of his mouth turns serious  
And I laugh

The clichés used as a foundation  
Building a perspective  
Of how a child grows  
More quickly than expected, etc.

My father calls  
Expecting something  
Not unreasonable things  
Thanks or devotion

And I realize:  
Love goes downhill

Towards the child  
As sure as gravity

Like any other river  
Or material flow  
Or quantum of energy or heat  
It takes the easiest path

---

### **Peat**

by Morgan Bazilian

The peat recently revealed to the sun  
Cut and drying  
Exposed on the sides

The sheep creating dust from water.  
A floating lake  
Above old weakened stone

The bog captures my shoe  
Its softness  
A partial solution for old knees

A hill steeped with yellow flowers  
And heather  
And autumn

Detail and color  
A landscape of low skies and gray  
Immersion and resistance

Planted regret  
Diffused doubt

Dreams infused with age  
Frayed and rusting

Children with no memory  
Unable to cite person, place or date.

Mediated ideals  
Negotiated interests

Small contributions  
Amounting to copacetic smiles

The day wholly unimpressed  
By the human condition

Bio- Morgan Bazilian's last fourteen poems were published in: *Exercise Bowler*, *Pacific Poetry*, *Angle Poetry*, *Dead Flowers*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Garbanzo Literary*, and *Innisfree*. His last seven stories were published in *Eclectica*, *South Loop Review*, *Embodied Effigies*, *Shadowbox*, *Slab*, *Crack the Spine*, and *Glasschord*.

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### **Frying Eggs**

by Anne Carly Abad

Fear is a shell.  
Apply great force  
and reap an oozing mess.  
Tap it open instead,  
once or twice  
because a crack is enough.

Pour on the hot, oiled pan  
yolk and albumen;  
let the white and the red  
of your lowest days  
coagulate a reconstitute  
of your alimental core.

Leave it  
half-cooked,  
have nothing overdone.  
Serve yourself

and dig in.

---

### **To the Coddled Youth**

by Anne Carly Abad

Is it you, or the curdled we?  
It's easy to forget the taste  
of fresh milk once it has hardened,  
and soured into good ol' cheese.

Too soft, too hard, too cold, too hot  
too loose, too free—arbitrary  
measurements of what constitute  
a good human, never enough;

the past always has to add more  
salt or vinegar or rennet.  
One way or another, you'll hear:  
*not enough churn, no you don't*

so coddle on, and don't worry.  
You're only a few years away.  
The worst that could happen is this:  
you will get there in a hurry.

Bio- Anne Carly Abad writes poetry and stories when she's not training Muay Thai. Her work has appeared or will appear in *Apex*, *Dreams & Nightmares*, and *Strange Horizons*.

### **My Wife Plays Ancient Music**

*Inspired by painting of Kokopelli by Georgia O'Keefe  
Denver Art Museum*

by Neal Whitman

From the wing bone of a mute swan  
music filled a cave 35,000 years ago—  
a 3-hole flute fashioned to express  
joy and sorrow. Music at the end  
still the natural way to go. Yes, the heart  
must beat to live. Yes, brain waves

signal life spark. Still, we note the end  
by our last breath. Her 6-hole wood flute  
custom made for Hospice, long for low notes,  
thin, so light to hold. She follows the breath  
of the patient. Starts and stops with him.  
The sound of the flute following, not leading.  
He takes his last breath.  
Now soundless.

Bio- Neal Whitman lives with his wife, Elaine, in California and loves to combine his poetry and her Native American flute & photography in public recitals. They utilize this as hospice volunteers to help patients and family members identify and sort out their feelings at a time when these people might be overwhelmed with feelings. Both are published poets. Neal's 2013 awards include the 2013 Blaze Memorial Prize, 1st place in the summer 2013 contest sponsored by *Diogen* magazine in Serbia/Bosnia-Herzegovina, and 3rd place in the 2013 Dancing Poetry International Contest. He is inspired by the visual arts and seeks to respond with ekphrastic poetry.

