



Cathexis Northwest Press

Nov – Dec 2024

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All the Young Blonde Ghosts

By: Hilary King

I refuse him visitation now.
He can stay in the past,
my father,
with Dean, Cobain, Plath,

all the young blonde ghosts
that remain frozen and unfailing
while my mother in her expensive
assisted living rediscovers her racism.

I let his memory swell like a balloon
in the Macy's parade, his mourners
miniaturized to rope-holding handlers.
I near broke my neck looking up.

Now I'm twelve years older than he
got to be. I can't keep kneeling on grief.
I dress for the afterlife, paint my pinched lips
cherry red so I won't fade from their minds,

only color-correct. Yes, she could get mad,
they'll say, but she was funny and smart
and wore red lipstick all her life.
I can see her smile now, her grey hair.

I Play with Mirrors

By: Vaishali Paliwal

I play with mirrors.
I smell their necks.
The men. So fragile,
such poets of melancholy.

Wind passes through
them all, the soft shells
so beautiful. Witness
must caress from a distance.

Sport of imagining sunflowers
is easier than the sport of
finding a vessel of sun.
Keep dreaming of shoulders

to rest the weary heads on.
One should idolize the man.
One should be an invisible
butterfly worshiping winters.

I always have my back
facing his walls. The room
is always moonlit. Poetry
continues to pretend.

Holy Bones

By: Leah Mockridge

I am no disciple,
I am the deity of misplaced desire.
Men often mistake my ego for exaltation.
My body is no place for expiation even as
hands press into my flesh.
Call it their providence.
Call it a gift from

God.

Dirtied hands delve into my holy water,
hoping that somehow, I could save them from sin.
I am their temple of temporary absolution.
The notion that women like me are just bread to be broken for communion.
Indoctrination from years forced to my knees in divine retribution,
with expectation that I will break before the hymen.
The idea that virginity is just an apple waiting to be plucked by some unworthy Adam.
I pray they don't confuse me for an open chapel,
my blood for wine undrank, my body for bread unbroken.
I am no sacred place for stained men to seek asylum.

Unclean,
unwanted,
unwed.

This isn't a confession of some cumbersome contrition,
in fact, I revel like red devils in the night.
Purgatory is just a name for the space between my thighs.
Penitence is what men prefer after impious action.
This isn't faith, it's fetish,
I am a sacrificial altar for masochists masquerading as messiahs.
Palms up they pray in demeaning doxology.
This is a covenant of crucifixes and false prophets,
filled with gnashing teeth and unhinged jaws,
hungry for whatever holiness I'm willing to impart.

Take all that I'm worth and call it retribution.

Take all that I have and call it tithing.

This temple filled with false idols and forked red tongues that cry out,
"Repent, repent, repent!"
The serpent lives in the anointed,
hidden in sacred flesh and holy bones. He whispers to Adam-

Thank God,

and blame women.

LIMINALITY

By: Julie Benesh

From my window seat on the plane
I scoop up the stars, white and crunchy
like rock candy from my childhood:

that Milky Way a neighborhood
we can't escape, and remain
both in and of, the homes set apart,
as if wealthy or rural.

I miss the past when the pilot
would narrate our progress,
note the sights to the right
and left: the Grand Canyon,
the Mississippi River.

Thirty minutes outside Chicago
a longing in my legs, leaden
with varicosities rises to alarm
my torso and I praise the arid air
without which I would marinate
in my own reduction.

I used to be an anxious traveler
but never a nervous flyer. Now
my fears spread like freckles,
shift like tectonic plates
in reverse, cover my existence
like a quilt made of clouds.

Thirty miles from MDW a light
flickers on and the stars

escape like water God
pulls from a well
in a pail on a chain
to separate heaven

from our

descent.

God Guy

By: Beth Dufford

A poet/teacher once relayed:

*All poems are about either
love or death.*

which might explain why so many poems
attend weddings and funerals.

My uncle's funeral was heavy
on poetry and it was good poetry
which was a relief:
it made the service chestnut-free,
free of poems blithely doling out comfort.

Fritz was a John Ciardi guy—

*I am in Rome, Vatican bells tolling
a windowful of God and Bernini.
My neighbor, the Pope, has died
and God overnight, has wept*

—and a God guy, a minister from New Jersey,
whose last birthday email to me read like a poem:

*I trotted over that day
to see you and your mother
warm sunny and wonderful.
Full of wonder, right?*

Dearly beloved...

It still is wonderful.

we are gathered here together...

*I was thrilled,
in my new clerical garb,*

vinyl collar and all.
to celebrate...

I did the math:
you're still 36 to me
life

and lovely fun.

Peace and all that,
Fritz

Meursault

By: Ghazal F. H.

Walking beneath the sun
Bare shoulders bearing
Blistering longing along
Dark hair stovetop
Thoughts simmering;
Oh, how I miss fall and how
I miss falling
The way it was for you,
As helpless as
The summer heat makes me;
Where nudity isn't enough
And I have to crawl out my skin
Like an emotional centipede.
Love in a world of lust is erotica.

