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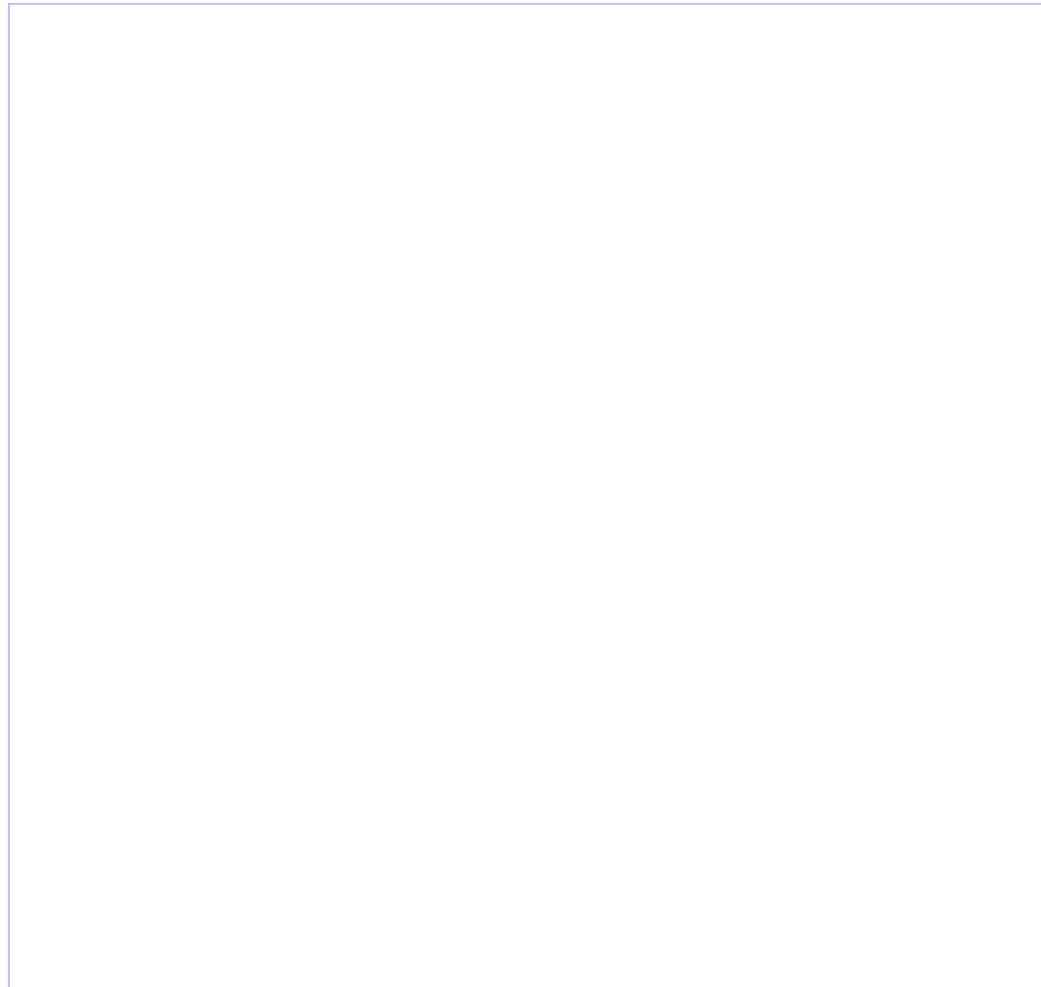
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"Touch of Fall" by Christopher Woods; <http://christopherwoods.zenfolio.com/>

My Middle Name is Waiting

by April Salzano

for life to slide into the tomorrow that will
breathe me alive. For the cord to be cut,
first breath to fill the bags of my new lungs.

for Prince Charming to kiss me awake,
erase the curse of silent slumber
during which no one knew I was dreaming,
one hundred loud, banging mares of night
riding into my head.

for it to get better, my prince having turned
not into toad, but a black devil
in whose shadow I walked not like a foot,
but a bright prism of dancing light, eclipsed
not once, but more than twice.

for a god worthy of my offering,
the sacrifice of my two children, fat
on my milk, heavy as burdens I carry alone.

for a house without walls that I cannot tear
down if I choose. Open-concept, free-range
residence where I alone am queen.
Not a castle, but a room of my own.

for death to come riding in a carriage,
its wheels made of bone, to take me
to the only place without the stubborn,
leaking umbrella of time.

Bio- April Salzano teaches college writing in Pennsylvania where she lives with her husband and two sons. She recently finished her first collection of poetry, for which she is seeking a publisher and is working on a memoir on raising a child with autism. Her work has appeared in journals such as *Poetry Salzburg*, *Convergence*, *Ascent Aspirations*, *The Camel Saloon*, *Centrifugal Eye*, *Deadsnakes*, *Montucky Review*, *The Write Place At the Write Time*, *Visceral Uterus*, *Salome*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Writing Tomorrow* and *Rattle*. The author also serves as co-editor at Kind of a Hurricane Press.

