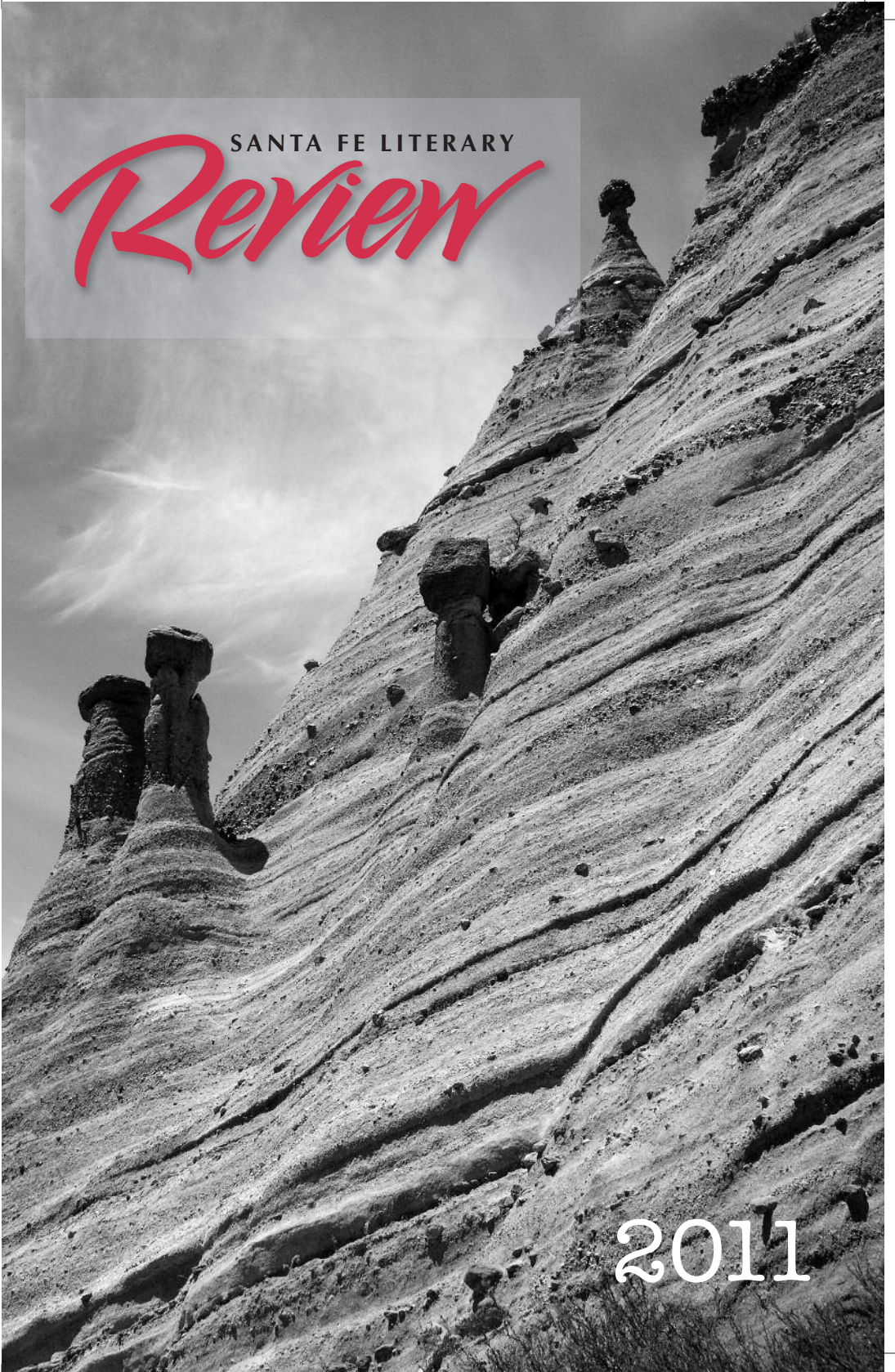


Santa Fe Literary Review 2011



SANTA FE LITERARY  
*Review*

2011

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*Review*



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# Santa Fe Literary Review 2011

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Dedicated to the memory of George Manner

Santa Fe Literary Review invites submissions of poetry, fiction and non-fiction of a general literary interest, as well as visual arts. Unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope, submissions will not be returned. Submissions are accepted on a year-round basis, to be read in the fall.

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# Contents

|  |                      |    |
|--|----------------------|----|
| <b>Rage</b>                                  | William Greenway     | 6  |
| <b>All Hallows, Colma Cemetary</b>           | Jeanne Lohmann       | 8  |
| <b>An Island, A Custody</b>                  | Debbi Brody          | 10 |
| <b>Now She's Expecting</b>                   | Devon Miller-Duggan  | 11 |
| <b>Permeate</b>                              | Sarah Velez          | 15 |
| <b>Capsicum</b>                              | Miranda Merklein     | 17 |
| <b>Creative Writing</b>                      | Larry (Ace) Boggess  | 19 |
| <b>Three Visitations and a Prince</b>        | Joan Mitchell        | 20 |
| <b>The Dirt Charmer</b>                      | Dick Altman          | 21 |
| <b>Late Promise</b>                          | Barbara Rockman      | 23 |
| <b>Cleaning Saints</b>                       | Ann Hunkins          | 24 |
| <b>When the Baby Woke</b>                    | Regina Murray Brault | 26 |
| <b>Then Again</b>                            | Jack Cooper          | 27 |
| <b>The Formula for Wholeness</b>             | Katherine D. Seluja  | 28 |
| <b>William the Pig</b>                       | Ariel Gore           | 33 |
| <b>Life Before Kant</b>                      | Meg Tuite            | 35 |
| <b>Oh God, Oh Jesus, No!</b>                 | Kona Morris          | 37 |
| <b>Behind the Wheel</b>                      | Linda Whittenberg    | 40 |
| <b>Stupa</b>                                 | Barbara Robidoux     | 41 |
| <b>In the Company of Men</b>                 | Tom Crawford         | 42 |
| <b>The Beer Grabbing</b>                     | Jon Olsen            | 44 |
| <b>After the Founder's Room Closes, 1982</b> | Jon Davis            | 46 |
| <b>Knitting My Shroud</b>                    | Dallas Huth          | 48 |
| <b>How to Read Your Father's Obituary</b>    | Karen Stefano        | 51 |
| <b>Skowhegan</b>                             | Audrey Powers        | 56 |
| <b>Desert Kingdom</b>                        | Joseph Hutchison     | 58 |
| <b>war came. war went</b>                    | Joseph Delgado       | 59 |

|   |                       |    |
|---|-----------------------|----|
| Shell   | Carol Denson          | 60 |
| Contemplating Sex and Electrons,<br>I Sew My Rakusu                           | Michael G. Smith      | 61 |
| Timorous  | Elizabeth Raby        | 63 |
| Tracks  | Kathleen Runyan       | 64 |
| A Brief History of My Lust,<br>His Visitations                                | Jim Nawrocki          | 65 |
| Yesterday Sonnet  | Michelle Holland      | 66 |
| Red in Reykjavik  | Timothy Riordan       | 67 |
| For a Man to Whom I May Have<br>Caused Some Embarrassment                     | Paul Lamar            | 68 |
| Interview with Melissa Pritchard  | Meg Tuite             | 70 |
| Looking For Dennis Hopper's Grave<br>Around Her Neck,<br>The Weight of Stones | Nancy Stohlman        | 78 |
|   | Roxane Gay            | 81 |
| Dream   | Erin Brooks           | 84 |
| A Fish Slipped Into My Arms<br>While I Was Praying                            | Susan Varon           | 85 |
| Geezers On Parole   | Brian Cronwall        | 86 |
| Magnitude 5.4   | Karla Linn Merrifield | 87 |
| On the Rez: Bob Marley, William Blake<br>and the Lakota Porcupine Singers     | John Brandi           | 88 |
| Tanka   | Liz Wallace           | 89 |
| Making Bacon  | Lorenzo Atencio       | 90 |
| Legacy  | Marmika Paskiewicz    | 92 |
| Bowling With the Regulars   | Alexis Ivy            | 94 |
| Girl Fight  | Shelly Reed           | 95 |
| Heavy Metal   | Ellen Birkett Morris  | 96 |
| Cul-De-Sac  | Richard Robbins       | 98 |

|  |                    |     |
|--|--------------------|-----|
| Ed From the Garage Stops In<br>to Talk Philosophy  | Trent Busch        | 99  |
| The Missing and the Found                          | John Grey          | 101 |
| Day Hike   | Kenneth P. Gurney  | 102 |
| 108 Suitcases                                      | Cynthia Gallaher   | 103 |
| Reality Was the Dream                              | Paul Freidinger    | 105 |
| Basement   | Michael Hettich    | 106 |
| By the Basin                                       | William S. Blome   | 107 |
| Whiskey Tango Foxtrot                              | John Davis         | 108 |
| Ugly Hat & Red Hook                                | Sean Brendan-Brown | 109 |
| Waiting  | Josh Goller        | 110 |
| The Lady Bug Orgy Tree                             | Meg Pokrass        | 113 |
| Refugees   | Tom Clayton        | 114 |
| We Were Trees First                                | Chasity Vigil      | 115 |
| My Life As A Lover                                 | Mary McGinnis      | 116 |
| The Forest   | Lauren Camp        | 117 |
| Her Fingers  | Nancy Wing         | 118 |
| Broken Bird  | Leia Barnett       | 120 |
| Thank You Suzanna                                  | Behzad Dayeny      | 122 |
| Colcha Treasure                                    | H. Marie Aragon    | 124 |
| Monsoon Season                                     | John Macker        | 126 |
| The Day I Lost My Mother<br>at Ross Dress for Less | Jane Tokunaga      | 128 |
| Vanilla  | Chris Bursk        | 131 |
| Swan Song For My Mother                            | Ursula Moeller     | 133 |
| Password: Zephyr                                   | Ann Filemyr        | 135 |
| 5 Pieces/3 Reviews/<br>Interview/Essay             | Tina Matthews      | 137 |
| Bios   |                    | 148 |

# Rage

by William Greenway

*Blow winds, crack your cheeks.*

— King Lear

It's what they say one flies into:  
sudden black rain and skeletons of lightning  
reeling on the wings. Once,  
coming into Memphis, back to the Navy  
at night, we hit the big one—a covey  
of plastic glasses and magazines flushed  
to flack the ceiling. Crying began.  
And because I thought I'd never get  
home again, I prayed like an atheist  
in a foxhole for the first time forever.

Flying home was beautiful, unbounded  
blue skies, clouds soft as the cotton  
from aspirin bottles, the whole  
dome of heaven serene  
and empty as the skull after  
electro-shock therapy,  
the fields far below, once sere and gray,  
grown green as the baize  
of a billiard table, the towers  
of Atlanta tall and ivory  
as pieces on a chessboard.  
My sweetie ran to the plane and swept  
me up and kissed me home. Later  
we parted, of course, the walls  
of our apartment pocked  
with a minefield of fist holes.

If Daddy was the Master  
of Righteous Indignation,  
Mother was the Mistress of Rage:  
slapping, kicking, breaking things  
over our heads—a flute, Chinese  
checker board, even a garden rake—  
so when I tell the therapist my  
recurring dream of having to walk  
across floors of overflowing  
excrement to piss, and she tells me  
I have backed-up issues that need  
to be unclogged, it makes sense,  
and that's usually when I stand up  
and storm out.



# All Hallows, Colma Cemetary

by Jeanne Lohmann

A friendly necropolis, communities united in civilized fashion: fraternal orders, sailors and Wobblies, Italians and Jews, generations of Chinese. Photographs of the dead, looking more or less as they looked in life, stand against granite and marble. From years of snapshots, survivors chose these particular faces.

Markers are set flat to the ground for easy mowing, vases filled with flowers that last all year. Statistics say we die almost as fast as the newborn come. and since we don't want decay contaminating the local water supply, we seal our caskets for the mutual comfort of living and dead. We scatter their ashes coarse and gray as oatmeal, with unexpected fragments of bone. We bury them under a favorite tree in the garden, or hire a boat, take *the remains* to the Bay, backpack them into wilderness. Propitiating our guilt for lives that go on without them, we invite the dead to join us for holidays, graveyard picnics. We leave offerings for them on the grass, flowers, small bowls of grain.

Each year with the dead in retreat, it's harder to remember them as they were, though we'd like them to come when we call, and we go on saying their names. We hope they'll keep in touch, though touch is nothing the dead are famous for. Invading our dreams, they surprise us. They wait in the schoolyard, ambush us on the stair, at the office and altar, the shop. When we travel, they follow the wake of the ship,

the plane's vapor trail. They are standing in grain fields,  
they look back from stones in the river.