## **Brazil**

by T. L. Blanchard

He split you in two when he made love to you  
And then nailed you together again.  
He spoke his language to you  
And fed you his food,  
Kissing the belly where it lay.  
And when you were with him,  
You were no longer a foreigner  
But had a country, a nationality  
That was him.

Most nights found you  
Wandering down the dirt road  
In the Brazilian heat  
Wearing the crown of  
Perfumed flowers—  
“Lady of the night”—  
That he made for you.

In the middle of the circle of fighters  
You faced his wife,  
Stared into her dark eyes  
Her beautiful face,  
And then tumbled against her in the dirt.  
He clapped and sang and smiled  
While you two women  
With identical teeth marks on your skin  
Sweated against each other's bodies.

And she never knew that  
You let her win,  
That you just couldn't bring yourself to beat her.

Bio- T. L. Blanchard is a poet and a writer of fiction and non-fiction. Some of her work is inspired by her years of travels to over 30 countries. She is currently writing a book on her experience of leaving her life in the United States to live in the jungles of Brazil and is the author of a travel blog ([www.mynameswanderlust.wordpress.com](http://www.mynameswanderlust.wordpress.com)).

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## **Venus**

by Nels Hanson

When you rise so brightly  
your return always whispers  
goodbye as sudden shadow

in a smile considers Spring  
will end. Your swinging  
auburn hair across lovely

woman's face suggests a  
fair, neon streaking under  
night, sky starry, staring

down at happiness, human  
lights. One fiery quiet word  
speaks like an echo I recall,

answer a lucky child heard  
deep from a wishing well.  
Why then is your presence

always the shadow of your  
absence, why in disordered  
dream you're there, then not

again when day birds would  
sing? Every kiss begins its  
requiem. Please tell me, do

you know how mild evening  
in warm arms presages frost,  
a final snow, or when world

was kinder somewhere bells  
rang twice, and more, tolling  
in a line as far as heaven is

the passing long cortege, one  
passenger to each black car?  
I admit before I mourned you

I missed you. When I knocked  
you opened and closed a door.  
It often changes color in sleep,

red, silver, a mauve, now rose,  
sky poised, not dark or dusk  
but indigo with Venus rising.

Bio- Nels Hanson grew up on a farm in the San Joaquin Valley of California and has worked as a farmer, teacher and contract writer/editor. His fiction received the San Francisco Foundation's James D. Phelan Award and Pushcart Prize nominations in 2010, 12, and 2014. Stories have appeared in *Antioch Review*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Southeast Review* and other journals and are in press at *Fiction Southeast* and ELJ Publications. Poems appeared in *Word Riot*, *Oklahoma Review*, *Pacific Review* and other magazines, and are in press at *Squalorly*, *Sediments*, *Blotterature*, *Digital Papercut*, *Indiana Voice Journal*, *Imitations & Allusions*, *Lost Coast Review*, and *Straight Forward Poetry*. Poems in *Outside In Literary & Travel Magazine* and *Citron Review* were nominated for 2014 Pushcart Prizes and poems in the *Sharkpack Poetry Review Annual* were awarded its Prospero Prize.

## Once I Saw the Edge of the Rain

by Joanna White

### I.

The edge of rain on window glass, sublime,  
damp line dividing mist from glittered sun.  
I happened on this image just in time.

Sky dome, transparent, shimmer droplets chimed  
as lunchers munched and chatted one on one,  
above, the sweep of rain on glass, sublime.

### II.

Pale chrysalis dangled. Legs in pantomime  
broke crinkle casing, caterpillar spun.  
I happened on this picture just in time.

Wings trilled and flickered, spindle legs entwined,  
first flutter, twirl of air, then freedom won  
til swoosh of rain on window glass, sublime.

### III.

An English Channel ship's gangplank I climbed  
and spied a friend from childhood. We were stunned,  
converging on that spot at just that time.

These moments, wild, a keen internal rhyme  
to be in just the place, to be the one  
to catch first flight or rain on glass, sublime,  
rare visions caught in slice of space and time.