Catharsis

By: Martha Fox

To cry like a baby
is to cry with your body—
wholly — so your body
is sorrow's storm, a wind
instrument, hollow and
resonant.

Such crying is oblivious
to an audience. It howls
to itself alone, speaking
in tongues of aloneness,
in a language not yet
constructed, or one lost.

I cried like a baby
when the cat disappeared—

for everything gone.

I cried like a baby
until the milk of fatigue
filled my belly. Then,
beyond empty, I stopped
to watch the cat prancing
home among the shadows.

Investment

By: Gillian Leonard

(after Catherine Barnett)

I remember him in his three piece suit and Tyrollean ski wear,
hopelessly out of style, tormented by my step-mother,
by unwise investments, and the color pink.

And how my mother endured my Juicy-Fruit-cracking gaze,
urging me, after the divorce, *Try to understand him—*
as if he were the child and hadn't already betrayed us both.

And for many years I did, long after he emptied my college fund
and at the supermarket check-out, always placed a divider
between his tv-dinner and mine. *Did you bring any money?*

I remember his funeral, the scent of white lilies and gladiolus,
purchased by my sister, as if from us both. *For Pop with love...*
Though I never would have used those words, I repeated them

to myself, softly, throughout the service, and for a time thereafter,
his photo, hung above my desk. Like a reversible image, duck or rabbit,
sometimes when I stare at it long enough I can see myself.

Custody Battle

By: Arnaldo Batista

They pick off
each crystal
in the arctic cave
of memory,
the ice stalactites
grow and grow,
the sheer will
of ice to reach
the far cavern
floor, their sighs,
the furious crackles.
They rest
together
in this cold cave
of time,
harvesting as crop
each ice glint,
each shard of brokenness,
of something
that could have been
something else,
warm and whole,
a summer patio set,
a pair
of wedding rings,
the family dog,
all given to time,
the great winter
of eternity,
the thief of love,
the absence of green.

Wanting to Feel a Little Brighter

By: Danielle Gold

floating on the salty surface, the
residue of an argument slimy as the seaweed
I tiptoed over into the waves
*there are things we live among, and to see them
is to know ourselves*
palms too tall for me to ever touch a frond, I might
brush the rough bleached bark and
think how harsh life can be or
I must right myself to walk straighter
in the sand, I can hear the sound of holding your hand or
the bubbled beating of my heart when submerged
in the sea, the murky future
and our unfathomable oneness, caught
in the glory of being so full
as to be completely empty

What birds don't know

By: Eleanor Eichenbaum

It's sunrise and
the birds know.

Signaling with too bright sounds
bodies elastic
with the sky.

(I wonder about our illusion here.)

To watch them fly is to watch feelings change.

Their wings open, close
and open again,
to glide unaware, witnesses.

Barefoot
the sand has the cold soft trace
of water.

I'm looking at you to see
an honest blue.

To watch them fly is to watch feelings change.

Their moments are longer
held
distant as chimes.

What is urgency?

A tree with birds,
a storm's vibration,
the instinct to fly.

The way we might cry out,
an instant.

Things Left by the Dead

By: Paul Iasevoli

a stick
a stone
a basket
filled with bones

a needle
a thread
a thimble
made of lead

a room
a chair
a widower
in despair

The Lonely Remains

By: Daniel Brennan

Based on the 2014 interview with Miyu Kojima, employee of the ToDo-Company, which specializes in cleaning out apartments of Japanese residents who have died alone. A rising phenomenon, these 'Lonely Deaths,' or 'Kodukushi,' have become more and more prevalent as older generations become disconnected from their families.

From the corner of the room
a man watches her pick
poke and pry at the pieces of still life in silence.

She says
please rest in peace
every time she enters a home,

never sure of how the body was found.

She arrives early,
driving back and forth between
a crowded garage in Tokyo

and these rooms cast in a bronzed freeze-frame.
She pulls the odds and ends
into her widening arms,

sorting the articles of living into easily divvied boxes.
Her chariot
overflows with hasty caskets of

past lives – dishware and toasters and stamps.

Once upon a time, these men and women grew like the Siebold's beech
and their roots soaked up
plentiful earth for decades

but now they've vanished. They've left it all behind
without so much as a whisper
of direction, so she must come and

she must clean and neatly package and parcel the past.

It's hard work but she doesn't mind.
She's learned not to mind. She's learned
to ignore the faint outlines a long-forgotten

body leaves on the floor,

the palimpsests
that haunt unit after unit across Japan's present day.
She rests flowers against any surface that will hold them,

because she knows that once these empty corridors echoed

with the sound of breath, of laughter
over the phone, of prayers late at night
when the infinite moon rose high.

The man watches her as she
throws pens into the trash, sorts half-empty sake bottles,
collects mementos she believes he will hold onto;

buttons and coins and filigreed tea cups.

Perhaps he accepts them,
perhaps he does not. He is one of many children who waited
unaware of the extinguished apartment,

sitting coolly in the turn of spring, soundless,
begging for a crack in the door,
a soft *hello*.