The dead in their masks care nothing for pumpkins.  
They cannot be stopped by cobwebs at the door,  
they pass through the hanging man in the hallway  
and show no interest in paper ghosts tied to the trees.  
Their hunger cannot be appeased by orange candies,  
witches, sugar skeletons. Their trick is in treating us  
to silence, and the dead are generous.



# An Island, A Custody

by *Debbi Brody*

In Zanzibar, an intermittent unwilling possession of Tanzania, we explore a spice plantation, tear cinnamon from trees, free lychee nuts from wild red tendrils, swallow slippery white globes fresh and dripping, weave sunglasses of lemongrass, dig up ginger and shocking orange turmeric root, string cloves into miniature brown wreaths dotted with creamy white cardamom pods.

After a perfect afternoon, men in beige, automatics in their hands, stop us three times, between two calls to prayer, berate the driver for my uncovered hair. Ticket him, cover his rear view mirror, threaten to revoke his license. At dusk, they mark his car door with a permanent ink black “X.”

# Now She's Expecting

by Devon Miller-Duggan

*Women are nothing but machines for producing children.*  
— Napoleon Bonaparte

A Japanese researcher says  
the ephemeral haze around her robes is rose and is, itself,  
a finely woven robe the ladies of her class wore —  
the *guarnello* — to signify gravidity.  
Perhaps their normal frocks' amplitude  
we so often read as mimicking fecundity  
prevented friends' eyes from knowing when they had achieved  
that blessed state? For centuries her face has graced  
us with her enigma, smiling slightly on fancy candy tins  
(oh, dear, another kind of amplitude...) and  
greeting cards pregnant with irony and post-Warhol wit.  
We've wondered what it is she knows.  
We've treasured our uncertainty and her elusive gaze.  
We've theorized she might be Leo self-portrayed.  
We've made up codes and laid them over her like  
nets to catch the butterflies of meaning.  
Now Canadians have brought equipment in  
to peer beyond the wisps and shades.  
They have found an extra dress.  
We construe from other paintings and  
documents some scholar reads in  
some archive in Italy, on a research trip supported by  
some foundation, that gauzy overgowns for pregnant women —  
were all the rage. We speculate that she'd have been  
so vogue-ish she'd have had her portrait painted by  
the dandy from the backwater of Vinci,  
wanting just that moment of her greatest possibility  
enshrined. Perhaps, for these five hundred years,  
we've loved her secret just so it could be

reborn in a scholar's mind a half a world away.  
And after all the years of our invasive gaze,  
she's gravid once again after a half millennium  
sitting there, waiting for the question  
anyone in her day would have known to ask.



**Fall** Albuquerque, NM, October 2010, Fuji FP 100  
*by Matthew Morrow*



**Brenden, Mid Tic** Albuquerque, NM, Oct. 2010, Fuji FP 100  
*by Matthew Morrow*

# Permeate

by Sarah Velez

When you moved into the apartment next to mine, your face was pallid. I liked to imagine counting the blue veins under the skin of your neck from my window as you sat in the courtyard, hunched over, staring into space. More than your voice, I believed the dark circles under your eyes and the thinning of your hair. They couldn't hide in the deception of vocal cords.

When you were asleep, I pressed my speakers up against our shared wall and played "Breathe Me" by Sia. I did it on the day we spoke about our favorite music, even though we never spoke. I just assumed you were asleep. I think we shared insomnia. I think we shared a lot of things.

I wanted you to trace your history on my skin, and paint my face with song. I asked the landlady about you. She said you were just a sullen girl. I asked if that meant you used to sail the deep and tranquil sea. She didn't get it, but I thought you might, so I left the CD by your door.

You were so thin the straps of the white dress you liked to wear, the one with the small pink and blue flowers on it, constantly slid off your shoulders. Lifted up like little wings on your shoulder blades, only to sink towards the ground. And the bruises on your ankles, a beautiful daughter of Hermes. You are golden, so golden.

I peered under the crack of your door before the sun rose. I couldn't be near you, the light just radiated. The hollows of your cheeks only reflected how minute and useless I really was next to you. Though I'd never been next to you. The fact was that I was small and needy, but you ran from him, or her, or them. That first part was from "Breathe Me." I sang those songs quietly, into empty envelopes and tacked them to your door. I've never seen you take them off. There are five there now.

You would know a lot of things if you listened. The scratching at your doors and walls, the soft humming, like electricity, at your windows. I listened to you. When you sobbed in the shower, or stood aimlessly in the middle of your living room running your fingers through your auburn hair, I knew you wanted to chop it off. It's because I listened to the way your fingers tugged at the loose strands. I bet he and her and them called

it beautiful. I bet they made you love it. Some one did that to me once, made me love myself.

I wanted to paint this wall between us purple, blue and gold. The gold was you. The deep indigo made by the melting purple and blues was me. You were something I couldn't touch, or come close to inhabiting. I would always be deep and dark. You would always be welcome on top of that shining mountain, Olympus. The day I was counting the veins lining your throat, I also saw the tracks on the inside crease of your arm. Red roses blooming, a garden of pain and desire. A history of temptation.

In the end, what more was this than broken glass in the carpet? I heard you tell your mother, or someone I assume was your mother. You had that tone of voice that was guarded and yet yearned for some kind of prodding. Some question beyond the subject of days and work. That was the day before you jumped. Maybe if she had questioned how thin your thighs were, or how the skin across your rib cage stretched until each protruding bone showed itself like a delicate instrument. Maybe if she listened to your breathing the way I did, she'd have heard it.

On your descent you soared past my window. The wind had pulled up the straps of your dress, trying to coax out the feathers that would lead you to Olympus. There was no sound when you hit. When I stuck my head out the window I saw how life had truly tarnished your shine. The moon illuminated your skin against the blood and you were a white rose.

I wanted you to breathe me. I couldn't cry, even after your mother came to gather your stuff. The landlady was right. You were a sullen girl. I just wanted you to breathe me.

# Capsicum

by *Miranda Merklein*

If you think about the chance we have at life, in our distinct manifestation of what we pretend, or have faith in to be original at all costs, that chance is very slim. Slimy, in fact, but if you are reading this, and I if I really am the speaker in question, we both have been successful. Big congrats to us both! Some of us evolve into relentless, unquestioning entrepreneurs. Some, like me, are paradoxes. Consider the inconsolable analogies:

Abandoned is to loved as ward is to state.

Huffer is to PhD as homeless is to hit-and run.

Sex goddess is to celibacy as psychosis is to medication.

Riptide is to death as survival is to hiccup.

And the list goes on like a GRE test gone mad!

Consider again the Capsicum as evidence. Once a spreading berry plant along the forest floor, the evolutionary mind of the plant understood that birds served as the best delivery of its seed and the surest hope of propagation. The problem was that mammals voraciously devoured the fruit, or “peppers” as Columbus would later rename them, planting the word into our colonized consciousness. As science teaches us, mammals ate the first peppers and grew stronger. You and I have eaten the peppers! Destroyed the seeds in our digestive systems like any common murderer. (Yes, even if you don't eat anything with eyes, you are still guilty of species destruction.) Capsicum understood this immorality and took arms. Thus the terms “hot peppers” or “chiles,” some so hot they could not bear to be eaten, except by birds, who are not affected by the added toxin. The problem for the chile pepper, however, was that as it became hotter, so rose the tolerance of the mammals who ate its fruit.

In the end, the toxin proved not only largely ineffective, but addicting. So it goes.

And this, my friend, is why I have changed my name to Capsicum. Some people laugh. Some people take offense at my audacity. Many of my friends, which will end up disappointing me no less, inevitably because they will all die, call me Cap for short.

Legally, I have changed my name many times. The truth is that I have exchanged identities so often that I feel I have given up my right to any namesake at all, and all this supported by the confusion of the public who can no longer identify me as a single personage. Somewhat a success on my part, which is why I have taken my most recent name from such a tragic evolutionary attempt, in hope of inheriting my own defense against the causes that persecute me, hate me, cause disease and so forth. My hope is to redeem every pepper on the face of the earth!

“Cap,” my fading friend said to me recently, though we no longer connect on that necessary soul level. “Don't you see what you have accomplished, despite the odds?” A woman of immense faith and concern, though her wrinkles grow deep.

“Yes,” I said. “But what hasn't killed me has made me more neurotic and fractal.”

You see, I cannot attest to you, to her, nor to anyone that I am a person at all, nor that I will remain on the crust of the earth after all my seeds have perished. To survive today may be enough, but as it looks now, it seems as though we all will fade out through mysterious or predictable causes, a cause for immediate concern, you might say. Yet I could be the first person to live forever! So could you, and why not?

You cannot deny my life until you have proof of my death, and which name would you look for on the tombstone anyway? I may become, like the cottonwood, a mathematical contortion of mirrored shapes and modified dimensions. After all, a snowflake, like the hexagram, falls fast when it realizes it is an individual, but the cottonwood, like dragonflies and mountain ranges, is at peace with the circular soul of repetition. Oh Plato, how lonely are the indivisible souls of your forms! Retreating like shadows in the forest as the sun plots against the sky.

# Creative Writing

by Larry (Ace) Boggess

Out there I wrote poems  
for friends who enjoyed a vision  
with pinches of passion &  
just a dash of melancholy. Here,  
I'm asked to write letters—  
deviant, hungry, decadent with spice—  
meant for lovers safe in their freedom,  
women I've not met.  
A jailhouse Cyrano sans desire,  
I'd much prefer whispering  
lines on the narrow view  
outside my window. *Less moon,*  
my patrons plead. *More cocks &*  
*cunts.* Each wants his girl to know  
he is smacking her ass  
in his sleep, so she gasps ... *again,*  
crying out from his astral touch. *But,*  
I say, *I'm better at making her sigh*  
*perhaps, or sing.* To which each tells me, *Yes!*  
*That's exactly what I want,*  
Although it isn't.

# Three Visitations and a Prince

by Joan Mitchell

When the poisoned apple lodged in your throat  
the sad dwarfs hauled you to a wide hilltop

and left you there alone. Your glass coffin  
is an odd sky window where the seasons pass

like familiar strangers, and bring eternities  
of birds. The owl comes with the first

snow's silence, tufted feet just above your head.  
Round gold eyes. His tears clink on the glass.

The raven brings tears of rain, and a comic  
waddle. He peers at you from one side

of his head and then the other as new green  
mounds along the coffin's sides. Summer's dove

has the tiniest feet, a busy scuffling on the glass.  
He pecks on the lid right above your nose:

"I'd curl, curl, curl soft and gray beside you."  
The prince will come as crisp leaves skitter on the lid.

He'll kiss you, and it all begins again: Rush of mind  
and blood. Tug of others. Bicker of everyday birds.

# The Dirt Charmer

by Dick Altman

Bothering not with seeds  
or pots of flowers  
but to prove  
I can master trees  
and bushes and holes  
enough for burials  
make the ground submit  
no matter how dry  
or intransigent  
drive a steel bar  
taller than a man  
into hardpan  
as if in some  
killing game  
not digging a home  
to outlive  
the cracked hands  
of the planter.

Such violent acts  
beget moments  
of tenderness  
even as I wrestle  
like an animal  
in need of calm  
a Colorado blue  
half again my weight  
tease the wheel  
of the bound-up root  
to its nesting place  
hug despite the pain  
branches needle-sharp

but innocent of intent  
thighs astride the base  
our dance nearly spent  
I tango my partner  
into the ground.

The chamisa  
and Russian sage  
I visit each sunrise  
look a child's age  
I sing to them  
as they battle  
wind and sun  
promise rains  
past due will come  
remind how  
ancient deeds  
hardened seed  
for waterless times  
make up rhymes  
songs of the soil-slayer  
subduing earth  
with staff taming  
the high plains dirt.

# Late Promise

by *Barbara Rockman*

Since crouched in the berried thickets  
since hay bales were hoisted to make-believe  
since the last dusk walk out of the sog swelter swamp  
since the path trudged tugging the warped toboggan home

I have hardly rested

so much work there was to be done  
to become one with the labeled and runged world  
to be in hot pursuit to not falter to marry and raise offspring  
to answer politely to vote correctly to do in moderation and be wise  
I have hardly rested

and so since I am tired I choose

less and what's been forgotten  
choose late walks cold and pink hued  
risk my cheek to rough bark to stay long enough  
to stuff pockets with scraps stones nuts rubbed a slick sheen

I mean to hide out

in apple gnarl elm island and log spoil  
holes deep to fit into snow piled to live in  
high limbs to dangle from on a bent-fendered  
blue bike breakneck downhill hands-off singing

I mean to hide out.