Bio- Joanna White is a music professor at Central Michigan University. After performing with a poet, she returned to an early love of creative writing and studies poetry with Robert Fanning and Jeffrey Bean. She has poems appearing or forthcoming in *The Examined Life Journal*, *Ars Medica*, *Pulse*, *Grey Sparrow Journal*, *Milo Review*, *Flare*, *Chest Journal*, *Open Palm Print*, *Flute View*, *Central Review*, *Minerva Rising Literary Journal*, and in

both *Snow Jewel*, and *Naugatuck River Review* as a finalist in their poetry contests. She lives in Mount Pleasant, Michigan with her husband and has a daughter and son in college.

---

### **Because**

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

Because you have exactly your mouth  
I can't forget you and because your eyes  
are the colors of cloves I can't forget you  
and because on the slate of night  
the stars spell out your name  
in every existing language.  
And how can I forget you  
in the flamboyance of autumn  
or when snow erases all color  
or when May celebrates with flowers  
the anniversary of our meeting?

How can I forget how your body pressed  
its latitudes and longitudes into my body—  
here your hands created an equator  
there you marked off a meridian  
that moving over we lost no hour and no day.  
No light was forfeit, no penalty paid in darkness  
but everything was timeless and my yes  
destroyed death and there was only you  
and absolute belief in forever?

---

### **Whitman Whispered Me**

by Sarah Brown Weitzman

I could never live locked in  
the random land, held back  
by hills far from waves.  
Whitman early whispered me.

I must have the scud and  
squirm of sea life near  
and be on shores renewed  
in those wild rhythms.

I must scan the perfect force  
of a rising surf before it is lost  
in confusions of foam drawn on  
tides of anticipation that turn

our rhymes and by the beauty  
of such men's lines who've set their craft  
upon the seas that swell in all of us  
until this stranded life lies deep

in some real sea stirring vaguely  
to each new moon's command  
returned to gray beginnings  
in the artless sediments of time.

Bio- Sarah Brown Weitzman, a Pushcart nominee, has been widely published in numerous journals such as *America*, *Art Times*, *The North American Review*, *Rattle*, *The Mid-American Review*, *The Windless Orchard*, *Poet Lore*, *Potomac Review*, *Poet & Critic*, etc. Sarah received a Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her latest book, a departure from poetry is a children's novel, *Herman and the Ice Witch*, published by Main Street Rag. [www.sarahbrownweitzman.com](http://www.sarahbrownweitzman.com)

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### Preparing the Surface

by Lois Greene Stone

The sable brush,  
 light oak handle  
 had different meanings.  
 My dad's held shaving  
 cream swished in a mug  
 then applied to fresh  
 whiskers. The long  
 handle on mine had  
 oil paint clinging  
 waiting to be dabbed  
 on stretched canvas.  
 Turpentine cleared  
 paint color; running  
 water cleaned foam.  
 Silky fur formed

memories of  
childhood  
moments.

Bio- Lois Greene Stone, writer and poet, has been syndicated worldwide. Poetry and personal essays have been included in hard & softcover book anthologies. Collections of her personal items/ photos/ memorabilia are in major museums including twelve different divisions of The Smithsonian.

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### **Anna in Her Eighth**

by John Grey

Eight months pregnant,  
gardening,  
always the presumptive miss  
now little mother  
like the rose bush,  
once resentful of others,  
now friend to all mankind.

She is having a baby.  
She can now join the conversation.  
Her stomach protrudes  
far beyond her breasts.  
She is recognized.  
Sick though she feels some mornings,  
she can relax.  
Her sickness crosses boundaries.  
She can revel in her vomiting.

A month to go,  
she's in her garden,  
pruning and planting,  
fertilizing and watering...  
lovely blooms  
but why should they  
be the only seed?

---

## **The Danger Inherent**

by John Grey

The danger is exposed by a giant hypnotic 'gator eye.  
Cold blood wastes a hot stare. Expressionism, be damned.  
This is physical reality, emotional experience,  
chapter and nerve-churning verse. They're not  
dangerous, whispers some yellowing nature guide  
from my distant past. But that's for second-hand adventurers  
in their upscale city apartments, I, on the other hand...