But she asks anyway.
She comes each morning to a new
tomb-in-the-making and asks

do you want to keep this, even if no one is there to respond,

because part of her believes that
the ghost stories now woven into the eggshell walls, the kitchen counters,
the sagging mattress may answer still.

She drives north when she's done,
then she'll do all this again, imagining
the forms, the tired faces,

who stood amidst the quiet until evening fell one final time.
She imagines their lives before
everything was reduced to the past tense.

Yes, there's money in this. A hard truth. But another truth: death

is everywhere these days. If she can keep these
silent homes company for just another minute,
is that not beautiful in its own design?

She comes and cleans and sorts and sighs
and sings softly in the back of her throat
the names that still linger.

She says *please rest* as she closes the door behind her;
she bids farewell to
these lonely remains.

What lies beneath this rising

By: Simon Parker

She lays her towel
on the sand
of the Plage des Raisins Clairs
covering the bones of the dead
not yet risen

to angle and puncture
vacation's flag

history's screams

are breathing
whispering
as the earth erases

this upright aberration
civilisation's beast whose hands

are stained with the blood
of his brothers

a confused Canute waving
Disneyfied towels

to stop
the sea's revealing

flesh stripped slaves
polished by Poseidon's grim saltiness
and lifted to light

of island's taking

scapulas

sternums

mandibles

fibulas

fine phalanges

breaching this granular land
disrupting rocks

a sunbather's comforting lie

she knows
her towel

will never lie still

Megalodon Tooth

By: John Dos Passos Coggin

Thirty years ago I first marveled
at this cold continent in my hand.
Crown of my father's fossil pile.

He found it at rest. Ocean-beat.
River-burnished. Hard as basalt.
Despite an epoch, an odyssey,
and an extinction, serrated
and pointed south. Alive.

Now, I reexamine
the fault lines.

Across the gargantuan tooth,
across the palm of my hand.

I will search
for another predator
hunting in the earth.

Though No One Told Us

By: Kathleen Holliday

Though no one told us
of our long-estranged father's death
somehow we knew.

How startling, to find ourselves
bobbing up out of the ocean
in sight of shore, gasping
great gulps of air.

A quick head count.
One of us raised the question.
Another shook their head.

We used to be afraid of the water.
On that day, we remembered why.

INSOMNIAC'S ODE

By: Anna Pachner

what grace is derived from a precarious comfort?
how sweetly sunken can one be on a tightrope?
how heavily can sleep surround on a string?
rest cannot weigh you in its warm unctuous gauze when maneuvering
finely. I dream of you chuckling sooner at your mistakes.

observe the terrain beneath us.
it is just a meadow. it is just a meadow.
if we step into its sponge;
if we weight ourselves down with the side stars.

it's not just the grasses there,
which tickle the slope of your calf.
it's not just the moon climbing too bright.
it's not just the beetle, whose emerald net soaks behind our eyelids as we
steep to dream, but on the oft occasion who crawls distractingly across
your back.

it's not just your lover whose breath slows, whose limbs twitch, whose
body wreaths and melts to you.
it's not just the silence of snow.
it is just a meadow, just a meadow.

MELVILLE'S BLANK TOMBSTONE

By: Eric Lunde

What did he want)(to have a child sinister in its abode but abandoned in its yaw
Stretched for the term wave in hand a furnace of chalk harpoon to gnash wick against
A candle isn't a vestment is it ? but the light sure 'nough is
Here it is to write imagined literature for a future copasetic frequency maybe a
chisel into though in wretched pieces against the drift and rocks make polio sized absences
in the limb
you fail \\
\come on there's an aside there a joke yes sideeye as we are calming to the word
for we make swarm drone in idle surge forward press and maybe the empty scroll is the
figure we need no my gad it isn't for future use to pen chisel with
its me Melville saying in death against you writers seeking alarm:
"I would prefer not to."
So why are you chiseling on my absence?

Body in a Box

By: Beth Kanell

The two of us have learned to share this cabin
your ghost fragrant with the only shampoo you liked
and I, aware of your warm arm across my shoulder,
content to notice you humming.

It's easier now: When I want to keep writing,
you inspect what's in the fridge (lemons, olives)
adding items to the grocery list. You bring
the gift of tongues, suggest pastrami.

When the garden seeds arrived this morning
in shiny packets, promising another season, you
rattled the cucumber pack. Pickles, you declared!
I said hush, let me finish this sentence.

In a nearby town, under a wide-branched tree,
a pine box settles deeply, exhaling into the earth.
Sometimes my spirit visits there, humming,
just to kiss the soft back of your neck.