# Cleaning Saints

by Ann Hunkins

My grandmother kept three things in her refrigerator:  
coffee yoghurt, chicken legs two weeks old, a gallon jug of white wine.  
She kept a cast-iron skillet of lard on the stove,  
fried the chicken legs in the same stuff every time.

At fifty-five, she drove her red Mustang to Santa Fe,  
the same one she used to back out into traffic  
at the bottom of Garcia Street without looking.  
Neighbors remember her.

She took her white wine through a straw,  
smoked long brown cigarettes in her sleep.  
She'd sew coins and tiny chicken bones onto vests she patched together  
out of scraps from her old dress shop, and wear them to formal dinners.

She flung down under-cooked French fries on restaurant tables,  
told waiters and social workers to go to hell.  
Once or twice she wrote me a card in shaky letters:  
“Don't waste time wondering who likes you and who doesn't.”

Or: “I wish I could tell you things will get better.”  
She wasn't religious, but she cleaned saints  
at the Folk Art Museum up the hill,  
swabbing layers of smoke or maybe oil

from someone's palm or cheek off slick painted  
panels using Q-tips, slowly revealing the surprised  
faces of San Francisco de Asís, San Raphael Arcángel.  
I don't know how the saints got so dirty,

trapped inside their flat wood worlds.  
At night, they watched with dry eyes as she burnt holes

in the leather chair-arms. She'd say, (to us or them):  
"I don't know why you all don't just go home."

Once her psychiatrist gave her an exact suicide recipe.  
She didn't do it. She fell, dropped her keys in a snowdrift  
by the front door and said to the friend who found her  
four hours later, "Don't know if I should thank you or curse you."

Frostbite nearly cost her a leg below the knee.  
She said, "Freezing to death *hurts*," as if this surprised her,  
as if numbness ought to sweetly take over.  
Maybe she meant it hurts to come back to life.

One year, the Folk Art Museum closed for renovations.  
Her pharmacist was arrested so she had to give up opium.  
She lost her driver's license, and the woman who brought her  
a green chile chicken casserole every week stopped coming.

The last time I saw her she was wide eyed  
but tight-lipped, watching sparrows chip  
and scatter birdseed from the feeder.  
The skin on her face had sunk flat against the skull.

She would not speak to us.  
The birds were busy; it was spring,  
and the daffodils began to unfold at the last moment.  
She wasn't waiting for anyone to get there before she died.

# When the Baby Woke

by Regina Murray Brault

Except for the baby  
Kate's children had black hands  
from picking coal  
along the freight-yard tracks.  
The baby  
(who was the size of a bread-loaf)  
slept in a box  
on the open oven-door.

When asked about those early years  
Kate's children spoke of soot  
and growling bellies  
but never of the man  
who fled into a wintry night  
with the bony cavity  
of one eye socket  
as empty as a bluebird's nest  
clinging to December's bough.

The baby never saw the man  
who left him groping in the dark –  
the man who'd spun his own glass eye  
across the bar  
into a stranger's hand  
for one more shot of gin  
while his infant son  
made sucking sounds  
in the half-light of the oven door.

But it was that baby who one day  
opened those familiar bird-blue eyes  
squeezed a chunk of coal  
in his blackened hands  
and pronounced his father  
dead.

# Then Again

by Jack Cooper

I had so little, a small place above garages where the landlord stored dismembered Jags, an iron bed, heavy as a car frame, that folded down from the closet and an office desk with an oak chair held together by wooden pegs. These were hand to mouth days that tested the limits of solidarity and deadbolt nights that left the world abandoned to gunshots and disembodied screams.

Then again, I had an IBM Selectric with a 12-point Palatino font whose round serif letters sang to me as I typed each word of the book I had promised Jesse Joseph Tougau I would write about him after he passed.

He'd been a cerebral vagabond in the days "When men were men and women were washing machines," and fed my longing with impassioned tales of imperfect heroes like the time he stayed awake 135 hours laying pipe from a gusher in Borger, Texas, alongside his bunkmate, a hermaphrodite who hid his fully formed breasts with an inner tube under his shirt.

And later he infected an eye in the Tehachapis mining silver and bummed his way to Vegas where he made a bundle counting cards but got crippled with arthritis and took a train to Hot Springs, Arkansas, where attendants with white towels wiped brown muck off his skin for three weeks before he hitched a ride to L.A. and took bets on horses from the back of a dry cleaners until he went completely blind and lost his legs for good and had to move in with his brother where I met him through a friend and made him that promise.

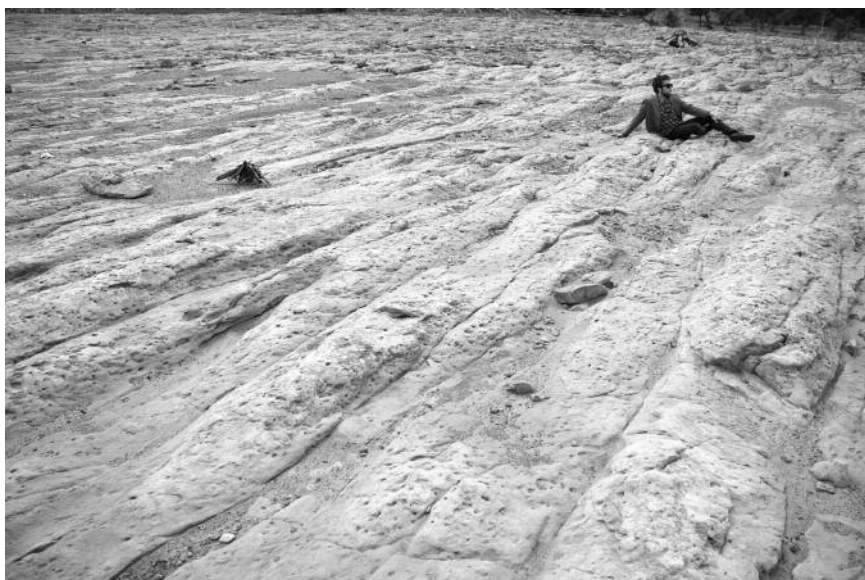
A new life later, when you moved into my place and we got a regular bed and bought our first computer, I'd long since given up the book and felt bad about it. Then you told me I could ask old Jesse in that other world for forgiveness, which I'd forgotten I could do even if it might be in my own head and even if it felt silly because how would I know if he forgave me.

Then again, how do we know anything?

# The Formula for Wholeness

by *Katherine Seluja*

The shape of his head was a pyramid, a pyramid turned upside down. His chin the pointed capstone, widening slowly into granite cheekbone, expanding further into a massive base. Hector was born with only a brainstem and miles of space and fluid where the rest of his brain should have been. I wanted to fill that space. I wanted to make him whole. But all I could do was hold him. Wrapped in soft cotton blankets, faded pink and blue stripes, the pink and blue of his veins more visible every day. His suck was strong. Some ancient impulse directing his tongue to grope and search, reach for nurses' hand, blanket's edge, plastic tubing that randomly brushed his face. His eyes protruded gazing at dark linoleum floors, too bright fluorescent light, late night radio on the low shelf above his bassinet. Each nurse took her turn with Hector, each one sure she had the formula for wholeness. Or the cure for space-where-brain-should-be. And if not, then a mumbled Hindu prayer, leather pouch of Jamaican curry, woven cross of fresh green palm. His fontanel began to bulge. I counted his irregular pulse there, in the little domed tent that swelled at the top of his head. He lost his will to suck, we lost one more way to soothe him. And then it was only quiet and nurse's arms. And faded pink and blue, a stone from Medjugorje, a string of ivory beads. The prayer card with a bleeding heart bursting under a crown of thorns was tucked behind his bassinet, the morning I came to work and he was gone.

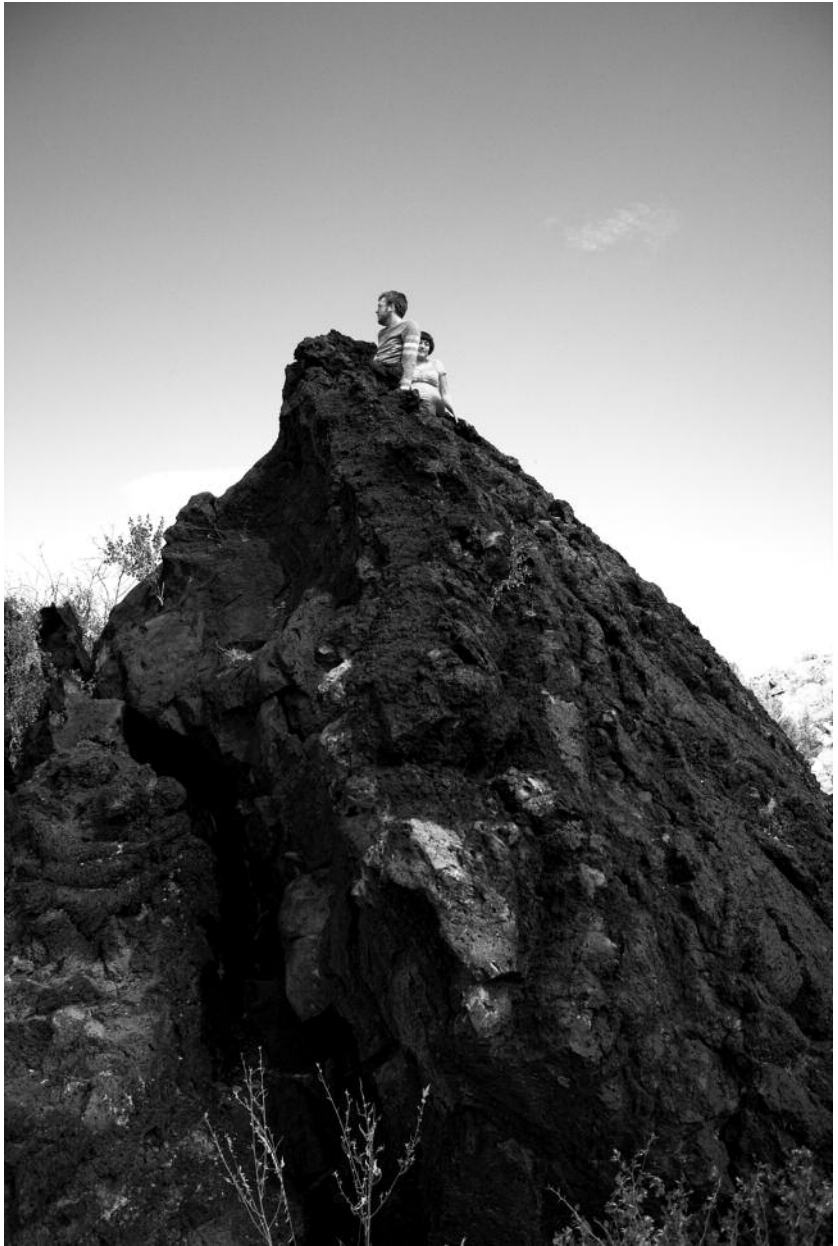


New Mexico 1 **Heron Lake**  
*by S.L. Bond*

Page 30:  
New Mexico 2  
**US-550 North**  
*by S.L. Bond*

Page 31:  
New Mexico 3  
**Valley of Fires**  
*by S.L. Bond*







New Mexico 4 **I-25 South of Socorro**  
by *S.L. Bond*

# William the Pig

by Ariel Gore

The Lehman's had this pig in their back yard. A pet pig named William the pig.

I wasn't really friends with those Lehman kids. They had sandy-colored hair and buttons for noses. My mom was friends with their mom, with Libby Lehman. They were in poetry group together. "There's a darkness to Libby's poetry," my mother said, but I was just straight-up jealous of those Lehman kids 'cause they had this big pinkish-greyish-black William in their back yard, and that pig was so cute and a little bit hairy—you know, sort of peach-fuzzy like pigs are.

"I wish I had a pig," I sighed to the older Lehman girl. She was my sister's age, maybe, tall and pretty.

She didn't answer me, she just shook her head and shrugged, like whatever.

But then one day we went over and Mr. Lehman wouldn't let me go in the back yard to see William—he just tugged at his beard and shook his head. And Libby Lehman set the long dining room table with the good silver and she served us pork chops for dinner, with dark sweet bar-que sauce. And I played Tinker Toys in the shag-carpeted den with those Lehman kids.

It was maybe a year after that when the phone rang at our house too early and it was one of those Lehman kids, voice shaky and too high-pitched so I handed the phone over to my stepdad who used to be a Catholic Priest before he got excommunicated for marrying my mom.

Mr. Lehman, it turned out, had accidentally shot Libby Lehman in the chest while he was cleaning his gun that morning and no, they hadn't called 911 yet, they needed a priest, not a paramedic.