I'm atop a high cliff, awed looking ahead, terrified looking down.  
A storm feeds ocean's thunderous want. A hard, metallic  
wind snaps my head back from my throat. It's fueled by  
the giant rocks below. Gravity is just a misguided step away.  
Or I'm wandering downtown streets late at night.  
I left the theater with people but they've disappeared into  
cars, into midnight. There's just me and whatever comes for me.  
My heavy footsteps name the time and place.  
Or I'm in the kitchen and the breadknife blade is far sharper than I am.  
Or shaving in a mirror, razor with a mind of its own,  
its shiny steel conceits too rich for my blood.

Danger, danger. Lightning and trees about to topple. A demon  
in the mist. A shark in the waters. Fiery desert sands draining  
the gas from my car. I'm with a woman who could be that  
serial killer I read about in tomorrow's papers. I'm crossing a  
street. The squirrel didn't make it. Why should I?  
And here's you telling me these things happen to other people.  
Then I'm with some other people. They treat me like I'm one of them.

---

## **News at Six**

by John Grey

The TV informs me they're out there:  
car-bombs, serial killers, dictators  
killing their own to stay in power—  
and then there's the epidemics,

mosquitoes, ticks and fleas,  
tiny living resentments  
getting their own back at life.

Not satisfied with razing the rest of the world,  
the newsreader homes in on the neighborhood.  
Drive-by shooting claims ten year old.  
Child burnt in house fire,  
found clutching the charred remains of a teddy bear.  
There are no lives lived to be reported on.  
Just the three car pileup.  
The swimming pool drowning.  
Dead faces pop up on the screen:  
people we've greeted on the street,  
some we might even know.  
What if it's me up there?

I'd turn off the news  
but I want to see who won the game.  
And watch the losers traipsing off the field...  
to the showers,  
not the firing squad.

Bio- John Grey is an Australian born poet. Recently published in *Oyez Review*, *Rockhurst Review* and *Spindrift* with work upcoming in *New Plains Review*, *Big Muddy Review*, *Willow Review* and *Louisiana Literature*.

---

### **A Piece Of Raisin Toast**

by Ken Slaughter

At the nursing home  
meals are his only excitement  
and raisin toast is his favorite food.

The server sets a single slice  
on his plate.

He studies it  
and picks up the knife.

As a cricket sings  
with its whole body  
he butters that toast  
with his whole soul

as if the knife  
were a paint brush  
and the piece of toast  
a work of art

then offers it  
with both hands  
to his oldest daughter.

Bio- Ken Slaughter worked for 30 years in Information Technology and is now retired. He lives in Massachusetts with his wife and two cats. His poetry has recently been published online at *Verse-Virtual*. In addition, his tanka have been published in *Ribbons*, *Red Lights*, *A Hundred Gourds* and other online and print journals. In 2012 he won second prize in the Tanka Society of America's International Contest. Visit Ken at <http://poemsbyken48.wordpress.com/>

---

### Wallflower

by Janine Lehane

She's heard that by the trick  
of stillness and emptying the mind

a girl can elude bad things,  
be invisible. It's worth the chance.

Why do we assume that those who singe us  
when we're young will become suitable company?

Mother spent a long time on this dress.  
Her wet palms mark the gray silk.

She breaks the minutes into small  
livable tasks. Survive tonight.

Somehow she moves across the open floor.  
A cool drink would be lovely.

She feels their prying fingers, hums  
an inner tune, thinks her inward dance.

---

### **d minor comes to mind**

by Janine Lehane

She is skin and bone  
and keen intelligence  
and I listen  
to her pacing  
across the linoleum  
and weeping  
at odd hours  
in the dark.

Don't lose your heart  
to the sorrowful night.  
Make amends, patch things up  
with the broad-shouldered day.

---

### **Theater**

by Janine Lehane

House lights dim.  
Hiatus.