Walls Open to Interpretation

by John Grey

The hospital walls are white
as sketch paper,
invite the kid in me
to scribble the most abstract of childhoods
from varnished floor to web-less ceiling,
for a bedridden adult to interpret.

How about a three-sided house,
a family of sour-mouthed stick people,
a grinning sun, puffy clouds,
an airplane flying on its side.
When the doctor asks me,
where does it hurt,
this would save me the bother of speaking.

Instead, I point to my brow,
mutter "pounding headache."
And not, "Broken home
but the sky held promise."

Scenes from a Nursing Home

by John Grey

With every step she takes,
a memory comes loose.
flutters to the floor.
She has to bend,
pick them up,
carry them in her hands,
not her head.

And steps aren't
all that easy,
now her mind deals loosely

with her feet.
And even bending
is just knees
going where the pain leads them.

Faces and places,
incidents and feelings,
all in the palms,
can be hugged into anybody.

The bender, the slow stepper,
the hugger...
none answer to her name.

Bio- John Grey is an Australian born poet. Recently published in *International Poetry Review*, *Sanskrit* and the science fiction anthology, *Futuredaze* with work upcoming in *Clackamas Literary Review*, *New Orphic Review* and *Thema*.

Saturday Morning Live

by Lee Marc Stein

I sit at the discolored counter
of Port Jeff Station Coffee Shop
eating my Swiss cheese omelet.

The twentyish waitress, pictured
wearing an "Unstoppable Train" tee,
flashes smiles as quick as her feet,
carrot-colored pony tail swishing
half a beat slower than her hands move.

Other servers who lumber more
crisscross with patrons and each other
but never come close to crashing.
The woman topping off coffee parks her carafe
and walks to greet her family at the door.

Standing at the grill, the bald old man
with white shirt and black-and-white

checked pants erects a wall of home fries
at the back edge as he concocts a mélange
of omelets, pancakes, and sunnysides up.

Across the counter the dishwasher
asterisked with glittery gold cross
looks up to grab another stack of dirty plates.

To my left, a husband and wife in their late forties
sit with their adopted daughter of ten.
The faded booths hold seedy toothless men,
older women dressed to fill, young Latino families,
middle-aged readers of tabloids, Asian students—
the world minus one-percenters.

Only the tchotchke rack hung adjacent to
the old fashioned register doesn't move.
The ringing up of my check brings an epiphany:
Hopper's painting *Nighthawks* stops life;
this eatery embodies it.

Bio- Lee Marc Stein is a retired marketing consultant living in East Setauket, Long Island. His poems have been published in *River Poets Journal*, *Still Crazy*, *Miller's Pond Poetry*, *Slow Trains Journal*, *The Write Room*, *Blue Lake Review*, *Blue & Yellow Dog*, *Blast Furnace* and *Message in a Bottle*. He has published short stories in *Bartleby Snopes*, *Cynic Online* and *Down in the Dirt*. Lee is finishing a chapbook of ekphrastic poems. He leads workshops at Stony Brook University's Lifelong Learning program on modern masters of the novel.

The Road to Lapai

by D. M. Aderibigbe

The rain challenges my temperamental emotion,
Dark thoughts seating in every breadth of the bus.

The driver's face is drenched with alcohol,
He hides clarity with a face-cap.

The journey is for many lives, for redemption,
I'm cash-less where choice is the legal tender.

The cock crows into the ears of earnest,
We properly face what we seek.
The road is dead, the sky is boisterous.

Distance shuts the sky's mouth, as a baby's mouth is kept
quiet with a cane.
Silence drops globs of fear in our hearts,
The birds spice our fear with their chirps.

The succeeding minutes bring calmness,
Crookedness takes to the road,
Revivifies our dying anxiety.
The driver spills anger into the brouhaha with
His reckless handling of our lives.

Remonstrations fill up the bus, as an aroma
Takes over the kitchen,
Like the military sacks the government through a
Coup d'etat.

The driver leaves many of his queries unanswered.
Curses are stored in his loud quietness like
Liquid is packaged with bottle.

He continues till the end begins,
We alight, unsatisfied, satisfied.

Colorless Sunday

by D. M. Aderibigbe

Tepid air encircles the morning,
The bells of the Tower of God ring in my heart.
I would go, I wouldn't go.
Exigency moves all over the ravenous

Wall of my stomach,
A mountain of starch, a stream of protein.

I actively go sedated,
Nature grows older on the wall of my room
where it's hung, like a shirt on a protruding door-nail.
I stay in bed missing its movement.

The night strolls into my dormancy, as a
Man walks royally into his house.
It sings its black lullaby to lure me into its grip,
Once again!
The rest of the night is washed off by sleep, like
A wet ground becomes brut, when in
collision with the sun.

The untouched sky is full of regrets,
of guilt, of wasted time.