That seemed like a strange story, but my stepdad the priest put on his wool beret and my mom the poet put on her coral red lipstick and the back door to our house slammed behind them and Libby Lehman was dead.

When my parents got home, my stepdad said, "I don't think that was an accident."

And my mother sighed and shook her head and said, “*Of course* that wasn’t an accident.”

But the newspaper said it was an accident and Mr. Lehman kept going to work every day and the Lehman kids kept going to school every day and I thought about William the pig and the way that before Mr. Lehman killed Libby, he must have killed William the Pig.

# Life Before Kant

by Meg Tuite

The nurse checked my vitals and squawked, NORMAL, in a parrot screech too loud for the barren, white room and me. She scribbled into her chart. I had barfed up oysters and beer scarfed down at the bar earlier and proceeded to faint again in the ER waiting room.

I should have locked myself at home that night. Instead, I dragged myself out to drown in another online genius of a date named Thwartyly, who mumbled, “There was no life before Kant.” Another word similar to Kant came to mind. This dumb ass, with a name I couldn’t say no to, hated humans, TV, animals, sleep and when we got down to it, the entire 21st century.

How many online hook-ups had I blitzed my way through in the last few months? Burton was the first. I was a sucker for overwrought quotes and his profile had a Nietzsche zinger dangling at the top of the page: “And if you gaze into the abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.” I recall gazing into his nose hair at the restaurant for a very long time and then his pubic hair as the night wore on.

Vince loved Bob Marley and had a hot tub. Jefferson was into Einstein, although when the bill arrived he had an easy time with the relativity of his lack of cash. I ended up dumping him after I got stuck with the unending monologue of his eminence and the prodigious bar bill. Trevor had a fetching quote of Maya Angelou, “All great achievements require time.” I definitely agreed with her and came up with my own quote after that date. “Small achievements spurt out prematurely, which gives no possibility for any great achievements to ever commence.” I don’t how many dates I’d been on, but I knew that this was better than staying home.

I doused back three Buds in the time it took Thwartyly to detest a variety of subjects including the naivety of quantum physics and billiards. I woke up from my stupor and ordered this swain, now eyeing my breasts, and myself two shots of Jack Daniels along with a plate of sliders. The least I could do was get a free meal and a good buzz off this screw-driver.

I brightened up as Thwarty's speech declined, sinking into his suspenders, the drunker he got. He was an overeducated, dumb-of-wheat that parted his sparse hair on the side like a five-year-old. He bristled on about his mother and living the life of a recluse when nausea overcame me. While he battled over mathematics, I started to do my own arithmetic. How long had I been dating these online freaks?

By the time I figured out that my knockers were knocking together like two, sodden sailors and I'd been schtupping these guys for over three months I was on my way to the bathroom as bile moved up my throat toward the sky. Oh God, I prayed for the first time since last year. Not again?

# Oh God, Oh Jesus, No!

by Kona Morris

Anytime I'm around this many women, especially adult, motherly, earth-tone wearing women, some with gurgling babes on lap, some brimming pots of estrogen just waiting for the right little tadpole to jump in, I get cold sweats, dizzy, blurry-eyed claustrophobia. As if the gaseous fumes exuding from their soft-pinned heads take up the rest of the space in the room, filling up all around me like the innards of a poisonous balloon. Their sisterly nag walks, bleeding axe wounds, nutritious home cooked meals, clogged Maybelline blackheads, expensive shampoo. I have to get out of here. Eighteen months overdue (again) or not. I look down at my core and grieve at it for making me need the same things they do.

I'm about a half a foot from the door, on my way out, when I hear the voice of a heavy-thighed nurse, volunteer, whatever, call out, "Cara — Caralee Robinson." I stand frozen, plagued with indecision. Responsibility versus tremendous humility and pain. I'm governed by the latter, continuing with my final step to the door. "Excuse me, aren't you Caralee?" She's followed me. Fucktoast. This shouldn't be allowed, this kind of intrusion, this break in the anonymity code. "Yes," I squeeze out, much to my own dismay, a million fake names rolling around in my head that I could have claimed instead. "Well, it's time for your appointment, dear, please follow me." Yes, but I'm on my way out, I've just remembered something terribly important I have to do right now, I'm sorry but I have no choice but to reschedule. Only I'm not saying that, only my feet are following her, carrying me off to a room I don't want to be going to.

After the initial heart-beating blood-pressure tests and waiting on the little cushioned platform for what feels like an hour in this no-clock room, a four foot tall white haired woman with fur on her chin and a full body lab coat comes through the door.

"Well, why don't you have your gown on by now," she looks down at my file, "Caralee?"

“Oh, you can just call me Cara.”

“That’s beside the point, now please take off your clothes and drape this in front of you, I’ll pop outside for *one minute*.” I feel like crying. Like clawing the skin off my neck. She has no patience with me, I know this. So I strip, ashamed, wanting nothing more than to run out the door, grab my file from her, and peel out in a lavish gust of parking lot dust and screeching tires.

There’s nothing in the world worse than the feeling of a pap smear, except maybe the feeling following a pap smear. Spastic muscle clenching. Invisible sex organ suddenly woken from hibernation, pierced and burning, from pelvis to clogged throat. She adjusts my feet into the pot holder-cloaked feet bars (oh boy do I feel at home now, hokie mama free clinic) and tells me to slide my ass down towards her. I feel a trickle of hot fluid in the corner of one eye, my opening below breathing into her face. Moist and hyperventilating.

Her hands move on me. I jump. She says, “Please just relax now,” pauses, “*Caralee*.” Relax is the last thing I can do. This is all a mistake, I just know it. Letting a bearded midget violate me. Displaying my bowels to this evil little prick. I vow that this will be the last time. I’d rather take my chances with explosive vaginal discharge than go through this torture.

She abruptly shoves the cold KY soaked metal claws far enough inside of me to grab hold of my internal nose horn. She’s pushing and poking all around. Jamming, forcing until finally it clicks shut. She’s got a hold of it now. Clamped onto it. That’s where it is and it’s hers, metal penetrating, gouging imprints. Then she slides a long, sharp straw up through the middle. It’s piercing, right through me, cold and long and thin. I feel it turning all around, the end of it scooping up whatever magical cervix slime it can, and then she pulls it back out and plops it into the waiting glass vial.

And for the next four or five days I am left with the feeling of physical injustice, like no matter what I do, no matter how tight I clench my legs and kegels and guts together, there’s just no way to rub or comfort that bashful part of my body, jammed way up inside. I can feel pressure,

the sensation specifically on it, just as familiar as any scraped knee outside body part, clenching and needing to be comforted after such brutality, but it's on the ugly side and there's just no getting to it. A guy can always reach down and pull, tug, or scratch his floppies any time needed. I wonder if he ever knows what he's missing out on, to not have genitals tucked up inside of unreachable you and only seriously feel it when the metal claw clamps and scrapes, the straw pierces and pokes, and you're left in a state of tense muscle clenching. So yeah, not enough body parts to go around.

# Behind the Wheel

by Linda Whittenberg

We were lurching over rutted farm roads  
in the '49 stick-shift Chevy.  
I even got a faint whiff  
of the earthy smell  
you carried on your boots.  
While I struggled with the clutch,  
you were laughing at my clumsy efforts.  
*You'll get the hang of it*, you said,  
cheering me on,  
your large body heaving forward and back,  
head just missing the dash.  
Even then, tiny spider veins crawled on your face,  
arteries already slamming shut,  
your fragile heart ready to burst.

Today, another chip in the cup of anger  
I've drunk from all these years,  
as I remembered you.

# Stupa

by *Barbara Robidoux*

On the south side, the poor side, the immigrant laden, gangster ridden, bean burrito and Tres XXX's riddled side of an otherwise fancy art mecca in the west, a small group of Tibetan Buddhists built a Stupa. It is a golden pearl in a desert of empty pocketed sand. Trailer homes surround it. A McDonald's lies at the feet of the Buddha. Amidst the chaos of a violent and uncomfortable world, the Stupa shines. Tattered red and yellow prayer flags hang from an old cottonwood tree badly in need of pruning. The flags appear to be growing from the tree. Leaves of tree and flags are one. Brilliant white Stupa walls glow against a gray winter sky. In the east a full moon rises out of the Sangres as the sun lays down in the Jemez.

moon shines on golden Stupa  
chanting fills night air  
om mani padme hung.

# In the Company of Men

At Outdoorsman, De Vargas Mall, Santa Fe, NM

by Tom Crawford

Six handguns lay on the counter top  
on a green felt mat  
in front of a very serious customer.  
He'd handled each one in turn.  
Then he picks up the 38, Smith & Wesson again.

"This one has the best feel," he says,  
slipping his hand around the black grip  
squeezing it, "and I like the way  
the trigger fits my finger."

"Yah, it's a fine piece of work," the clerk says,  
"tried and true," as the customer hands him  
the gun and he fits it gently  
into his hand then shows us all  
how his finger, too, fits the gold trigger.  
Then with a slight smile,  
"We can't keep this one in stock."

There are four of us at the counter,  
so I don't feel conspicuous about my feelings  
about why I come in here.

Then the man next to the man interested  
in the 38 Special puts his hand out.  
Immediately the clerk puts the gun in it.  
"You're right about the trigger,  
and the weight, I like the weight."  
Then he lifts the gun to his nose,  
smells the muzzle.

Just then the third man's right hand floats  
across the five handguns on the counter  
just grazing each one with tips of his fingers  
like he's psychic or something.  
He picks up the 357 Magnum.

"Now, this is more my style."  
He's big and it's a big gun. Holding it  
in his right hand he runs his left hand  
over the extra long barrel  
and on down to the cylinder  
which he slowly spins with his left hand  
looking into each cartridge chamber  
as it comes around.

It's a quiet moment for all of us  
at the counter, when men find something  
beautiful that doesn't seem to confuse them.

I've been eyeing the 22 Ruger  
on the bottom shelf to my left,  
a replica of the 9 Millimeter German Lugar  
my Uncle Benny brought back from the war.

Nobody looks at anybody else  
except for the clerk  
who picks up my interest.

But now I feel, what, satisfied?  
I'll come back, I tell him  
over the backs of the men.

"You betcha," he says, "Any time,"  
and points to the Ruger.

"It'll be here."

# The Beer Grabbing

by Jon Olsen

I'm following my friends to the door. We're finally leaving this awful party. Still drinking the can of beer I just opened, I help myself to another from the mini-fridge in the living room, slyly slipping it into the pocket of my tweed jacket. Miller Lite is all they have, not my favorite, but it's free. I'm reaching for a third can when our drunk host confronts me. "What the fuck do you think you're doing?" he asks. He swats the opened can I'm drinking from my hand. It lands on the carpet with a bouncy clunk and begins gushing out a foamy puddle. I reach down and grab another can from the mini-fridge. "No!" our host shrieks, knocking it from my grasp. It hits the floor and rolls under the couch. I can't help but wonder why he's knocking the beers out of my hand instead of punching me in the face. It would make more sense.

I remember words spoken years ago by my best friend Hank, that huge unstoppable redneck of doom, "One of these days, someone is going to beat the shit out of you. Someone is going to punch you right in the face." He told me this while driving home from a party, drunk, chased away by his friends after five of them had to drag him off a guy who made the mistake of kissing his girlfriend.

I grab another can and again he knocks it away. It ricochets off the wall and bursts, geysering cheap horse piss into the air. Spectators move back to avoid the spray.

I have never been punched in my life, not yet anyway. In high school it almost happened once. A gigantic, lumbering jock with a wispy adolescent mustache loomed over me after gym class. "I just want you to know that I don't like you and I think you're a fucking faggot and I'm going to punch you in the fucking mouth," he told me. "That's gonna happen real soon."

I was scared, but also a bit thrilled. Nobody had ever threatened me with violence so unambiguously before. I wasn't sure how to reply, so I just said, "Okay." He never ended up punching me. He never even spoke to me again. I wondered if I had inadvertently intimidated him. Did he think I was unperturbed by his threats, when I was actually frozen

in terror? I wish I had control over these things.

I have no control over myself at the moment. Just look at me, unchecked audacity has turned me into a character in a real-life slapstick comedy. The ghost of Mack Sennett is directing me and I am compelled to go with the flow of the gag. A fifth and then a sixth beer hit the carpet (and maybe a seventh as well but I've lost count by now). A drunk guy walking by trips on one and falls, spilling his plastic cup of margarita. Finally my friends are dragging me away.