Vixen

By: Peter Jackson

The vixen screams at midnight
down behind the neighbor's house
—distant, probably over by Big Rock
along the creek—a haunting shriek
carried along thin, dark, chilly air.
It reminds me of my soul, which
remains despite microelectronics,
sucked this way and that by these
unknown, un-studied distractions,
this light-beamed opiate age.
Somewhere inside my ribs I too
scream at my freezing half-moons,
urgent with desire for what's Real,
God damn it: loudly protest myself
and all my choices; crawling late
to sleep after hours of odorless
Nothing—

She screams again, a violent noise
faint in the woods. I head back in, to

watch them score another TV point.
Later, stupor'd by electric sideshows,
I hear her once again, but now
much closer, now
deep within.

witch school

By: Eve Bernfeld

“Do you want to be a
Dorothy?” my
second grade teacher asks, for our
production of *The Wizard of Oz*

I’m eating weeds for lunch

I lie it was
Christmas in Oz

and bones

“Can
I be the Wicked Witch?” I
whisper, shyly so shy
yes so

also a tamale from the woman
who knocks
loud
on the door at 7 pm every

I play the Wicked Witch—just me—opposite
four cute Dorothys finding a
voice

so often

a cackle

The Shine Before a Core-Collapse

By: Danielle Torpey

Afternoon, I asked my grandmother to lock the pearl
necklace around my throat before making lunch.

Gaunt little long-neck toddler, pearls hanging down
past the collarbone, honey curls unfurling—

at what ages do we look in the dusty mirror and have
no desire to understand how beauty encapsulates?

Those hang-off-the-body hand-me-downs
swaying rhythmically with little bones hiding

underneath. What would happen if those pearls slid
off the string and floated in the air: new stars in an old

wood-paneled living room constellation? What a
treasure, wasting the days in the flesh that dances

in the sunshine peeking through window panes,
rainbow reflections shimmering across tippy toes

as the pearl's last stage of life expands
absorbed into my skin, before a collapse.

Mission Creek

By: Paul Willis

From here the water slides
into the throat of the canyon,
swallowed up but running free.

The current has cleared
since last week's storm, dropping
past each sandstone sill from pool

to pool. Overhead, a small cascade
descends a dihedral in the cliff,
emerging from plumes of ceanothus.

Where one branch finds another
is the place you want to be,
a trickle adding its vote to the tide.

The ferns and oaks nod their approval
on either hand. They're not going
anywhere, and that's just fine with them.

Only the moss on the banks,
green as a sunset flash, wishes to join
a rolling stone, and someday it just might.

For now, though, the plunge pools,
the wavering foam, the farewell crush
of the creek against cool clouds of February.

—*Los Padres National Forest*

Visitor 231

By: Peter Coe Verbica

The Lieutenant Colonel
often asks me to say more
with less words.

And I've seen
the bishop's bookkeeper
in the audience

beg with his eyes for the same.

I seem to stagger into these edicts
like a beast shot in a front quarter,

not directly into the heart
or lungs:

Bounding verse after verse
before stopping like a feral boar,
breathing heavily in the high grass.

Reluctant to brevity.
Reticent to die.

Perhaps it's due to my own fury,
under the furnace
of a dry summer sky,

as if my mouth itself
is the exit wound.

As if my own words
are a red froth
which cascades involuntarily
from my throat,

each letter a brushstroke
of paint upon the earth.

All of us lie this flat and naked,
I suppose

in the alpha and omega of a poem.

AT CHIEF SEATTLE'S GRAVE

By: Michael Grodesky

Suquamish, Washington

Everything here
is settled and
unsettled. Ancestral spirits

incense the air with spruce
and dry grass.

Western Hemlocks sway
in yield
to the coming autumn

and a tiny daisy leaves its throng
and stretches its stem
to caress a stone.

Small cyphers
of daily life left as offerings
become more beautiful

as a collective presence.
Together they form a kind
of dialogue
between the living
and the dead.

How quietly time revises
the distinctions of our lives

sanding the edges
so that what was given
and what was taken seem

much the same

and the visages of peace
and appeasement
begin to blend together.

From here his city in the distance
forms a still life
balanced on the verge
of being both in
and out of time
as though it were a reminder
of the uncertainties
that come with fruition.

And the gods float by
hiding their faces
behind the clouds leaving

the dead
to grieve silently

for those still living.

In the Square in Santa Fe

By: Bruce Arlen Wasserman

We are perhaps the only nation which tried as a matter of national policy to wipe out its indigenous population. Moreover, we elevated that tragic experience into a noble crusade— Martin Luther King Jr.

Facing the IAIA
leaning to the left adjacent to

the old yet not the oldest church
a wedding in the grass beneath the trees

and a little breeze that carries the languages of
conversation with differences in pitch, lisps

and accents and the *Indian* in IAIA trapped between
the letters, sandwiched in the oldest city that

waits for resurrection on this Sunday
that waits for the restoration of the centuries

that killed and pillaged and raped in no
particular order and I am struck by the number

that have vanished, the 90 percent of the
natives in the first couple hundred years of

uninvited visits and yet we have clearly deified
Columbus when we should have vilified the

forbears' intrusions to this land this September
which is the hottest in New Mexico records that

shows our hand in the destruction of not only
peoples but places, instead making the news is

a supply chain where impoverished truckers
struggle to make a buck and the peoples of this

land—here for thousands of years—have been
told to go back where they belong by strangers

who've always acted like they own the place.