I rise up from the bed, like an uncurled curled iron,
Wishing I could be a day younger,
To put the wrongs on the right.

New Year's Resolution

by D. M. Aderibigbe

The wiry man, who lives beside
my older sister's house calls me

To reel out the contents of his heart
On a slate of truth. The year is new,

And so everything should be, even
Though he gets older as the year

Gets newer. This year, he means

Next year, he's giving up drinking

For adoption, same goes for
Philandering, and laying-about.

What about this? I say, pointing at
A cloud of gray smoke, extruding

From his mouth, like that of a
Volcanic rock. His lips are a

Black rubber ring. He looks at me,
And laughs, I know what you're

Thinking son, I'm not an incorrigible
Smoker, but if I gave up smoking for

Adoption, I would be lonely, you know,
The man said.

Bio- Born in 1989 in Lagos. D.M Aderibigbe is a Nigerian undergraduate, currently studying History and Strategic Studies at the University of Lagos. His work appears in numerous journals including *Berfrois*, *Canary*, *Poetry Kanto*, *Rampike*, *Anomalous*, *B O D Y* and elsewhere. Also in a couple of anthologies, including the Kind of a Hurricane Press Best of 2012 Anthology: *Storm Cycle*.

After Long Absence

by Beate Sigriddaughter

You were so many times dear
a brook through my silence you
were the first rose in summer
in my wilderness and once
a willow branch that touched my cheek

tonight I saw you
it was difficult to speak
your hands were lovely still your eyes
were many shades of restlessness and
I had never yet missed you so much
now where can I turn with my desire?

how can I comfort you?
we saw a white shape in the sand she rose
and was a dove who had been sleeping
after you left you became the river
again I stood on the great bridge alone
and with all the fragments you have been
is it really a wonder that I cried
about the heaviness of your completion?

The Wanderers

by Beate Sigriddaughter

Do you remember scenes we passed
on roads we never traveled?
I meant to wear two skirts and have you
paint me as a gypsy.

I remember the poppy fields I wasn't
born to see. Your father's wagon
broke across the hill at dawn:
poppies, orange, and sun.

I remember songs I promised and never
had time to write. They are growing,
Eurydice. Soon they will fall into rhythm
or cliffs lined with agave.

I will not pray that we meet again:
Those roads are already rolling. But I hope
and pray down peace all night,
for you, beloved, for me.

And as the sun's dust awakens to dance,
peace comes, no matter what road I lie on.

Bio- Beate Sigriddaughter, www.sigriddaughter.com, is in the process of moving to Silver City, New Mexico. Her work has received three Pushcart Prize nominations. She has also

established the Glass Woman Prize to honor passionate women's voices. Currently she is working on a novel called *Tango*.

Amen

by Gale Acuff

I say my prayers every night but
nothing happens. Isn't it supposed to?
I hope that when I ask God to bless my
dog and parents He actually does
but then again I'm not really sure though
the next morning they're still alive and
so am I. I don't even pray for *things*
but for something better—lately it's been
that Miss Hooker, my Sunday School teacher,
will fall in love with me even though she's
25 to my 10 and out of reach
by fifteen years and numbers being what
they are, whatever they are, she'll always
be that far ahead and I'll be that far

behind. What I need is a miracle
so I pray for one but remind God that
if He can't or won't come through then I'll be
happy to settle for marrying her,
Miss Hooker I mean, when I'm 18 to
her 33, which will give us a few
good years together anyway before
she starts looking like my mother and not
my wife. Sure, she'll die long before I do
unless I go accidentally and
not really naturally, and leave me

lonely then, but I'm pretty lonely now
and anyway by then I'll be able
to marry someone else, I mean if I
ever get over the funeral and
Miss Hooker in her coffin—it will be

a sweet one—the lid snapped on or is it
nailed, hammered like those nails through Jesus' hands
or was it His wrists, and settled into
the ground, where I guess we all come from, or
is that Heaven, at least for our souls? Not

enough information—that's another
reason I pray like the devil at night,
to understand why I was ever born
and what I'm expected to do and why
after the first two I'm supposed to die
and, I guess, like it. I think I could be
a better God than God is—of course, that
might get me sent to Hell but it's mighty
strange to be alive, it would make more sense
never to have been born. Then I'd relax.

Bio- Gale Acuff, PhD has had poetry published in *Ascent*, *Ohio Journal*, *Descant*, *Adirondack Review*, *Concho River Review*, *Worcester Review*, *Maryland Poetry Review*, *Florida Review*, *The South Carolina Review*, *Arkansas Review*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Poem*, *South Dakota Review*, *Santa Barbara Review*, *Sequential Art Narrative in Education*, and many other journals. Dr. Acuff has authored three books of poetry: *Buffalo Nickel* (BrickHouse Press, 2004), *The Weight of the World* (BrickHouse, 2006), and *The Story of My Lives* (BrickHouse, 2008) as well as having taught university English in the US, China, and the Palestinian West Bank.