As I'm exiting the house it occurs to me that I have behaved like a complete and utter douche hole. Cringing with shame, I pull out the can I had slipped into my jacket pocket and crack it open. I express my remorse to Wendy, one of the friends who helped drag me out of there. She insists that I was hilarious. Wendy is a beautiful dark-haired girl with a permanent sardonic smirk. She's my secret target audience, the reason I went to the party in the first place. It was she who, when I asked, said no one was likely to care if I helped myself to a can of beer on my way out.

# After the Founders' Room Closes, 1982

for Larry Levis

by Jon Davis

Tonight, following this stranger's form —  
the longed-for, the late  
muttering form, I thought of him in Montana  
reciting Lowell's "hardly passionate  
Marlboro Street," rumors of cocaine  
& a talent in decline,  
talk of divorce, careless line breaks,  
foreclosure —  
poems skittering off the page & each wiring  
a little mercy to a wan  
image. That  
chaste gossip of grad students a frail  
epigraph for our own failures.  
Twenty years. Levis gone.  
Our images. Our losses. Holding our poems, not his,  
we watched the lecture hall  
emptied, watched until the bleak,  
gray winter light of Missoula returned & touched  
the empty institutional chairs, touched,  
behind the blackened lecturn, the tossed off  
jacket, touched even the stern faces of the founders  
in the paintings there: John Carrington Hicks,  
Pierre Fremont—almost as if the gray light could  
quicken the dead, each dire fragment  
of creation, as if to somehow grace them  
with presence again.  
It can't, or won't.  
And it is too late for grace: All night  
I've studied his poem that,

in his voice, will not be spoken again, & which,  
with his voice, probably will languish  
in the prison of the page. And so at last  
the poet and the poem will share  
a mild entombment, or,  
someday in Missoula, walking on Higgins,  
a quick, bemused snatch of voice  
then nothing.

I don't expect to see him, striding  
with his leather jacket and thin curlicues of hair,  
that angelic or Rilkean profile,  
even though he was, clearly, only a man  
like any other, but one rifted with ore,  
older than everyone, stunned  
by song. I recall him now,  
holding the delicious line,  
delicious to him,

“like the sun she rises  
in her flame flamingo infants' wear” —  
that precious and baleful line  
not his, but offered anyway, held out  
like a child for baptism, held out  
as I hold out this poem  
in the already failing light.

# Knitting My Shroud

by Dallas Huth

I intended to be cremated and had written a poem of instruction for my children for the disposal of my ashes:

Outside the kitchen window  
is an orange Austrian Rose  
where I scattered your Dad's ashes.

Take a cutting from the rose  
and carry it home in a zip-lock bag  
with a little dirt from around the base.

Mix in some of my ashes  
and plant the cutting in a sunny place  
until it takes root.

If it doesn't, go to the nursery,  
buy another Austrian Rose (*rosa foetida*)  
and try again.

But in the latest 'Hey! I bet you didn't know this!' exposé I learn that toxins released into the air from a cremation could pollute a city block. Even the fillings in our teeth contribute to the mercury in the atmosphere. Cremation releases dioxin, hydrochloric acid, hydrofluoric acid, sulphur dioxide and carbon dioxide. Cremation also requires a container, a plastic or composite box that may contribute other pollutants.

In New Mexico and probably other states, it is legal to be buried on your own property, but I have no old homestead cemetery where I can be laid to rest. Then I learn there are green burial sites. Washington State now has three cemeteries certified "green" by the Green Burial Council, a group formed to reform the death care industry on ecological issues.

Green cemeteries do not use embalming fluids, non-biodegradable caskets or permanent grave liners and vaults. They use products that

promote the natural decomposing of a body. I wondered about the lead grave liner. I thought it must be to preserve a loved one's bones for eternity, but I learn cemeteries use them to maintain ground stability. Otherwise, each cemetery row would be like a street full of potholes or a particularly difficult golf course.

A natural landscape is preserved in these cemeteries. I picture rolling hills, evergreen trees, a babbling brook and picnic tables. And I love this part: many such cemeteries let visitors use GPS tracking devices to locate remains of loved ones. Wouldn't my children have a field day, so to speak, with that?

I am not actively contemplating dying. I am seventy-five years old, realistic, and only a little unnerved by the prospect. I want to be responsible and make arrangements that will make it easier for my children to – well – get rid of the body. I'd like my poem read:

Canyons of red  
deep purple  
tumbling white water  
shooting the rapids  
now an eddy

and “Bye, Bye, Blackbird” sung. I like that line, “Make my bed and light the light, I'll arrive, late tonight.”

Ruminating on a desirable “container” for my body, I happen upon a whole bin of knitting yarn at a thrift shop. All my favorite colors – blue, red, purple, teal and rust – in natural wool, were on sale for half price! Not only that, but the entire lot is only \$8.50 to begin with. I realize I can knit my shroud for only \$4.25.

I rarely knit anything more complicated than a scarf or washcloth, so I make a few false starts each time I begin a new project. Rather than experimenting, I stop in the local craft shop for casting-on directions.

“I'm going to knit my shroud,” I begin, and the two women behind the counter stare at me as though I had, in fact, just dropped dead in front of them. I mumble about “green cemeteries” and “sound ecological practices” and “how do I know how many stitches to cast on and how do I do it?” The grey-haired, more down-to-earth appearing clerk recovers

and mimes measuring around her ample bosom. She explains how to calculate the stitches-per-inch, suggests circular needles, and shows me how to cast-on.

Before I start, I lay the yarn out and sort by colors. I start where my head will be with purple, since this is supposed to be a spiritual color. But I cast on too many stitches and after a few rounds of knitting, it is apparent that this will accommodate my hips. Now the top becomes the bottom. I decide to take it in and knit together a few stitches which make it look bunched. During a tense moment in “Invasion of the Body Snatchers” (it just came on TV while I was knitting) I drop a few stitches. I hate to admit it, but I begin to wonder how I will look in it.

I knit rust mohair, a few inches of teal, some sky blue. As the shroud grows, it begins to warm my lap, then my legs. I no longer care if there are mistakes. They seem only fitting. And speaking of fitting, I hope my children can figure out how to get me into my shroud. And I hope they plant that slip of Austrian Rose over my body. That may help them locate me, and if not, there is always the GPS.

# How to Read Your Father's Obituary

by Karen Stefano

Read, through eyes flat as a rag doll's, "Sam Dwyre. Born San Francisco December 15, 1927. Died San Francisco January 16, 2009. Career civil servant." Read behind closed doors. Under no circumstances should you read in public. This means train, bus, or any other mode of public transportation and includes the reception area of the law firm where you answer phones because you can't find anything better right now.

Don't worry that the staccato bursts of words read like your father was cut from a piece of cardboard, a flimsy man with hollow insides. Don't bristle when the words fail to capture the cadence of his laugh, the laugh you heard whenever he made his puns about pee, like the one about the tea-drinking Indian who drowned in his own Teepee, or the one he said every time you had peas for dinner, "Eat every carrot and pee on your plate!" You didn't get that joke for almost a year, and always wondered why he was being such a grouch when you were a good eater and didn't need such imperatives.

Feel no bitterness that the editors didn't give him the big half-page obit. Everyone knows those are paid for. But still, don't read any of those story-tale life advertisements appearing on the same page with your father's lapidary obit. That will just make you feel worse.

Take no offense when it seems his life counts less because he is measured only by how many survivors he left behind: one daughter, whereas the guy in the next column had four brothers, three daughters, and fourteen grandchildren. This is just how they do it.

Do not feel guilty when under "Services" it reads simply, "None." This may sound like you are a selfish daughter who can't be bothered to honor the life of the man you have known every minute you've been alive, the man you cannot imagine living without. Sure, it reads a little cold, but remind yourself he didn't want formal services and in a couple of months when you can (hopefully) speak his name in more than a

squeak, you are going to make a few calls and have a wake at The Blarney Stone where you will toast him with Guinness. You will raise your glass and share all your private moments, like the time you hadn't finished your book report and it was Sunday night, and your report was due Monday and you hadn't even finished Chapter One and you couldn't get further because it was *Treasure Island*, and you didn't know it then but even in your rambling hysteria you made a cogent argument about how it was gender bias for the school to even make you read this fucking book, and you were panicked, and he told you he would be right back and you were like, "You're leaving? Now???" and you seethed with the betrayal, stunned that YOUR OWN FATHER could leave you at a time like this, and you threw yourself on your pink bedspread and sobbed and then he came back forty minutes later, standing over you holding something called *Cliff Notes*.

Do not think in metaphors. Like how he is already starting to fade, his life as soundless as your footsteps on the carpet beside his bed. Or how it's like you were playing happily on a see-saw together but he hopped off his end without warning, sending you down to hit the ground with a thud.

Do not ponder the meaning of obituaries. Don't wonder, if news of his death is printed but no one reads it and no one ever knows --is he really gone? Philosophical musings won't help you now.

If someone catches you and asks, "Whatcha readin'?" Tell them to mind their own fucking business.

Throw the paper away immediately. Crumple it in a loud, passive-aggressive ball. (Remember to recycle).

Prepare for the year of firsts. The first Christmas, your first birthday without him. Learn to live in a world that does not have him in it.

Do not recall his last weeks, when all you did was nag him to eat better and get his hearing checked. And do not recall his last days, especially not the day you forced him to go to the hospital and he looked at you through eyes puddled with tears and told you he didn't want to go, and when you asked why not he said, "Because I'm afraid I won't come back this time." Do not think about that.

Make mistakes at work. Transpose phone numbers on messages and when people complain, shrug and give them your best glassy-eyed

stare, saying, “That’s the number they gave me.”

Realize, slowly, that nothing will ever feel right again.

Leave work early. Resist the urge to drive by the house where you grew up, the wide bungalow where your father lived for forty-four years, the home he refused to leave unless it was “Feet first!” That place no longer exists and if you turn back to look at it now, you could turn to stone, like what happened to Lot’s wife, and no one likes turning to stone.

Go home. Watch the president’s inaugural address on TV, even though your father was a Hillary supporter. Cry during the part about what so many Americans have lost. When your friend touches your arm and asks in her most tender voice, “What’s wrong?” Sob and tell her, “It’s just so sad.” “What’s sad?” she’ll say. Yank your arm back and yell, “The poems! All the lost poems!” When she squeezes your hand and tells you softly, “Honey, he said *homes*. All the lost *homes*,” decide it’s time to get your own hearing checked.



## Study in Black & White, 1

Mixed media on clayboard, 5x5"

*by Mickey Bond*



## Study in Black & White, 2

Mixed media on clayboard, 5x5"

*by Mickey Bond*

# Skowhegan

for Robert Creeley

by Audrey Powers

I.

Light moves slowly over the East Coast  
while a humid note shatters like lightning-  
blue cold paint in the studios.

II.

Barn doors open revealing  
a wooden chair that waits for words to form  
the spider webs that accumulate among the corners.

III.

Mosquitoes suck dry at veins that run out of milk  
while a Luna Moth delicately lands on the skin of mildew.

IV.

Blue “low-rider,”  
a banana seat bike  
sails down a muddy hill  
while fear of duck’s itch  
prevents swimming  
nakedly in the lake.

V. First Circus

Balloons, tied to tiny braids, attempting to float away;  
In the middle of a circus, a sad clown spins plates on top of poles?

VI. Con Amor Fresco

Grinding pigment, making love  
as your hand holds onto the  
smooth handle of a glass müller.

Adding water to precious dust to form paint.  
Lime along with sand mixes together  
as layers upon layers of memory are added.  
Intonaco settles, and waits for the first pigment  
to be inserted.

Waiting for twenty-minutes  
before delicately applying more layers  
of paint so that the raven's head appears  
while a fancy shawl dancer becomes  
a ghost rising up to tell a new story  
as Penobscot singers  
sing of A.I.M.

Magically, the golden moment arrives,  
as the plaster draws in the pigment  
before the very eyes.

Running out of the studio shouting,  
"The Golden Moment is here!"  
The dawn of special replies,  
"Hurry back!  
before you miss it."

VII.  
Running for cover  
between 4 to 5 p.m.  
when all is still  
except for the  
hungry mosquitoes.  
For don't you know  
it's only the female  
that feeds this very hour.

# Desert Kingdom

(after the photograph by Steven Hays)

by Joseph Hutchison

*Bisti Wilderness, New Mexico*

What are these battered beasts  
from a time before words? Heaved

up out of the desert's bleached  
grit, they point blunted faces

into a wind the camera's put  
a stop to. Frozen in place, how

can they be so moving? It must be  
that some creature inside recalls

these familial shapes. I feel it lift  
its snout in recognition, feel it

groan beneath that billowing  
flood of high, sun-struck clouds.