ZIGZAG

By: Anna St. Aubrey

You: the zigzag man,
impatient, not abiding
traffic, prefer movement,
inefficient, to the stultifying
stillness of the stopped

Pillaging our peanuts, you leave
half-filled bottles down to skin and salt
for new ones, neglecting
the reality of endings

while I pull single peanuts
from the plundered scraps,
eat what you abandon
off your plate.

I always finish the book I hate.

Are we perfect mates,
mismatched, me grabbing what you
leave behind, while you break open
doors to what is restlessly alive?

Even now I am holding
your hand, its constant wiggle
waving wildly at our life's breath,
shared but separately breathing

Dweller II

By: Brenda Serpick

Does a fetus dream its host's
Dream? Its mother's ghosts?
Even our ghosts sleep inside
My dead metaphor. A home
Falls on stilted hope. Separates
- is restless - a split metaphor.
Through its broken path I rumble
Push a house out of her. Pinpoint
The art, getting born with the sun
And its December. How close
I was to swallowing her world.
An artist in her spilt-ink fractions

Fly

By: Gary Fox

I just bought a forty
percent off red, white
& blue Nautica warm-up and
Blue with black soles
yellow stripe Adidas, to
offset the blues. I
look good reflecting beyond
the cotton. My aura glows.
A peacock on the pavement
that steps out of the dictionary
leaving mere fragment of words
collect like litter in the corners.
No gusts of smoke halt
my stride. Unless I eat some
pasta and specks of sauce
freckle my jacket. Now
I need a washer. Detergent,
spin cycle the newness out.
The collar does not pop. The toes
scuffed. Time to hustle for another
Band-Aid. Something to stitch
me up. I understand the price
old friends have paid still in
triple XL clothing, memories
confined in the noughts with
crushed pills or bent blackened
spoons that lean on that trap door.
I know I'm one day away, one
fallen chip. I settle for

internet searches
Diadoras, Air Maxes, matching t-shirts.
The fear of sticking to the sidewalk
like chewed gum & having
a family member scrape me off
the bottom of their shoes
against the curb lets
my crow wings stretch.

Unborn Lyla

By: Derik Roof

No. 1

I stop to write
and meet a man
walking barefoot
in mud and snow
I had seen his tracks and wondered
of the wonder of the man
we speak of the nature of feet
and everything resonates
poetry
because I'm happy like I haven't been

at the trailhead
I try to make you a narrative poem,
but I want you, truly,
to be delineated
images, feelings of
hope and beauty,
abstractions I've taught
myself not to use
because you are everything
that I have never been until now

while your mother makes you
in her sleep, in her belly,
in my truck parked in the woods
you walk while I build the baby
she says to me as I draw
the blanket up and lay back the seat.
I leave my keys in case the two of you get cold.

When I learned of you
I dreamed of a trail
of call-bells
the tide's out for miles
and the water lay
inches deep, over white sand,
radiant, clear-blue—
to blanket the buttons
as I rang each bell
in long, summersault dives.

each ding called me
forward to the next
each stone, each snow
patch, or muddy melt,
each tree on this trail
I ring deliberately.

A poem, a dream,
should not explain itself,
but you will be born
with no such rules.

I scrape the brown
slush from the bottom
of my shoe
on a half-buried stretch
of discarded railroad track
and I realize
every stupid thing has meaning again
sunsets and landscapes and dreams
are all inspired by an unborn child
and their image will be written
for you.

No. 2

I bit your mother,
in a dream,
out of anger.
I heaved the sofa
on the lawn,
tore a desperate murmur—
whisper from my throat
I wish we were still

having a baby

The couch burned
orange strobe flicks
her sticky, sweat-and-tears
skin
the fire glare in her teeth
eyes
she said, *OK*
She was meant to be the most beautiful
sight until I saw you
and now she's stuck

I want to tie this dream to a balloon

I want to tie this dream
to some passionate act,
some instance of utter vulnerability,
write it out in analogy
in the woods—
the bear I saw in Yosemite,
or the rattlesnake
in the desert
at my drunk and sleeping head,

but this dream is just my stupid
and misplaced pain

Your mother told me
she can't read my poem
she can't Art about this
her loss is guttural
her pain more tangible
than mine

making you Art is all I can do
to keep you

I want to make you an image
and dream you

Altar Boy Cm7

By: Ed McManis

I lived in a traditional Catholic
neighborhood next to the church
that claimed to love jazz
but no one could play the horn.

I was an altar boy, got to wear
a cassock, surplice, got to hang
around the *Tabernacle*—
that's where they locked Jesus up,
in a gold cup.

The gold *Tabernacle* was locked
behind the altar in an *aumbry*.
Catholics have cool, mysterious words.