Wonderbird

by Thomas Piekarski

Grappling with the first words of the universe
the uninitiated Wonderbird sheds his feathers,
falls like Icarus, tumbling head over heels,
with no rabbit hole escape—summersaults, dazzled
as he encounters on his woebegone journey a dense
viridian jungle that teems with prehistoric animals.

So goes the commencement of a transformation
that proceeds on cue substantially devoid of motion

as though a solid electrified wall has been built
between Wonderbird and his ultimate destination.

Dejectedly mired in the pit of sabertooths that is
abject loneliness, solitary like an emperor without
a home, Wonderbird is at a loss to describe anything,
absolutely speechless. Then he slouches, slumps, slides,
takes a ride all the way down the Big Dipper's handle.

Slipping off the tail end of the handle, he becomes
weightless, lost in unfamiliar open space. But then
the purple Wordbird swoops in from her star-studded
plateau, chirps wildly, grasps him in her beak, makes
a break for high heaven, kingdom come and beyond.

Bio- Thomas Piekarski is a former editor of the *California State Poetry Quarterly*. His theater and restaurant reviews have been published in various newspapers, with poetry and interviews appearing in numerous national journals, among them *Portland Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *Kestrel*, *Scarlet Literary Magazine*, *Cream City Review*, *Nimrod*, *Penny Ante Feud*, *New Plains Review*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *The Muse-an International Journal of Poetry*, and *Clockhouse Review*. He has published a travel guide, *Best Choices In Northern California*, and *Time Lines*, a book of poems. He lives in Marina, California.

Sunrise

by Frank J. Hopkins

Smoke forms from the faces of memory
broken hands with lazy fingers feed me
yesterday's special.
I choke on something and then recall
my abuse of words and the consequences
of the same.
They took away the mirrors so I could not
see myself,
they took down the curtains and unplugged
the light..
They left me a table and an awfully small candle,
they gave me two matches, a long puzzle and
all the time they could spare.

Bruises

by Frank J. Hopkins

The light from outside is dimmed,
the room cold but she has been colder,
the room empty but she has been
emptier.

She has perished many times become
decayed, strained, rooted yet resistant.
She measures her life in bruises—from the
first given by her mother on sun-filled
spring days amid the unfurling of branch
and springing grass.

Delayed and imprecise but impeccable;
under the assault of fist, of open palm,
of belt and boot-strap.

With nothing on her tongue but appetite and
useless entreaty
boxed in amidst a swirl of winds demanding
payment...

She let fall her eye-lids spider veined and barren
holding on as best she could to shaky tidings
from unsure voices swollen within her memory
holding fragments...the remains of better times.

Bio- Frank J. Hopkins is an NYC writer and poet born and bred. He writes a column for *BrooWaha- An Edge In My Voice* and is currently working on the final draft of *Lies...Damnation and Other Tales Of Love*.

Between Joy

by Darren C. Demaree

By leaning there,
shoveled to express
the white noise

of almost happy
again, shallow
to the shore, wet

ankle(d), torso relieved
of such alien forces,
like steady wind,

violent only
to the light weight
of waiting for joy.

Bio- Darren C. Demaree's poems have appeared, or are scheduled to appear in numerous magazines/journals, including *Wild Violet*, *The South Carolina Review*, *Meridian*, *The Louisville Review*, *Cottonwood*, *The Tribeca Poetry Review* and *Whiskey Island*. He is the author of *As We Refer To Our Bodies* (2013) and *Not For Art Nor Prayer* (2014); both are due out from 8th House Publishing House. He is also the recipient of two Pushcart Prize nominations.

Want, Desire, Dream, Crave

by Michelle Kennedy

You are my lover
Yes, you are my beloved
and what you whisper
into my butterfly hair
echoes the songs
of eternity
that which the moss
sings to the pine tree
The notes which the Palomino
passionately shouts
to the fields of green grass
The visceral longing

and pull of the soul
recognizing another

I want to devour you
like a ravenous coyote
under the desert sun
Lick your pulse points
brimming with life
taste the salty sweetness
of your lips

I want to gently play
upon your eyelashes
dance upon your throat
like a feather
falling from the sky
lay my hand upon
your sacred heart
and feel the steady beating
of your soul

I dream of lying with you
by the stream
in unchartered territory
gaze at the stars
feel the earth below us
spinning, spinning

Yes, you are my beloved
You are my lover
and what you whisper
into my butterfly hair
echoes the songs
of eternity
I am mindful—
In your arms
I crave to be

Bio- Michelle Kennedy's passion is writing. She has had many pieces published (poetry and short stories) and is presently seeking publication for a collection of her poetry. She also has a novel-in-progress.