# war came. war went

by Joseph Delgado

war came. war went  
like grandmother's cigarette  
smoke through the screen door  
there she whittles bone and wood  
praying for rain, praying for the snakes  
to stop hissing her name from the  
bunch grass or under the old chevy  
that never got fixed  
she whispers names long since forgotten milagros  
dios santo nino san ysidro  
she twists her tongue in psalms and  
bends her back over the wash, sheets  
sweat stained, a drop of blood  
like a peach from the branch  
hangs from the cloth, that  
smell of camphor and gauze  
that taste of piss in the air  
pulling grit and sand from teeth  
watching the wind waver through and over  
grass, watch as the sunlight traces my  
grandmother's face, watch as she eyes the  
ghosts sitting down by the acequeia, she tells me dont go mijo  
dont go

# Shell

*by Carol Denson*

If held tightly in one hand,  
it presses its thin edge  
into flesh.

If balanced on a palm,  
it rocks across its hinge,  
flippant.

If held by the fingers, protruding,  
it wants to speak,  
to leap.

If held between the palms,  
it fills the hollow  
made in prayer.

# Contemplating Sex and Electrons, I Sew My Rakusu

by Michael G. Smith

With every slip stitch, needle and thread  
become a more radical notion. Thread disappears.

Reappears. Pleated strips of black silk meld  
to pleated strips of black linen. Two become a third,

my meditation preventing a bit of hurt. Carefully I sew hidden  
stitches and couple the border to the white silk

that will face my belly. Here Roshi will ink  
my new name. Something like *Blind Turtle*

or *Cold Mountain*. Long have I desired  
a name with pigment – another delusion I hope to sidle up to.

The quiet house has good air. Thoughts like flocks  
of grackles land and pass. Another lands. I bump

against the echoes of words. A woman becomes sex,  
anger spills through the car horn. Streams of electrons

dictate my every mood. I am stingy with my good sides.  
Still, sunbeams tunnel through the window. A river

thaws somewhere. Long ago a point became a spacious  
thing. All I have to do is hold both sides of the fabric

and stitch two precise stitches back-to-back.

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Author's note: The rakusu is a garment worn around the neck by  
Zen Buddhists who have taken the Bodhisattva precepts. It represents

the robes that Shakyamuni wore, the rice fields he walked past, and is worn in memory of the Buddha's Teachings and those who carried Zen through the centuries, especially the monastics persecuted in China during the 9th century CE.

# Timorous

*by Elizabeth Raby*

She remembered being someone,  
or so she thought at the time,  
but she ran away, became no one,  
afraid of being found out,  
learned to be mostly quiet,  
hidden at the back of the room  
where no one would see  
that she had raised her hand.  
She marched when everyone marched,  
cheered when her voice was one  
among many, never felt the force  
of water from the fire hose,  
the prison door never closed on her,  
the truncheon never came down,

but he forgave her, lived the risks  
she wouldn't, loved her anyway.

# Tracks

by Kathleen Runyan

I remember the night  
the wild horses went by,  
went by our sleepy farm  
like ghosts from a fleeting dream

Lame old Dobbin, drowsing in his stall,  
roused and reared, tossed his wispy mane  
and whinnied like a colt

Molly, patient Molly,  
chewing her bitter cud,  
held back her milk  
and kicked her calf away

Contained in their scientific henhouse,  
chickens cackled madly, pecked each others eyes  
and flew against the windows

Even Shep, faithful Shep,  
howled like a lonesome wolf  
and woke the stuporous sow  
who rolled and smothered her babies

For the first time in years I wet my bed.  
Needing comfort, I went to my parents' room,  
was frightened by grunts, groans, and giggles.

Her legs in the air, Mother screamed.  
His naked rump a stunning revelation,  
my mild father bellowed like a bull,  
“Get out of here before I kill you!”

In the morning everything seemed the same.  
Only by tracks through a trampled garden  
could you tell the wild horses had gone by.

# A Brief History of My Lust, His Visitations

by Jim Nawrocki

The first time, a fresco's blossom  
fresh in famished paint.

Thereafter, a pair of dark eyes,  
like some saint staring through ordained fire.

Always, my blood in a manic pulse.  
Sometimes, a gold incandescence in the dusk,

a garden shed, a pulled-down shade.  
There's a mute warble, the late sun

orange and wobbly  
over some back wooden stairs.

It's tantamount to surrender – this ascent  
again within view of the ocean at the edge

of our city. Dalliance. Entrechtat. And even now  
waves still twinkling in the window's slate gut.

Call it a multitude, the sure moon  
on an infinity of empty dinner plates.

Walk the water's edge.  
There's hunger in its pinioned turbulence,

another surge, and crest, and plaintive hush  
of false resolution, rolling forward

again and again and again

# Yesterday Sonnet

by Michelle Holland

Carrousel stories strike a garish organ chord, vivid  
in the lie that there is anything to reach for  
from the back of a shiny pony on a pole.  
Don't you lean, lean and reach for the brass ring?  
I paid the barker's fee, clutched the coupons  
in my hands, chose the mount with the least  
paint chipped off, both ears intact, the red tassel  
still in place, and pulled myself aboard.  
Mid-day sun, the barn smells from the big tent,  
the sawdust between my flip-flopped toes,  
all served to convince me of my purpose.  
Yesterday, I was ten years old, my mother  
told me the brass ring was mine for the taking.  
Now, I don't have a clue which horse to ride, where to look.

# Red In Reykjavik

by Timothy Riordan

she was red in Reykjavik

blue in the lagoon  
white against the glacier  
green as moss  
on black lava fields

she flowed through fjords  
and quickened  
at crystal falls  
spanning two continents

she was Iceland's summer air



# For a Man to Whom I May Have Caused Some Embarrassment

*by Paul Lamar*

I've told this story to a friend with certain airiness,  
But now I need absolution from you. If, when we pass again,  
You will give me two minutes, I'll explain it all  
Without attempting to excuse. And then you can forgive me.  
(Ah, I worry you'll either take out a police whistle or shove me  
Or spray me with Mace. I wouldn't blame you, beautiful man.)

I'm lonely, and that is all there is to say.  
Since May I've nodded to you, and you to me,  
On State Street where you work. And then I said hello.  
Hello, you said in return. And Monday when you waved  
Across the street, going the other way  
(You with a companion), I determined to meet you.  
Instantly I devised the rash plan that makes me cringe with shame.

I had no pen, but I had a blank page among Xeroxed resumes  
That were going to prospective employers (I'd just copied them  
Down the block—you must know every horrible detail).

I stopped in  
At the ice cream parlor, where they recognize me, and  
borrowed a pen.

I wrote: "I know this is presumptuous of me, but I will take  
The plunge. I'm the man who waves to you on State Street.

Perhaps  
You'll join me at the Pub some night?" I wrote my name  
and number.

God.

I took it to your office and, because I did not know your name,  
Described you to the secretary. She must have thought  
I was a fool. But worse than this was not folding down the corners.  
I knew that she would read the note and twinkle when she  
handed it to you.

God.

Thank God I didn't return and take it back.

You must have been annoyed and hated me.  
Perhaps you were merely being sociable and never  
Intended friendship. Perhaps you have a lover  
With whom you're planning revenge with bricks or rumors.  
I feel like Michael Henchard. I wished to know you, Tom  
(Your name, she said), but I am shy (one other time  
I left a note on the windshield of a neighbor's car)  
Who now wants only to explain. If ever you have overstepped,  
Then next time we pass please let me tell you everything.

# Interview with Melissa Pritchard

by Meg Tuite

In January, 2012, Melissa Pritchard's eighth book and fourth short story collection, *The Odditorium*, will be published by the prestigious Bellevue Literary Press, NY.

Her work has appeared and been cited in numerous magazines, journals and anthologies, including *The Best American Short Stories*, *The O. Henry Awards: Prize Stories*, *The Best of the West*, *The Prentice Hall Anthology of Women's Literature*, *The Paris Review*, *Conjunctions*, *Agni*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *The Nation*, *The New York Times Book Review* and *O, The Oprah Magazine*. Her essay "A Solemn Pleasure," has just been reprinted in *The Inevitable: Contemporary Writers Confront Death*, W.W. Norton, edited by Bradford Morrow and David Shields. She has received many awards, including The Flannery O'Connor and Carl Sandburg Awards, as well as fellowships from The National Endowment for the Arts, the Howard Foundation at Brown University, the Illinois Arts Council, Writer's Voice YMCA and the Hawthornden Foundation, Scotland. Two of her books, *Spirit Seizures* and *The Instinct for Bliss*, both New York Times Notable Books, have been translated into Italian and Spanish. Having served as a judge for The Flannery O'Connor and the PEN/Faulkner Awards, she sits on the Governing Board of the Afghan Women's Writing Project (AWWP) and has founded The Ashton Goodman Grant, working with AWWP to help fund education and literacy projects for Afghan women and girls. Sought out nationally and internationally as a teacher and speaker on humanitarian issues, Melissa teaches at Arizona State University.

*Meg: I was blessed to be an early student of Melissa's, almost two decades ago, in Santa Fe and Taos, NM, after her first collection "Spirit Seizures" had won the Flannery O'Connor Award as well as numerous others, and before she had set off to get her MFA at Vermont College. She is an incredibly fun*

*and innovative teacher who knows how to hone in on what works in a story as well as to help her student's make the changes necessary to resuscitate a story back to life. A workshop with Melissa is like being in group therapy. She got us to delve deep and pull up what was needed to make a story resonate and ring true! She also became a friend to all of us. No one could possibly forget Melissa Pritchard and how she transformed each one of us!*

**Meg:** I wanted to go back to the early years of your writing career. You made it happen without the MFA and I thought you might have some advice for burgeoning writers with that burning yearning to write, but not much knowledge of what to do next? Is an MFA important at this point in time to get a book published?

**Melissa:** A cultural belief has taken hold in the last fifteen or twenty years that you must have an MFA in order to publish, to succeed as a writer. I don't agree. A passion for literature, for reading, a willingness to practice the lonely art and daily discipline of writing, to study the work of writers you love, can give you as much of a chance as anyone. MFA Programs have their benefits, absolutely, but they are not requisite to being a successful writer. Occasionally I choose to gently shock my students by telling them I am self-taught. Years ago, as an aspiring writer, I had no money to attend an MFA program; as a young midwestern mother, I wrote at home when the children were napping. I knew no living writers. I simply had this zeal to write, and I tried to learn how from my best teachers, authors whose books I checked out of the local library as often as I could.

**Meg:** You once told me that you scoured used bookstores and bought obscure black and white photography collections for your inspiration. A haunting face or a scene ignited something in you. Is this still one of your tricks and are there others that work well for you?

**Melissa:** I still buy old books of photography, and sometimes use them as prompts for students in class. I've never actually written a story based entirely on a photograph, I just find them stimulating to my imagination, photographs of people from different eras, different regions and

countries. I marvel at the mystery of a photograph of someone long dead, yet still hauntingly vital on the page, alive in an image. Old photographs speak to me of time and memory, of the false stillness of image as an attempt to slow, reverse, even sabotage time. Writers do much the same thing with language. I'm a very visual person, so photographs of people speak of unfinished stories to me, remind me of the profound secrets and unrevealable, unspoken depths of human life. Photographs keep me awake to surprise, wondering.

**Meg:** Who were your most powerful influences as an early writer that kept you writing?

**Melissa:** The authors who astounded me, made me want to write as well or at least make the attempt: Thomas Mann, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Chekov, Georges Sand, Gustav Flaubert, Flannery O'Connor, James Joyce, Dickens, Thackeray, the Brontes, Faulkner, Eudora Welty, on and on. So many. When I would lay down to write each afternoon, under the dining room table, (the one clean place, not overrun by primary-colored toys and child-centered chaos in the house,) I imagined all of them lined up, in no particular order, on white bleachers. I pictured myself writing from the field to them, trying to hone one sentence, create one image, that might please them. Another powerful influence was my first husband, a luthier, artist and musician, who showed me how incredibly hard one had to work to produce anything truly fine, how to actively love the work you did, to be patient with it, obsessed by it, how to be both humble and a perfectionist. I watched him hand-build these gorgeous Renaissance lutes, one at a time, and his self-discipline and joy in what he did, taught me more than a dozen books on craft. He is now an internationally famous instrument maker, making basses for some of the best musicians in the world. My second husband was a great influence as well. He encouraged me to write five pages a day and then reward myself after each writing session. For years, a third of a frozen Snickers bar waited for me at the end of every two hours of writing. So simple, candy for the child who did her chores, but it worked and got me past my fear and excuses. I recommend the candy system of writing.