One Sunday morning, Father left
the chalice out. After I put away
the cruets, I genuflected, returned
like a courageous Apostle
to the altar, stared at the gold

cup, light from the stained-
glass windows reflecting dim
rays, peeked inside, saw
the dribble of red wine,

wondered if it was His blood,
reached to grasp the stem,
braced for some sort of celestial
jolt. Nothing.

Fifty years on, I can still smell
incense, dream of that chalice,
how the curved lip of gold appears
like the horizon before I wake,
like Miles' horn floating in my
unconscious, how I feel kind of blue

when I see my young self frozen
on that altar, black cassock, white surplice,
how I still struggle in the candle glow
of all these smooth black and white notes,
how I love and hate the tune.

rapture.

By: Connor M. Bjotvedt

i.

*unquenchable Word;
What more can you hope to reap
from man or his fruit?****

ii.

*At last! The Apples;
>fallen furthest from His tree!<**
and lo, Barnabas!*

iii.

*>{Praise! Praise!}< Apostle; **
“Deem: Does the flock still wander?
Does the clock not strike. . .*

iv.

*Terror(!) in your heart?”
>{Will, unseating Righteousness!}< **
“Charlatans! Fools! Rogues!”*

v.

*“Hardened hearts of men:(!) **
Charity, Prudence, Temp’rance—
daughters, act Swiftly!”*

vi.

*I plead, "Discipline!"***
~~*(The Crowds Outnumber the Rest.)*~~
"Father, in your name. . ."

vii.

"Call upon the Just;
Usher the Wicked onward;
*>Reclaim your Kingdom!<"***

viii.

"Enliven the Meek;
*Impair the, ~~the~~ Vigorous!"***
>Withhold your Mercy!<"

ix.

*. . . bless'd Oleander;***
. . . elegant Ophelia;
gratifying Fig. . .

x.

. . . Steer my heaving breast;
. . . Restrain my clattering teeth;
~~*Reprimand my Wit. . .*~~****

xi.

>{Mark!}< Observe their flight!
*>{Hastened, no doubt, by my Spell!}<"***
Diocles, my Crop!

xii.

Cicero, my Coat!

>{I shan't face these darkened Streets;}<

~~(Put out the lanterns.)**~~

xiii.

Judge: The Myopites;

>{spoiled, cantankerous lot!}<

*Haranguous Peat. . . ***

xiv.

>Trod by all manner!<

{Sproutless and unproductive!}**

. . .and I, the lost Lot?

In Order of Appearance

Hilary King's poems have appeared in Ploughshares, Salamander, TAB, DMQ Review, and other publications. Originally from the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia, she now lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. She is a poetry editor for DMQ Review, and an MFA Creative Writing student at San Jose State University. Her book of poems, *Stitched on Me*, will be published by Riot in Your Throat Press in fall of 2024. She loves hiking, travel, and ribbon.

Vaishali Paliwal is a poet and artist from India currently residing in Pittsburgh. Her published poetry collections are 'Lion's Tooth On Migrating Chests' (Soap Box Press) and 'Water Bearer's Song' (Finishing Line Press) and her art has been displayed in several art galleries and community events. Inspired by the mystery of human experience and the mysticism behind natural elements, Vaishali explores the pockets of absence in the spectrum of multiple polarities and realities. She likes to create with threads, colors, and things of the earth, and aspires to build model art villages that re-establish harmony between humans and nature.

Leah Mockridge is an American poet and aspiring author with a deep connection to language and storytelling. A graduate of Lake Superior State University, Leah draws inspiration from her great-grandmother, a published author, who instilled in her a lifelong love for the written word. Her poetry often reflects the delicate balance between life, loss, and what it means to be a woman. At home, Leah finds comfort in the companionship of her two dogs and two cats, who provide a constant source of inspiration and distraction in equal measure.

Julie Benesh is author of the poetry collection *INITIAL CONDITIONS* and the poetry chapbook *ABOUT TIME*. She has been published in Tin House, Another Chicago Magazine, Florida Review, and many other places, earned an MFA from Warren Wilson College, and received an Illinois Arts Council Grant. She currently lives in Chicago and holds a PhD in human and organizational systems. Read more at juliebenesh.com.

Beth Dufford lives, works, and writes in Kerhonkson, NY and New York City. Her work has appeared in Barrow Street, The Little Magazine, Rise Up Review, Common Ground Review, Crab Creek Review, High Shelf, Cathexis Northwest Press, and The Greensboro Review. Forthcoming: Gramercy Review. Chapbooks: *Microscopic Peaceful Implosions*, Eyewear Publishing (2018); *The Catalog of Daily Fears*, Cathexis Northwest Press (2022).

Ghazal (she/they) is a Queer Iranian poet and activist for the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement. Her work- inspired by psychological phenomena, Persian culture, and absurdism- has appeared in Toronto Public Library's "Young Voices," Dark Poets Club, and Beyond Words Literary Magazine. She's a finalist for Markham Talent's acting category and has featured at events such as Verse Deli and The Tartan Turban Secret Readings. You can find her hosting the Art Bar Poetry Series or posting and lurking on Instagram: [@cherry_vvine](https://www.instagram.com/cherry_vvine).