Untitled

by Ira Melnick

We sink together
You and I
Like the bottom layer of ice cubes
In a glass of tea

We melt together
As the cold sinks
And the heat rises

We come from the same freezer
We've lived side by side in the apartments of the tray
The old kind
The aluminum kind
The one with the lever

We are old fashioned that way
We do not ask for much

How lucky we have been
Chosen from the same swirl of time

Bio- Ira Melnick is a poet from Vermont where he lives with his wife Mary, an artist in her own right, who has been composing and performing as a pianist for most of her life. Ira's poems range widely in scope, style and length. He does not title his poetry so as not to influence the reader. He has been an avid collector of music for over forty years (notes are letters, words are chords, compositions are poems). It is with the encouragement of Mary that Ira has begun his foray into the world of submitting his works for publication.

Company Man

by Denise Bouchard

A
Brilliant

Career
Dashed
Even
Friends
Go
Hiding
Integrity
Job
Knowledge
Loyalty
Mean
Nothing
Over
Pay cuts
Quarterly
Returns
Spurning
Trustworthiness for
Un-American
Values
With
Xeroxed
Younger
Zealots

See Bio for Denise Bouchard on our About Us page

Writing Class Hell

by Beth McKim

Thought flickers in the brain like a tiny
candle flame, circulates, accelerates, ignites
an idea seeking oxygen and creative flight.

If lucky, this energy bursts into external fire,
emblazons paper with furious white heat.
The writer's internal cauldron feeds the sparks,

burns through defenses,
erupts volcanic size,
flows between pen and draft.

Sizzling words alive to scald minds,
the work glows with inflamed intent.
The author waits to light the universe with brilliance,

finally rises, reads the words aloud to ears in the room.
Cool, blank stares meet the hot formation
now leaking into corners among puzzled frowns.

Like a burning bush extinguished by cold water,
the little inferno dies,
brainstorm now a sputter among crumbled ashes.

Bio- Beth McKim lives and writes in Bellaire, Texas. She enjoys spending time with her husband and their young grandchildren. They all get a kick out of playing with Lucy, Beth's beloved Labradoodle. Beth also swims, acts, and studies Spanish. In addition to this wonderful publication, Beth's works have also appeared in the *Birmingham Arts Journal*, *Mayo Review*, *Front Porch Review*, *Della Donna* and others.

The News

by Vince Corvaia

The first bulletins
were hazy
and almost amusing.

Someone shot a teacher
in the foot
in Newtown, Connecticut.

By day's end,
I had turned off the news
forever.

No more evening anchors,
no more round table pundits,
no more late night monologues.

I found myself
watching the Golf Channel.
I don't play golf.

But every afternoon
the soft reassuring voices,
the green of the vast grass.

Eventually
even that was spoiled.
The long slow walks

funeral processions,
sand traps
playgrounds at recess,

the round holes in the earth
small graves
marked with flags of honor.

I unplugged my television
and turned it to the wall.
I read the stories of Malamud,

the poems of Szyborska,
without relief.
When I walked

to the grocery store at noon
I passed schoolchildren
any one of whom

might not make it
back to class.
Let's face it,

the streets were full
of young white males
(the predominant demographic)

any one of whom
might have just left his mother
dead in her bedroom

and with nothing left to live for
would blast out the glass security door
of an elementary school.

I knew I'd never
make it home.
I crumpled under a bus bench,

the world too fraught
with violence for my heart to move,
until paramedics

checked my vitals,
jiggled me into the ambulance,
sang the siren up State Street.

Finally, I had become
the last thing I ever wanted to be
in my neighborhood—

the news.

Rachel Weeping

by Vince Corvaia

Not one child, not two,
but many,

hundreds, in fact,
all boys,

all butchered
by order of King Herod.

It's not dwelt upon
in Sunday school

or during the Christmas sermon
or given more than a sentence

in the second chapter of Matthew.
Perhaps it's unthinkable.

But Jerusalem is what I thought of
when I heard about

the twenty children of Newtown.
Eternity for half of them

was the time it took
a stranger to reload.

Twenty small coffins,
twenty large funerals.

How did Jerusalem
ever begin to mourn?

Sometimes at night
in my sleeplessness

the two events come together,
eternal dusty streets

lined with hundreds
and hundreds of teddy bears,

and a toga-clad news anchor
rendered speechless,

nothing but dead air
broadcast through the gaping town.

Requiem

by Vince Corvaia

I kissed my mother
in a pool of blood.
Goodbye, goodbye.

Picked up my bag
and went to school.
Goodbye, goodbye.

Blasted my way
through the security door.
Goodbye, goodbye.

Watched the little faces
as I stopped to reload.
Goodbye, goodbye.

The Lord never did me
no favors, see.
Goodbye, goodbye.

Counting twenty-seven,
here's the death of me.
Goodbye, goodbye.

Bio- Vince Corvaia holds an MFA in creative writing from Wichita State University. He has more than 150 poems published in journals nationwide including *Intro*, *Cimarron Review*, *The Write Place At the Write Time* and *Kansas Quarterly*, and has won poetry prizes from *Mikrokosmos* and *Kansas Quarterly*. He has taught writing at Kansas State University, Wichita State University, Friends University, and Kansas Newman College.