Someone tears the scenery,  
a gash so large that goodness  
rushes through.

I'm met full force.  
Lost.

Who knew  
that's what it would take—  
a flawless departure  
from the program.  
The surge leaves  
me clutching at tussocks  
lips in the dirt  
pressed against trees

blinking and straitened  
from unheralded  
contact with mother  
and sated and you.

*Poet's Note: I have deliberately used unusual syntax here to highlight the concepts/constructs mother, sated, and you, and to express fulfillment of these human longings (a sense of attachment with one's idea of mother, the satisfaction of physical and emotional longing, the sense of connection with another) through an unexpected encounter in the theater of life.*

Bio- Janine Lehane is a poet, artist, and horsewoman from Brisbane, Australia. She completed postgraduate study at The College of William and Mary, in Virginia, in 2006. Her poetry has been published in anthologies by Telling Our Stories Press (PA) 2012, and 2013 (along with her cover art, TOSP, 2013), *The Write Place At the Write Time* (Autumn/Winter, 2014), and *Hawaii Pacific Review* (December, 2014). She also co-edited a selection of writings by the eminent teacher and community organizer, Suzanne Radley Hiatt (Seabury Books, NY) (May, 2014).

## **Graphic Novel**

by Lew Caccia

Archie is making a choice, after sixty-eight years of dating, the ripples set forth—Moose runs for mayor, gasp. Jughead and Midge partner for joint government stimulus relief. Reggie faces trial: he didn't do it, really. You will have to follow Betty and Veronica yourself following the "I do's," then the attendant dreams, struggles, uncertainties, and enduring ties.

We may read the journal for breakfast, perhaps  
an intense biography for dinner. For dessert  
why not the graphic novel? Themes and styles  
for mature audiences. Vivid drawings on colorful  
pages rooted in the pensive state of human  
emotion. Decisions, consequences, outcomes;  
the effects and affects of cultural attitudes.  
Dark corners in safe places. Yet ongoing vitality.

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*, and *The Penwood Review*.

*Editor's Note: These poems are excerpts from Mr. Stein's collection Whispers in the Galleries: Ekphrastic and Other Poems which we featured in a book giveaway that aptly kicked off our Art & Soul themed season.*

### **The First Twitter Account**

by Lee Marc Stein

O, Klee, could you see  
how much cacophony  
there would be?

Your twittering birds, bandy-legged  
deformations of nature shackled to  
their perch, fight the machine as they  
poise to proclaim the pink glow of dawn.

One bird exclaims the twitter's full volume,  
the arrow in another's beak signifies shrillness,  
the third sags with lolling tongue,  
the fourth sighs the symphony has ended.

Twas brillig whimsy fights with  
corporate monstrosity for our aye.

Lab sciences gets sent up in nano-seconds.  
Absurdity could not be more simply drawn.

We see a portrait of the artist among philistines.  
Or watch Chaplin, in the gears of Modern Times,  
sidestep and (in Crane-speak) *to the final smirk*  
*dally the doom of that inevitable thumb.*

What is your music box playing—  
Berg, Webern, Schoenberg?  
Guns N' Roses, Megadeth, Judas Priest?  
The laughable laments of Donald Trump?

Twittering birds fused with machine  
flame our fears that when they tweet,  
they don't know what they tweet or why  
they tweet, they only know they tweet!

*After Paul Klee, The Twittering Machine*

Image Link: [http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object\\_id=37347](http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=37347)

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### **The Real Thing**

by Lee Marc Stein

Before the bard of Hartford declared  
*poetry is the supreme fiction,*  
Gauguin guiled us into believing  
his Tahiti was true.  
In his furnished studio  
in fin de siècle France,  
he painted in *Day of the Gods*  
the paradise of our dreams.

The quasi-Cardiff giant we see  
watching over all he based  
on photos of carved reliefs  
decorating a Buddhist temple.

Only on this make-believe day  
are working girls' sarongs  
so Ivory Snow, tones of  
the pan-pipe player so Rampal.