**Meg:** Your writing has a rhythmic beauty and depth to it – poetic prose – that has captivated readers since your first book. You are loved by both poets and fiction writers, as well as all your non-writing readers out there. How did it change for you to write a biography? To move from fiction to another genre?

**Melissa:** I found it incredibly difficult. I had to stick to the barbed-wire fences of facts, had to write in a "lowered" style and with a kind of language that would reach as broad an audience as possible. It drove me crazy. I was inspired by the woman I was writing about, but left dispirited by the process of writing in what I thought of as neutral, gray prose. I told myself it was a service project...a commissioned biography of Arizona philanthropist Virginia Galvin Piper, a kind of philanthropist's coffee table book. I interviewed over 100 people in Arizona and Chicago, many of them wealthy philanthropists themselves, and in meeting them, overcame an innate, wrong bias I had unconsciously harbored against wealthy people. I chose the photographs appearing in the book, happily sifting through hundreds of marvelous old black and white photos, the images revealing so much more, I thought, than my too-pleasantly censored words. It turned out well, the biography, but afterwards, I ran like I was on fire back into the sweet anarchy of fiction.

**Meg:** Juggling your many balls-in-the-air as writer, teacher, reader, traveler, promoter and soulful humanitarian, how do you keep a steady writing schedule?

**Melissa:** I don't. I struggle with that balance all of the time. I love traveling to meet courageous people doing amazing humanitarian work in the world, Ecuador, India, Afghanistan – I am trying to figure out, by meeting these people, what inspires some individuals to say yes to a larger life, a life of service and risk...and why are they so much happier, more joyful than the rest of us? Or are they? As for my writing, I do write more in the summer, when I am not teaching. There have been long, good stretches during a semester when I've managed to wake up early and write for a couple of hours each day. But it's a perennial battle for me, a battle for priorities and time. I am happier when I write, I know

that. Friendlier and prone to insane, jolly optimism. So it's a much better day when I've gotten in my writing time....still, I've gone for weeks sometimes not writing, and it's like becoming vitamin deficient. Scurvey-ridden. Symptoms appear!

**Meg:** This is a difficult time for new writers out there to get published without constant self-promotion. Not that it was ever easy, but gone are the days of the free agent (now one has to pay to get someone out there to do the work for them of sending out manuscripts, if they don't want to do it on their own) and sending out just a few submissions. Most beginning writers are sending out multiple copies of their stories to online and print magazines and if they have a collection of stories or a novel completed, they have to spend a lot of time sending out their manuscripts to independent publishers and contests in hopes of rustling up some interest. You did it on your own with your first book. Do you have any thoughts for writers that love to write, but want an audience and are feeling overwhelmed by what's ahead?

**Melissa:** I just returned from a writing conference where the keynote speaker was an engaging young agent from San Francisco who managed to deliver grim publishing news in the most charming way possible. Since 2008, he explained, publishing has been challenged, hard-hit, and the effect on authors, especially literary fiction writers, has been devastating. At the same time, he said soothingly, there are more entrepreneurial opportunities, more opportunities in general to be published in print or online. One just has to pay attention, develop an appetite for self-promotion (contrary to the introverted temperaments of most writers, including myself...) His message was mixed but hopeful. I would add: study the field, it's changing from hour to hour, see what tactics your favorite authors and writing friends are using, just jump in there. A friend of mine said he had had to promote his new book on Facebook. I was shocked. He's a well-known writer. Why would he need to do that, I wondered? I've since seen numerous writers announce their publications on Facebook. And now I've begun to do the same, with enormous trepidation. Two weeks ago, I put up the announcement that an essay of mine would appear in a forthcoming anthology, generously mentioning the

names of the other writers, too, of course....it was such a queasy exercise in self-aggrandizement...yet within a few hours, I had over 40 responses, congratulations, good wishes, thanks for posting, etc. It works, I thought. Tooting one's horn. How strange. (I still don't like it.) A lot of us are going to smaller presses now, prize-winning writers who have formerly published with the big houses. This is a good thing for the small presses - they are picking up some of the most exciting, innovative writing being done right now, work that the big houses can't risk losing money on. It's sad, but like the young agent, though lacking his charm, I am optimistic we can, as a community of original thinkers, weather this hostile climate, and create a better one.

**Meg:** Any advice that you regularly give to your students that you would like to share with us?

**Melissa:** Write the book or story that you would love to sit down and read.

If you are having a bad writing day, lower your standards and keep writing. The next day may be better.

If you are writing something that is boring you, you can be sure it will bore your reader. Throw it away, start over.

Be brave, ask the difficult questions, plumb the emotional depths of the story. Your unconscious has given you everything you need to interpret the dream of your first draft, but it takes stamina and courage to unearth and shape human truths.

Read maniacally. The classics, the avant garde...study the writing you are most drawn to.

Live an interesting life by being interested in others. Have something to write about.

Develop a social conscience, volunteer somewhere locally or internationally. Get outside of yourself. Writing is not about you. It's about the human condition.

Eat well, love wildly, exercise, laugh, live with as large and endless an appetite for life as you can bear. Then you will have stories to tell.

**Meg:** Thank you so much for all your invaluable insight and for tak-

ing the time out of your incredibly busy, coming-in-from-all-windows-and-doors, schedule to give us some of your brilliant gems! Sending you love and letting you know that NM misses you horribly!

Hope you can come back to visit us soon!

**Melissa:** You're most welcome. Thanks for asking me these great questions, Meg, and I'd love to come back soon and visit New Mexico's writers and artists!

Please check out Melissa Pritchard's website:  
<http://www.melissapritchard.com> to keep up with her latest undertakings. She is now working on a novella, and I hope she's getting lots of private time to write it.



**Sanford** April 2010, Polaroid Type 55  
*by Matthew Morrow*

# Looking for Dennis Hopper's Grave

by Nancy Stohlman

You're on the outskirts of Taos, Rio Ranchos, eating at a restaurant called the Trading Post. The walls are adorned with black and white photos of Dennis Hopper, different era Dennis Hoppers from the brunette, *Easy Rider* days with Yosemite Sam moustache and leather fringed jacket to the aging gray goateed version of his final years. It's a message you both whisper as you settle into a small table on the patio.

"Yeah, he was old friends with the owner," the waitress confirms. "The service was here. I think he was buried off Highway 518, up there somewhere."

*Up there somewhere* is closer than you've come so far, so you welcome the tip. Your boyfriend is the current events expert; it was he who told you about the funeral, attended by the ever grinning Jack Nicolson and a badly aging Val Kilmer-turned-Meatloaf in ranch-style hat and bolo tie. According to the internet, Hopper was buried in a cemetery just outside of Taos in a "humble grave" Native American style, piled up with rocks and artificial flowers and a tiny green plastic marker.

And so began the quest. You're both looking for some kind of desert medicine that goes beyond Dennis Hopper's grave, but you're drawn to wander the tawny dust of New Mexico graves, languish among the white grotto rocks and iron scrolled fences and the simple purple crucifix at the grave of Baby Martinez. There are too many of these baby graves you both agree while a yellow garden windmill spins in eternity over Ofelia Archuleta.

You head down Highway 518 in the direction the waitress pointed, the same dusty roads where *Easy Rider* was filmed. You google the Jesus Nazarene cemetery and study the picture of his grave for the dozenth time. You marvel that you can be on the internet in the middle of nowhere New Mexico—no such luck back when you were 20, when you were your own easy rider, wandering around the country looking for it, just like Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda did in 1969, purring across

sagebrush-studded roads. You spent days then trying to find the burned out remains of the cult compound at Waco and you had to keep stopping and asking all the locals.

Let's ask at the church, you suggest when the road seems to have gone too far and the late afternoon sky begins to blacken and the wind picks up. You scuffle along the pink dusted walkway to the pink adobe walls of St. Francis church and pull aside some men in big brimmed hats—Excuse me, do you know where the Jesus Nazarene cemetery is? They shake their heads. The one where they buried Dennis Hopper you add, and now everyone starts talking—I think it was there, no there, no there, and you find it odd that no one seems to know since you thought this would be big news in little Taos, but maybe it's really no big deal and Hopper shopped at the Ace Hardware like everyone else and ordered his steaks medium rare at the Trading Post and was buried in a common grave in any one of those identical looking cemeteries. And you even wonder if you might be starting a trend, a cult quest for Hopper's grave, considering it's only been a few months and already his remains are forgotten...how quickly it happens, you realize.

As you leave the church you glance at the informational panel for the Lady of St. Francis of Assisi, the miracle Mary whose image appeared in the frescos behind the altar or something like that. Miracle Marys have been another theme of this trip, starting with “La Conquistadora” in Santa Fe, translated as “Our Lady of Peace”: A four-hundred year old Virgin Mary statue with changeable outfits and dark hair like a Cher wig, her vast wardrobe—from the red velvet fur-lined cape to the black veiled dress to the wolverine skinned moccasins—on display throughout the cathedral sanctuary. Apparently the local custom is to offer an outfit to Mary in exchange for special blessings, beseeching her to intervene to God as only a woman can. Being raised Catholic, you know all about the miracle Marys: Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Fatima, Virgin de Guadalupe, The Black Madonna of Montserrat. Usually the miracle Marys appear when they want you to build a church, and so it was with Mary Conquistadora, Mary of Peace, who arrived in Santa Fe with the determined Spanish settlers 12 years after they had already been run out by the Natives. Or so the legend goes...

“Hey, where'd they bury Hopper?” the bald man asks into the phone

(you flagged him down in his truck) . “No, a couple here wants to know.” He hangs up and points in the opposite direction: “It’s back that way. Follow the road up and around for awhile until it forks and then there should be a cemetery on your right.”

And so you arrive at the fourth identical cemetery of the day, the now-familiar windmills, grottos and floral wreaths dirtied by the weather. But no Dennis Hopper, only itchy tumbleweeds and abandoned trucks and American flags. Who would want to be buried in a cemetery like this he asks you in the silence. He has a harder time finding the romance in decay than you do.

Tired, you finally head towards the tiny Taos Casino as the day is concluding and the shadows are lengthening. You pass another cemetery and think about not stopping. But what if this is the one? Dammit. That’s exactly how it would happen, after all. You turn the car around.

Half the cemetery is lit with the overexposed light of a New Mexico sun slowly waning, casting long, exaggerated silhouettes of yourself against the backdrop of graves. But you’re tired of this quest, now, so instead you start a photo shoot of the creepy statuettes and sad little cherubs with their sad little cheeks in their hands. You squat and shove the camera between scrolled ironwork to capture a grotto Mary perfectly placed between clumps of red and pink and yellow plastic carnations and suddenly the flash goes off by itself. It reflects the exact moment of receding golden sunset at the exact moment when the metal sunshine waves surrounding grotto Mary light up in a blinding glare...and then the flash turns itself off.

You walk it over to him and pull up the picture: Look what just happened in this picture—the flash went off by itself. It makes it look cool, don’t you think? Like she’s on fire or something.

He pretends to gasp. It’s a miracle, he says. We’ve found it: Our Lady of the Taos Cemetery.

Maybe he’s right you wonder as you leave the cemetery, besides, what the hell were they looking for in that movie, anyway? All that talk of smoking grass and skinny dipping and the Steppenwolf soundtrack, sure, but weren’t they just wandering around, too, looking for the message behind the veil? For the first time you wonder if Dennis Hopper, under his humble pile of rocks, finally found it.

# Around Her Neck, The Weight of Stones

by *Roxane Gay*

The whores had always been there for the men of the city. They worked in the Flesh District, a narrow, dusty corridor framed by tall stone buildings where they draped their bare breasts and damp thighs over the windowsills for the men passing by. They were the soul of the city, the bloody beating heart. All day and night men brought the whores sweet smelling oils, fresh fruits and, of course, silver coins, always polished to the brightest shine. They also brought their calloused hands and coarse words, their petty miseries and difficult, demanding, often depraved desires. The men of the city liked to believe this was a fair exchange.

On the far side of the Flesh District there was a wall built high enough to block out the sun and on the other side of that wall were the women who knew where their husbands spent their time after long days in the quarry or the Spice Market or at the Tribunal. They named it the Wall of Sorrow and the city's wives spent their lonely nights beating their fists against the obdurate stone until the bones broke and the anatomy of their hands became unrecognizable. It was the whores who always fixed the broken hands of the wives—a small, terrible kindness—but the wives relished the fleeting affection, the tender touches of the women their husbands loved. The wives allowed their bloodied knuckles and awkwardly bent fingers and torn ligaments to be set right, to be healed and covered in thick webs of scar tissue that would only tear the next time they came to the Wall of Sorrow.

The men didn't care. They bedded the whores, working themselves into frenzies as they listened to the intense pitch of their wives' keening. That miserable sound that only increased the men's pleasure.