Frosted Dreams

In memory of my father

by Máire Morrissey-Cummins

Easterly winds drive sleet showers,
the gray shroud of January deepens.
Frozen snow cradled
in barren branches,
roads and paths lost
under a quilt of white,
the village,
lifeless.

I picture a pale sun,
wish I could cradle it,
staving off these icy days
of winter.

Nights nip,
snap at wrists and ankles
numbing pallid flesh.
I burrow under the duvet,
shiver myself warm
with images of spring.
I color the darkness
with sun-filled daffodils,
and scent them with fountains of
glassy green,

and in my dreams
I come to you,
frosted bluebells
in my hands.

Winter Daybreak

by Máire Morrissey-Cummins

Fog cloaks the dawn
as I stroll the seafront.

Hardly a ripple on the water,
waves gentle into the cove.
Gulls nestle on the rocks
voiceless in the dim-light,
feathers fanned like a stack of cards.

Leaves jeweled in dew
rustle a lament to winter.
Fading dahlias
tilt their worn faces
to the pale rising sun
as a robin warbles
the day in.

Bio- Máire is Irish but has lived throughout Europe for many years in Holland and Germany mainly and presently lives between Ireland and Germany. After years of working in the Financial Sector, she found the joy of art and poetry and loves getting lost in words and paint. She is a published haiku writer and has had a number of poems published in *Every Day Poets*, *Your Daily Poem*, Poetry Anthologies and other e-zines. She has been married 32 years and has two adult children.

Let Her Sleep

by Ginger Peters

No one knows what goes on in a troubled mind—
Let her sleep, let her sleep.
Only sleep gives her peace from the dungeon she is trapped in.
Awakened, she sees only a dank, dark place,
The dungeon offers no happiness, only fear.
Her fists tightly clench—her mind has crossed a delicate line—
Her jaw is tight and pointed
Her words begin to scream.
It doesn't matter that the words make no sense,
She could kill.
She blurts out untruths and hurts and threatens to
blow her brains out.
Once in a while, the sun comes through the cracks in the dungeon wall,
She might be stable a minute, an hour, or perhaps a day.

No one knows what goes on in a troubled mind—
Let her sleep, let her sleep.

I Float

by Ginger Peters

Death came to me today, I'm quite sure.
I only remember the word pain,
then I started to float.
I hovered over myself—my body—
I watched loved ones cry,
as I ascended into a different plane.
I struggle to go back—to hug my grieving mother,
but I can't.
I want to touch my husband and give him peace,
but I can't.
I want to hold my children, my father, my brother,
but I can't.
It's like a strong wind here. I move toward familiar people and places,
but the fierce turbulence pushes me back to my new domain.
I'm not hungry—yet I remember food.
I'm not thirsty—yet I remember water.
I'm not alone—there are so many here with me.
Like shells on a sandy beach, so many
wandering, drifting, just floating.
I feel less and less of the world I once knew.
My mind is occupied by nothing really.
I notice smaller souls—once children I think,
but there is no laughter, no weeping either.
Perhaps a neutrality of worlds...
I float, I float.

Mysteries of the Arroyo

by Ginger Peters

Along the winding arroyo I walk and watch.
 I wonder if anything is watching me.
 The trees are alive, but they do not speak.
 I sense they know I am here.
 The proud apache plume with feathers raised high,
 perhaps waving in the breeze, perhaps waving at me...
 The ravens dive low toward the ground,
 Searching for nourishment...
 I hope they acknowledge my existence.
 Coyotes may be eyeing me from afar—
 Do they fear me or are they familiar with the scent of my breed?
 A mountain lion lurking in the shadows of the trees or cliffs...
 Inquisitive as to why I spend such time meditating in their realm.
 I'm told rocks have no heart or soul as they sit in silence.
 I notice their shapes and colors.
 I imagine the wondrous stories they could tell
 Of olden days and contemporary ways.
 Tomorrow I will explore yet again,
 and await further mysteries of the arroyo.

Bio- Ginger Peters is a freelance writer living in Santa Fe, NM. She has sold fiction, nonfiction, and poetry over the past few years to various journals and magazines. Her most recent sales include: "Grips of Nature" to *Shemom Poetry Journal*; "See One of These in Me" to *Westward Quarterly*; "Alive Now", "He" and "Cry for the Earth" to *The Poet's Pen*; "Winter is Here" to *Write On Poetry Journal*; "Rise Early Old Woman" to *Ginosko Literary Journal*; and "Sewn to Life" to *Dialogue Magazine*.