In the center, Gauguin portrays  
island girl as Eve before the fall,  
symmetrically flanked by naives  
acting birth and death.

Most real and everlasting is  
the kaleidoscope of reflections  
in the water, birth canal  
for a bevy of abstractionists.

*After Gauguin, Day of the Gods*

Image Link:

<http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/exhibitions/Impressionism/Gauguin>

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### **Party Time in Suburbia**

by Lee Marc Stein

Because he cannot post to Facebook,  
Renoir plies his oils to record this moment  
of joy and the eternal youth of his friends  
at lunch in Maison Fournaise today.

Gaze at this pre-Elaine's group: his girlfriend  
and her dog, a rich collector, Italian journalist,  
fellow painter, three actresses, ex-mayor of Saigon,  
writer, critic, owner's son and daughter.

He makes the scene work sans flashbulbs:  
Sunlight cuts through the opening  
on the balcony and caroms off the table cloth  
and shirts of the two men closest to us.

Having no Wii, he delights in games of the eye,  
one-upping Degas as he captures

the dance of the glance, guides us on  
a dazzling tour of flirtation around the painting.

Behind the winks is unblinking belief,  
beneath the pleasure is principle:  
Renoir's tableau trumpets achievement  
of the French Revolution's promise.

*After Renoir, The Luncheon of the Boating Party*

Image Link: <http://www.phillipscollection.org/collection/boating-party>

Bio- Lee Marc Stein retired from a career in direct marketing as a manager, agency executive, and independent consultant. On the client side he held positions with McGraw-Hill Information Systems, Business Week and Standard & Poor's. As an agency executive, his accounts included Chase, Hertz, American Express, IBM, Bristol-Myers, and US Airways, among others. His consulting clients were magazines, insurance companies, non-profits, and business marketers. Lee received the prestigious Silver Apple Award from the Direct Marketing Club of New York, and was elected to the Direct Marketing Association of Long Island's Hall of Fame. In addition to his published poetry, Lee has had short stories appear in *Bartleby Snopes*, *The Write Place At the Write Time*, *Cynic Online*, *nicollroad* and *Down in the Dirt*. He leads workshops at Stony Brook University's Lifelong Learning program on modern masters of the novel. He is an enthusiastic walker, photographer, white water rafter and kayaker. A poor golfer, he excels at creating excuses for not playing well. Lee resides in East Setauket with his wife Ann. They have four children, all living on Long Island, and eight grandchildren.

## **Country Singer 2**

by Richard L. Provencher

You must have been there  
when I was young and lived  
the songs you  
now sing—

about growing up sad  
and being picked last for  
a backyard team,  
a skinny lad with one

friend and a daddy who drank  
too much.

Your message is reality  
about long lost love captured  
by pleading in words,  
overcoming events that held  
you back—

same as I during childhood,  
not understanding tears  
weren't just for babies but also  
came from a child's  
broken heart.

Bio- Richard L. Provencher believes poetry is a global adventure in a land without borders. Everything is his canvas. His work appears in *Ottawa Arts Review*, *Paragon 111*, *Tower Poetry*, *The Foliate Oak*, *Parenting Express*, *In Touch*, and many others. Richard and his wife, live in Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada.

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### **Pillars**

by Steve Pollack

A pillar of cloud  
has become an Iron Dome  
and a pillar of fire  
now terrifies the night  
supersonic screams  
sleepless fright

Abraham, father of nations  
who defeated kings millennia past  
once washed the feet of angels  
argued for lives, righteous lives  
though he knew them not

Where are these leaders  
with the courage of soldiers  
and compassion of their people

will they ever find the wisdom of ancestors  
share the shade of olive trees?

Hope remains buried in caves  
trust hides in shadows, misplaced  
innocence lay sacrificed on false altars  
beating hearts turned to rocks

When will cousins  
grandchildren of Abraham  
cease man-made provocations  
chariots of mutual destruction  
seething hate, unrested?