Martha Fox published *This Arc of Assurances* with Grayson Books in 2022. She has also published a chapbook *Tides* and a book *If the River's this High all Summer* (Martha Fritz, Pym-Randall Press, Cambridge, MA 1974). She has published poems in literary journals, including *The Atlantic*, *Comstock Review*, *Passager*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, and *Voices and Verse*. Her poems are included in *Tide Lines: An Anthology of Cape Ann Poets*. After receiving a B.A. in Creative Writing from Emerson College and an M.F.A from The University of California, Irvine, Martha was an NEA Poet in the Schools in California and later Director of the Dodge Writing Center at Brookwood School in Manchester, MA. She now facilitates poetry groups in her hometown of Rockport, Massachusetts.

Gillian Leonard was born in Washington D.C. but spent much of her youth in N.H. She attended Hampshire College and Keene State College where she received a BA in English. She moved to N.Y. to pursue her MLS at SUNY Albany and remained in the area, working as a reference librarian in two local public libraries.

Arnaldo Batista is a queer poet from Miami, FL, where he received his MFA in Creative Writing from Florida International University. His work can be found in *Prairie Schooner*, *Gulf Coast Journal*, *PANK*, and has been nominated for 2024's Puschart Prize and Best New Poets.

Danielle Gold is living an idilic life on a Caribbean island, or at least that's what it may appear. When not writing poetry she can be found in her office at the medical school or climbing Mt Scenery. She dreams about museum outings and urban cafe.

Eleanor Eichenbaum is a writer and artist based in Florida. She holds an MFA from Image Text Ithaca and has been honored to attend residencies at Trelex in Paris, France and the Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, FL. She is also an independent curator of visual arts and has organized shows in California, Florida, New Jersey, and New York.

Paul Iasevoli is an author and editor. His work has appeared in various print and online literary journals. He currently serves on the board of Florida Writers Association.

Daniel Brennan (he/him) is a queer writer and coffee devotee from New York. Sometimes he is in love, but just as often he is not. His work has been nominated for the Puschart Prize, and has appeared in numerous publications, including *The Penn Review*, *Sky Island Journal*, and *ONE ART*. He can be found on Twitter and Instagram: @dannymbrennan

Simon is a London based writer, performer and teacher.

His work has been published in *The Pomegranate* London, *The Ekphrastic Review*, shortlisted by the BBC and he was a finalist for the Galtelli Literary Prize.

Simon is an associate artist of Vocal Point Theatre, a theatre company dedicated to telling stories from those not often heard, and providing workshops for the marginalised. He also runs creative writing and reading groups for the homeless, socially excluded and vulnerable..

For more info go to <https://www.simonparkerwriter.com>

John Dos Passos Coggin is a writer based in Alexandria, Virginia. His poetry has appeared in *Pangyrus*, *Half and One*, and *The Blue Mountain Review*. He co-manages the John Dos Passos literary estate.

Kathleen Holliday lives on an island in the Salish Sea. Her poems have appeared in *The Bellingham Review*, *The Blue Nib Literary Magazine*, *Cathexis Northwest Press*, *New Ohio Review*, *Nimrod International Journal*, *Poet Lore*, *Poetry Super Highway*, *SHARK REEF*, *The Write Launch* and other journals. She is a graduate of Augsburg University, Minneapolis, MN. Her chapbooks, *Putting My Ash on the Line*, (2020), and *Boatman, Pass By* (2023), were published by *Finishing Line Press*.

Anna Pachner is a mother, poet, and criminal defense attorney, prioritizing her roles in that very order. Her poetry mirrors the precision and power of legal writing, without the poison of the law. With a focus on openness, curiosity, and a fascination with love and lovers, Anna's work explores the struggle to maintain a childlike wonder in our burdensome world. Anna writes her (often tiny) poems on the Royal 10 typewriter stationed on her kitchen counter, overlooking the mighty Kennebec River in central Maine.

random access perception, a process of assembly and fabrication from what is available, yes. a pile of words.... ERIC LUNDE lives in Minneapolis MN USA. With many years of engagement in the arts, he now primarily works in hand-made books, printing, "letter press" of his own design, writing and self-publishing. He continues to work in audio and noise-oriented spoken word, culminating in 2019 with an appearance at underground film festival lausanne, switzerland.

Samples of his work and activities can be viewed at: <https://endythekid.blogspot.com>.

Mr. Lunde adds: I am not socially (inter)active, I've long eschewed the social network much to the detriment of my brand.

Mr. Lunde further adds: Yes, I have appeared in *Cathexis* before

(<https://www.cathexisnorthwestpress.com/post/plane-flips-as-it-lands-everybody-survives>).

Beth Kanell lives in northeastern Vermont among rivers, rocks, and a lot of writers.

Peter Jackson is a writer and analyst living in Washington, DC. His poetry, literature reviews, and news articles have appeared in journals, newspapers, and magazines including Patrol Magazine, World Magazine, Drunken Kodoku, Friends of Atticus, Oracle, and Gateway. Jackson received his MA from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA, and his BA from Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, OK.