Sonnet

by Rehan Qayoom

And you too, Muse! Have known the pangs of Love
 Of its not happening or happening
 How lustily it strikes from up above
 Betimes cajoling, touching, flattering
 O yes you've seen the warning signs, and yet
 Being cruel to yourself, unmindful oft
 Have loved alas to be consumed by it
 And lost your loved one and have felt bereft

As now I find myself —Your Poet—Yours
 Set upon argosies of your desire
 To love (whatever it may mean) the years
 Of all my life, My sweet Muse: love like fire
 Burns in me now and will consume me too
 One day and prove my Love...That it was true

Bio- Rehan Qayoom is a poet, editor and translator educated at Birkbeck College, University of London. He has been featured in numerous literary publications and performed his work at international venues. He is the author of *Prose 1997 - 2008* (2009), *After Parveen Shakir* and *About Time* (2011): a collection of his English poetry. He is the editor of the prose and poetry of Morney Wilson, published as *Martyr Doll, Remains and The Recordings* (2011).

Cougar

by Erren Geraud Kelly

she looks better at 45
 then she did at 18
 thanks to botox
 her body was sculptured by
 pilates
 a divorce changed her philosophy
 on love
 now, it's get love any way you
 can
 she never meant to be the
 aggressor
 she just took what she wanted

he was in her african american
 college literature course

she went back to college
 after sitting out for 20 years
 he wanted to brush up on
 black writers
 she only took it because it was

required
but she never found the books
boring
she realized after the divorce
there was no future in being a trophy
they sat in the tiger lair cafeteria
and quizzed each other on black writers
she liked richard wright
he was surprised
she liked amiri baraka
but she was never a typical white woman
she told him baraka's eyes always had
a look of determination
in them
she ignored the gossip
of young girls
a few tables away

"ni##er lover"

"he's old enough to be her son..."

"maybe she buys him dinner..."

he admires her perfect penmanship
the flowing letters and loops are
definitely feminine
she always gives him a handwritten
note before class

"females always write better than men,"
he told her

she consciously and unconsciously
touches his shoulder
her hands, perpetually soft from
ivory soap and body lotion

he attempts to ask her out
to study again

but she accepts before
he finishes his sentence
there's nothing wrong with people
using each other
it's when you abuse each other
that's when it gets dangerous

maybe next time, it'll be dinner

Bio- Erren Geraud Kelly has been writing for 25 years and has been published in over 80 publications (both in print and online) such as *Hiram Poetry Review*, *Mudfish* and *Poetry Magazine*. His work has also been featured in anthologies, including *Fertile Ground* and *Beyond The Frontier*. He is the author of the chapbook, *Disturbing The Peace* (Night Ballet Press).

The Interview

by Kim Suttell

The dead soldier is a line in a newspaper,
the newspaper crimped to a perianth
by the father's fist.

The father holds on,
left behind and as dangerous as percale,
easily torn and always a flap

from dreams that run on strangled legs.
The father blinks his fury when he's roused
by a slippered toe, his wooly face askance.

With not a question, with the offer
of a glass of water, his shadows un-pall.
His slump becomes the breath of patience,

his snarl and simper, eloquence.
Death doesn't ennoble us
but does, by indignity it does,

by gut and bellow, we buttress law.
Law does not grieve,
Law looks down and struggles to understand.

The Loneliest Recrimination

by Kim Suttell

Long lonely and used
Still let down
By averted eyes of the quick good-bye.

The battered and certain
It's the very last time—
That disappointment when the fist falls again.

The might-be promise
Of a wayward father
To willful young a stunting blow.

Wronged sure, but wrong too.
Dashed expectation,
Conned belief that it could happen.

Chagrin isn't the half of it.
Bruising hurt, a swipe that buckles
The knees of need, how we stand.

That I allowed it!
The stain of resentment,
And the washing want of trust.

Bio- Kim Suttell lives in New York City. She has been a teacher and a Peace Corps volunteer and is now an avid creator of spreadsheets by necessity and personal chapbooks by choice. She has been published in *Right Hand Pointing*, *Penny Ante Feud* and, upcoming, in *The Cortland Review*.

Conflicted

by Cheryl Sommesse

I go there weekly as if drawn by
a potion's spell.
This place
cloaked with contradiction
like a spotless maiden commanding repute
yet bargaining her body as the lamplight dulls.
Boasting images of all that is heavenly
yet committing
iniquity more regularly
than followers like me choose to see.
Grasping neither love
kindness
nor humility
at its lavish headquarters
but instead hubris,
adoration of power,
and luxury.
Not Christ's face
at least not the humble Savior I know.

Nonetheless—
recognizing virtue in scattered outposts,
noble men and women emptying their time
integrity
and talents
so chalices may overflow with love:
human angels affording the rest of us
a glimpse at Heaven.
But even these righteous sorts seem subject to
skewed strategies and
flawed dictates.

Causing me to wonder what draws me to a place
stinking of deception
yet leaving apologists
impervious to the smell.
Ready to sacrifice the most innocent of innocent

for organizational sovereignty
instead of holding the real transgressors
to task.
Casting protective shields over hierarchical heads
as if the notion of infallibility
absolves accountability.

Perhaps one day I will be led to another assemblage,
one where truth-seekers
are not nailed to a metaphorical cross
and institutional offenses can never be
exempt.
But for now
a wafer embodying truth amidst a legacy of lies
beckons my return.