Fragrant desert flowers  
open to persuading moonlight  
a midnight bloom, unexpected  
a new life born of old age

Surprising news  
shalom, salaam  
peace, the only real victory  
for their children's sake

Laughing once again  
at the wonders  
of the One they both know  
by different names

Bio- Steve Pollack, retired from a career in engineering construction and facilities management, was employed by numerous governmental and non-profit organizations including Fox Chase Cancer Center and Souderton Area School District. He has enjoyed writing ever since his story about a magical snowman first appeared in the Solis Cohen Elementary School journal. Over the years, he developed writing skills at more technical content. Only in the last 4 years has he most happily set his hand to the creative craft of poetry. Previously, his poems have been published in *Poetica Magazine* and *Copperfield Review*.

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### **The Recalled Prayer**

by Janice Canerdy

The funeral home was crowded that night.  
I signed the book, went through the line,  
spoke a few words of comfort, and sat in the corner—  
where I conversed quietly with old friends  
and acquaintances, some of whom I see  
only when someone dies. I found this realization  
vaguely unsettling.

Some filed by the casket crying—their faces contorted  
in raw grief. I heard their well-meant, in some cases  
awkward, condolences and saw many loving hugs.

I also overheard heard platitudes, glibly-spoken  
by those who perhaps came out of a sense of  
obligation—the ones who had looked frequently at their  
watches and glared impatiently at others who lingered  
with the family for more than a minute.

I thought of a prayer I had once whispered on a night  
when thoughts of death troubled me: "Lord, when my time  
comes, let me see the faces and hear the voices so I will  
know how much I'll be missed."

I looked at one more face, heard one more voice,  
and, just before leaving, prayed a new prayer: "Lord,  
can prayers be recalled? Please forgive me for praying  
amiss that night. You know what I mean. Amen"

As the door closed behind me, I heard a muffled voice  
say, "Wonder who'll get all that money."

Bio- Janice Canerdy is a retired high-school English teacher from Potts Camp, Mississippi. She enjoys the privilege of keeping her grandchildren while their parents work. Life in general, her grandchildren, and her walk with God inspire her to write. One of her proudest moments as a young teenager was when her freshman English teacher (also her third-grade teacher) presented her with a laminated copy of a poem she had written six years before at age 10. She stays busy with a variety of activities at home and church.





and what was the occasion for the book:  
Jo Anne's birthday? graduation?

Or no special occasion other than love?

Bio- Michael Ceraolo is a 56-year-old retired firefighter/paramedic and active poet who has had one full-length book (*Euclid Creek*, from Deep Cleveland Press) published, and has another full-length book forthcoming this year (*Euclid Creek Book Two*, from unbound content press).

### **Fragmented**

*Inspired by Picasso's Weeping Woman*

by Cheryl Sommese

She wept for many reasons,  
ones that made sorrow splatter  
like extra virgin olive oil  
sizzling  
in a scratched Teflon pan.  
Ones that released regret floods,  
causing them to surge  
like Ebro River rapids poised to plunge her over  
the edge.

But she sculpted the conundrum—  
keeping overall composed,  
trying to eye others' needs while neglecting  
her own  
as if attending to them would be  
as futile as scrubbing  
rojo wine out of a  
snow-white carpet.  
Each angle of her tidy reflection  
shaping  
the fragmented imbalance:  
the idiocy of an overextending nature—  
sting of disregard.

But that was before and  
now is here  
so maybe  
once the tears  
dry,  
she'll reassemble her face and try  
a new way.

Image Link: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/picasso-weeping-woman-t05010>

Bio- Cheryl Sommese is a freelance writer. Her past contract work includes ghost blogs, multi-topic articles, authoritative reports, and medical posts. Additionally, she writes poetry, short stories, and nonfiction: a number of her creative pieces have been included in print and online publications.

Ms. Sommese has also completed a screenplay based on her immigrant grandparents' lives as they successfully assimilate into 20th century America and come to confront an unscrupulous, life-changing family member. The writer's dream is to bring their fascinating story to life.

Ms. Sommese lives in New Hampshire with her husband and two dogs.

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