Eve Bernfeld is a writer, theatre artist and teacher living in Portland, Oregon. She holds an MFA in Applied Theatre and her work has been published in Howlround Theatre Commons, AmSAT Journal, Northern Lights and more. This poem was created during her time as an Art/Lab Fellow.

Danielle Torpey is a Creative Writing teacher in Wyoming. She holds her MFA through the University of Eastern Washington and loves walking the mountains with her Alaskan Malamute, Poppy.

Paul Willis has published seven collections, the most recent of which is *Somewhere to Follow* (Slant Books, 2021). Individual poems have appeared in Poetry, Cloudbank, Tahoma Literary Review, and the Best American Poetry Series. He is an emeritus professor of English at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California, where he lives with his wife, Sharon, near the old mission.

Peter Coe Verbica grew up on Rancho San Felipe, a commercial cattle ranch in Northern California. He earned his BA in English from Santa Clara University, a JD from Santa Clara University School of Law, and an MS from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Michael Grodesky is a poet whose work has appeared in Down In The Dirt Journal, Stepping Stones, BlazeVOX, and in Urban Textures, a collection of photography and poetry published with his husband, photographer Jim Simandl. In 2021, he self-published his first chapbook *Dissimilation*. He lives in Seattle where he is a Clinical Associate Professor at the University of Washington.

Bruce Arlen Wasserman assembled his first poetry manuscript with a typewriter on the kitchen table when he was seventeen. He received an MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts and is a literary critic for the New York Journal of Books. His poetry manuscript, *The Broken Night*, was published by Finishing Line Press in July, 2022. He has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize, was a semi-finalist for the Francine Ringold Awards for New Writers, a semi-finalist for the Proverse Prize and won the Anna Davidson Rosenberg 2019 Poetry Award. Bruce's writing has been published in the Proverse Poetry Prize Anthology, The Fredericksburg Literary and Art Review, The River Heron Review, Kindred Literary Magazine, the Broad River Review, Cathexis Northwest Press, High Shelf Literary Magazine, Wild Roof Journal and the Washington Independent Review of Books.

ANNA ST. AUBREY is a psychotherapist specializing in asking the existential questions that keep us up at night. Her poetry was first selected for a young poets' award at the College of the Atlantic and her short story 'Wading' was a top finalist for Glimmer Train's Short Story Award for New Writers. Her poem 'Gutted' was recently selected as part of The Poets Corner's Art & Ekphrastic Poetry exhibit at the Paige Gallery in 2023. She regularly attends Beyond Baroque's Poetry Workshop in Venice, CA.

Brenda Serpick received her MFA in poetry from The New School and is the author of three chapbooks: 'the other conjunction in it' (Furniture Press), 'No Sequence But Luck' (3 Sad Tigers) and 'The Female Skeleton Makes Her Debut' (Hophophop Press). Her poems have appeared in For Women Who Roar - The Body Issue, Burningword Literary Journal, Requited, Tule Review, The Potomac, Free State Review, Printer's Devil Review, LIT, Lungfull! Magazine, and Boog City - among other fine journals. She currently teaches English, AP Research, and creative writing for Baltimore City Public Schools.

Originally from Philadelphia, Gary Fox currently reside on Maryland's Eastern Shore. He went from a neighborhood kid writing graffiti, to a hip-hop producer, to a Teamster, and now I am a retail manager, father and husband. Gary has published poems in Toho Journal, The Shore, High Shelf Press, and Struggle Magazine.

Derik Roof studied poetry at Arizona State University and works in Human Services, primarily serving the unhoused and recently housed out of chronic homelessness. He taught Poetry to incarcerated individuals at Arizona Department of Corrections, Florence, South Unit, as part of the ASU Prison Education Project, for two and half years, before COVID prevented entry into the prisons. He has served as poetry editor for Iron City Magazine which primarily publishes the work of incarcerated individuals.

Ed McManis is a writer, editor, & erstwhile Head of School. His work has appeared in more than 60 publications, including The Blue Road Reader, Cathexis Northwest, Nimrod, Narrative, Lascaux Review, etc. He, along with his wife, Linda, have published esteemed author Joanne Greenberg's (I Never Promised You a Rose Garden) novel, Jubilee Year.

Little known trivia fact: he holds the outdoor free-throw record at Camp Santa Maria: 67 in a row.

Connor M. Bjotvedt received his Master of Fine Arts in Writing from Spalding University. He was awarded the Charles E. Bull Creative Writing Scholarship for Poetry by Northern Arizona University where he received his Bachelor of Arts in English, Literature, and Creative Writing. His work has appeared in Rain Taxi, Cathexis Northwest Press, the Santa Fe Literary Review, the Haiku Journal, Three Line Poetry, Straylight Literary Magazine, and The Wayfarer, among others. His first collection, A Contemporary Portrait of the Southwest, is published by Unsolicited Press.