Bio- Cheryl Sommese is a freelance writer specializing in ghost blogs, newsletter pieces, and multi-topic articles. Her creative endeavors include short stories, essays, and poetry. Several of her literary works have been included in print periodicals and online publications. She considers poetry to be a particular passion and opened for the emerging poet, Muad Saleh, in two spoken word events in Manchester, NH, and New York City. She has a BA in Communications and an MA in Liberal Studies with a focus on political studies and writing from the University of New Hampshire. Ms. Sommese lives in Londonderry, NH, with her husband and two dogs.

Unfinished Gems

by Tim Reed

Nope, no pearls in this one...
no dazzling brilliance hidden
within this ragged shell,
no pearls of wisdom
to take one's breath away...
nor their pain or struggles.
Just unfinished gems...
still rough around the edges.
Works in progress as these
jagged little sources of irritation
lose their edginess.

Slowly eroded and worn away
by the abrasive sands of time...
the turbulent winds of change.
Polished smoother and smoother yet
by the grittiness of life—and choices,
both right and wrong, until
just enough heat and pressure
begin to reveal the sparkling beauty
that has always been encrusted within
these...unfinished gems.

Bio- Tim started exploring his poetic gift in 1990. This journey of discovery led him to take a long and hard look at, himself, his life and his goals and aspirations for life. While looking at these things, he embraced the gift of poetry within him as an outlet for expression, explosion, and healing. Tim draws on the vast education he has earned as a “student” of life experience! In his words, “When things touch me or move me in some way... I write, my writing and life are like a path unfolding before me that’s not mine to question, only to follow. I have found that life is all about perception and often write about my interpretation of ordinary situations that we all experience.” Tim regularly attends several of the poetry venues in Massachusetts and credits much of his growth as a poet to his fellow poets.

Mourning

by Mitchell Krochmalnik Grabois

An urban gypsy mourns the loss of her goose
far more trustworthy
than her husband
more caring, more gentle

The gypsy woman mourns her goose
It wore a gray tuxedo
never drank
never had black-outs
never beat her

The gypsy mourns her loss
The goose never berated her
He laughed with her at sunrise

and at dusk
oversaw the ducks

but didn't pursue them
when they hid under the overturned boat
to lay their eggs

Bio- Mitchell Krochmalnik Grabois was born in the Bronx and now splits his time between Denver and a one-hundred-and-twenty-year-old, one room schoolhouse in Riverton Township, Michigan. His short fiction and poems have appeared in hundreds of literary magazines in the U.S. and internationally. He has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize, most recently for his story "Purple Heart" published in *The Examined Life* in 2012, and for his poem, "Birds," published in *The Blue Hour*, 2013. Grabois's novel, *Two-Headed Dog*, is available for all e-readers for 99 cents via Kindle, Nook, and Amazon for the print edition.

Euclid Beach Park

by Michael Ceraolo

Born Saturday June 22, 1895
(a few months before my maternal grandfather)
in what was then a small village
not yet a part of the city

Died Sunday September 28, 1969
(a few months after that same grandfather)
having become a part of the city
and seen the city
(and some of its ills)
grow beyond the park

I remember Democratic Party steer roasts
and meeting Kennedy and Johnson
when I was a small boy

I remember grotesque dolls
with recorded cackling inside them

I remember rides with names like
Thriller,

Flying Turns,
Flying Scooters,
Rocket Cars,
Over the Falls,
and Laff in the Dark

I remember arcade games and miniature golf

I remember a soft ice cream called the Frozen Whip

One would have to be around my age
(fifty-five in 2013)
or older
to have significant memories of the park,
while
those a few years younger might have
some vague recollections of the park,
and
two complete generations' only memory
is the EUCLID BEACH PARK sign
(covered with fake stone since the 1920s)
that still remains on the site
and was even repaired in 2007
after it had been hit by a car

And
some my age and older have different memories:
of being allowed in the park
only on certain days,
of being told
"no sitting,
no talking,
no mixing of any kind"
and being escorted,
sometimes violently,
from the park
when they dared to protest such treatment
(such demonstrations always called 'riots'
by the complicit media)

The site today contains highrise and other apartments,
restaurants and stores,
a nursing home,
a park on the lakefront
(swim at your own risk,
for a number of reasons),
a trailer park
(constructed during the park's lifetime
on what had been the park's campgrounds;
when the park closed,
the owners
were overpraised for not evicting
the residents of the trailer park
for a fruitless expansion:
the rents from that trailer park
were the only source of profits
the last several years of the park's life)

The afterlife of the attractions:
some scrapped,
some scavenged for souvenirs,
some cannibalized for parts,
some sold to other amusement parks
where they had afterlives of varying duration,
some now residing in historical societies and museums,
some available for rent
And I can say
the Rocket Car is the ultimate convertible-----

Bio- Michael Ceraolo is a 54-year old civil servant/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.

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