Isadore was the most beloved of the whores. Little was known about her. She had once been sealed to a man, a soldier it was said. She loved her man down through her bones. Each morning when they woke up, she washed his face with a rose oil soaked cloth and massaged every part

of his body so he could be limber and alert, satisfied throughout the day. In return, the soldier loved Isadore gently, never spoke cruelly to her, gave her a boy who looked just like him and loved the boy gently too. He died during a war and their son died during a war and the loss of them was not something she bore lightly. The grief made her hard and cold and but not unhappy.

The men did not understand Isadore. They did not know her. They thought, when she held them in her slender arms, when she took them between her muscled thighs or in the humid softness of her mouth, that there was a part of the whore that loved them. She did not love them, nor did she hate them. She was indifferent. She felt nothing for men at all. Isadore was ageless, enjoyed by fathers and sons and grandsons alike. Her skin was dark as was her hair. She had ample hips, a soft belly, and breasts that often brought men to their knees when they entered her chambers. She lived on the top floor of the tallest stone building in the Flesh District in a series of open rooms separated only by long, sheer cloths that changed the configuration of space when they swayed as a breeze passed through. The moans of the men who enjoyed Isadore's bed could be heard as far away as the edge of the known world. She was always handsomely rewarded. When the sun rose and the men returned to their labors and their families, Isadore would bathe in a deep ceramic basin filled with cold water. The cold made her feel clean.

When men brought Isadore brightly polished stones, she wove them into a beautiful necklace she always wore, whether she was bathing or bedding or walking through the Flesh District, looking in on the women who would never be wives, tending to the broken hands of the wives who would never be the women their husbands loved. As the necklace grew, she had to wrap it around her arm, or drape the length of stones over her shoulder or pull it behind her, letting it gather dust. The weight of the necklace made her gait something to behold. Her every movement was slow, measured. Isadore felt the weight of stones in her spine and the soles of her feet, a dull ache that never went away. Sometimes, Isadore fingered these stones and sucked them clean and thought of her husband who died in a war, leaving her in the city to carry a length of heavy stone. He had not been handsome man but his back was strong. When she and her soldier made love, Isadore splayed her

fingers against his thick body, holding him inside her, needing him to fill her, letting him teach her how to be loved. She only thought of her soldier when she felt the weight around her neck. It made her strong. When Isadore lay with the men of the city, she needed that strength to make them believe.

# Dream

by Erin Brooks

You tread water with your arms spread out  
waiting for your teammates to come to you.

I watch the rim of your shoulders above the surface.

When I move closer you shift and I can see  
your marble eyes green inside your face.

Time turns and we are standing  
in the street on Rockingham:

I am curving back against your car  
rubbing my big toe into the asphalt,

hooked into the shine under  
your heavy slanted lashes

and you say, *you're just that girl.*

When time meets up with itself  
I am standing at the edge of the pool

watching the surface of your back  
glint as you move across the water.

# A Fish Slipped Into My Arms While I Was Praying

*by Susan Varon*

I make my way in prayer and it's like walking underwater,  
the sounds dim, I put my feet down deliberately,  
one after the other in slow motion. I come from people

who were fishermen, my father and all his sisters sat  
on piers, in boats, stood by the side of a pond casting  
and recasting. They spent hours praying for fish

to find them—bluegills, shiners, perch. Not a miracle with loaves  
and a crowd to be fed but a private dispensation,  
a sweaty wish worth wrestling for, worth a wait of hours.

When I walk around in prayer I am fearless and slow,  
like a crazy person,  
but I look just like everyone else, that's the joy of it,

I can carry a fish in my arms  
of any denomination, its scales wet and shiny,  
its eyes peacefully closed, I'm the only one who sees

it has offered itself in service  
in case I can use it I'm the only one who knows  
how to appreciate this.

# Geezers on Parole

After mis-hearing title of song, “Geezers on Parade,” at coffee shop in Stratford, Ontario

by *Brian Cronwall*

Their training wheels came off rust-ages ago.  
Their bananas have darkened to pewter, and  
they gum gum for flavor, energy, and exercise.

No one ever told them life in the sun took  
so much more time than thrice daily walks  
from cell to meals and back again.

No one blesses them now at sunset,  
shadows swallowing memories like  
milktoast and not-too-hot tea.

Now and then, a smile crosses eyes like a bird  
flying, reflects on pond surfaces, then  
disappears into darkening southwestern skies.

# Magnitude 5.4

by *Karla Linn Merrifield*

This is the fault line:  
five words  
where I falter  
and fall  
into the Mojave Desert  
of thoughtlessness.  
One misstep, one slip.  
Canyon floor brings me  
to a halt, sharp-stoned  
and searing, to the lip  
of the boneyard.  
Monzogranitic gravel grinds  
into knees and palms.  
Its dun-colored, coarse graters  
bloody the edge of my imagination.  
I am face down,  
spitting dust, spooked  
by the empty eyes,  
non compos mentis.  
The San Andreas shifts.  
The Earth underfoot comes  
alive; it quakes  
with enough desire for my flesh  
to kill me.

# On the Rez: Bob Marley, William Blake & the Lakota Porcupine Singers

by John Brandi

Webbed electricity racketing the horizon—  
sandy wind, pink coral fans  
spread from chiseled bluffs. Prickle of stars  
between solitary rocks standing  
like men grown full.

At the old Veterans Center  
danced with a Hopi beauty—  
hair falling to floor, body bending “down  
to the Red earth.”

Woke alone, Chinle motel  
coffee and frybread, a flyswatter on every table  
National Enquirer on the counter: *Sunbather*  
*Bursts into Flames*  
Across the road: Salvation Healing,  
*Slave Driver* on tape deck.

Yellow soil, further in I drive.  
Northern Plains Porcupine Singers  
doing Lakota “Sneak Up” song.  
Peyote tents, juniper-branch shade houses  
pickup trucks hugging each other  
in ceremonial circles—

Drum chant from eight-sided  
east-facing Hogan. Look for camp spot—  
look into blue-flame-sunset Blakean eye  
through chrome rain shafts  
—shafts of Religious light  
every direction!

# Tanka

*by Liz Wallace*

Had hoped and prayed  
I'd never see you again  
You seem taller  
I forgot how beautiful  
I felt when you looked at me

Why did you hate me?  
I was only a baby  
Too small to hit back  
My first memory is  
Being tossed like an old toy

I don't recall  
Feeling your belt strike me  
But the sound of it  
Sliding from your Levis  
Is as fresh as the dawn

I recall how you  
Inspected my silver work  
Spiked heart, flames, blood  
At my show, after I  
Told you to go to Hell

I should be happy  
Credit cards paid off, flat abs  
But the sadness  
Of being your daughter  
Runs deep, like kimberlite

# Making Bacon

by *Lorenzo Atencio*

Buck drives up in his pick-up, greets his dog, kicks the mud off his steel-toed boots, and enters his house. He trips on the threshold, stumbles but catches himself and sways over to the fridge. His hands are washed but his nails are perpetually dirty.

“Hey. I’m home.” Rose turns from the stove to watch him, frowns, and then turns back to the stove. Rose’s son, Timmy, is spread out on the floor reading a book.

“I need another beer. Did you get me some beer? Oh, yeah!”

He pops the top and slams half the beer.

“Is that pork chops I smell? My favorite. Isn’t supper ready yet?”

He weaves his way to the recliner and drops his body into it. The floor shakes.

“You’re not going to answer me. You’re going to be a bitch tonight. I see.”

She keeps her head down. Her frown deepens.

“Okay. Well you can listen then. I drive that truck all day and I want my supper ready when I get home. What the hell do you do all day?” He snatches the t.v. remote controller and tunes into the news. The tele-caster laments the worsening economy.

“How much of my money did you spend today?”

No response.

“I want to see the checkbook.”

The baby cries in the other room.

“Goddammit Timmy, shut your sister up.”

Timmy turns from his book to Buck and gives him a burning look.

“Don’t give me that look. Are you still trying to learn magic from a book? What planet did you come from?”

Timmy concentrates on his book and ignores Buck for five full seconds then gets up to rock the baby.

“Are you sure you’re only ten? Hey, I have an idea. Why don’t you use some of that magic and change yourself into a gopher and go-for a beer.” Buck laughs at his own joke.

The baby continues to cry.

Rose lowers the flame on the stove, settles the baby down, then returns to the stove.

Buck gets up from his recliner and sits at the kitchen table and stares at her while she scurries around the kitchen.

“That’s a sexy outfit. It shows a lot of skin. Is that what you wore to the market today? Are you trying to impress somebody special, or are you trying to give everyone a thrill?”

She rolls her eyes and shakes her head.

“You’re just like your sleazy momma. Lucky for you I came along to marry you and support your kid.”

Timmy’s body tenses as he listens to Buck’s voice grow louder.

“Are you meeting somebody? You’re meeting somebody ain’t you? Who is he?”

He gets up from the table and moves toward her.

“That’s why you’re dressing like that. Isn’t it? I know it. Let me see your phone.”

She grabs her phone off the counter and holds it away from him. He reaches and takes her arm with a vise-grip hold.

“I said give me your phone. I swear I’ll break your arm if you don’t give me your phone.”

He starts to twist her arm with both hands. She kicks his shin.

“Ouch you bitch. You’re going to pay for that. Bring it on.”

He balls his fists. His face is red. He hulks up and moves toward her with a crazed look in his eyes.

“I said GIMME THE FUCKING PHONE.”

Timmy hurries past Buck to the stove mumbling something that sounds like Latin, picks up the pan with the pork chops and throws the hot grease and chops on Buck.

Buck staggers back and slumps against the wall. Smoke is rising from his head. His ears grow into a point and fold forward. His mouth slowly melts into a snout.

Rose stares at Buck in shock, then turns to her son. “Look! Timmy what have you done? He’s turning into a pig. He has pig ears and a snout. Put him back before someone sees him.”

Buck bats his pink pig eyelashes over bewildered pig eyes and grunts.

“Oink. Oink.”

# Legacy

by Marmika Paskiewicz

Pink is an important color.  
Dye your hair pink sometimes & smoke cigarettes.

Don't ever try to diet – it never works.  
Go to India instead. Walk every day along the rocky streets;  
Climb steep cement steps and walk down steep paths by streams  
and garbage.  
Give pencils to school children.  
Take band aids and money.  
Take tea with people you meet.

Label your writing so you know which is from poetry class,  
and which is from memoir.

Don't do everything you're supposed to do.

Look at the moon that's full; see it white & nubbly & grooved.  
Swallow it. Feel it juice you through your toenails.

Plant geraniums. They're always successful and have a potent  
but bearable fragrance.

Loosen up. Don't regret medical school or not taking that job on the  
pilot of "Breaking Bad," and not going into rehab when you  
really needed it.

Pay your student loans – even \$20 a month.

Buy an imperfect house and fill it with flowers and Tibetan carpets.

Go slowly.  
Write a poem every day.  
Get a Zen board and brush & make some marks every morning  
Watch them disappear.

Visit Red Emma's bookstore & coffee shop when you are  
in Baltimore,  
before you go to the inner harbor.

Read *Alice through the Looking Glass* and get a copy of *The  
Annotated Mother Goose*.

When you're sad, say you're sad.  
When it's pleasant, feel the surface of your skin.  
Say "I am happy."  
Say "I am Walt Whitman in Brooklyn."

Say I am not happy, I am not sad;  
I am not great or terrible or anywhere in between. I am definitely  
not a Buddhist or a visitor with a basket of baked goods.

Go to bed early. Resist watching sitcoms and suspense dramas.  
Go outside at night and look up.  
There are stars and planets and a moon up there.  
There you can connect with Zeus and Cassiopeia and  
Roland Barthes.

Drive down La Bajada hill at 3:00 a.m. with two small children,  
Park on the side of the road. Look up at the sky and see  
Haley's comet.

Remember my birthday.

Remember your grandmother who marched with her mother  
at age three,  
singing "Ohio's going dry."

Remember your grandfather, the gambler, who disappeared and died  
in Las Vegas,  
alone, making a million.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of sky.

Orange is also a good hair color.

# Bowling With the Regulars

by Alexis Ivy

The better-offs-in jail, the double-crossers,  
the almost-but-not-quite Steinbeck  
characters. The ones with the scars,

half an ear bit off out of love, ripped  
skin on the knee due to reckless  
rolling from lane to gutter.

I'm one spare and playing by the book.  
Five frames of *I like your hat*, five frames  
of *I like it too*. *Forgot my name again?*

and flirting with the concept  
that the jukebox is my one true friend.  
I'm a vending machine, all King  
Size and no Mr. Goodbars  
and soon I'll run out of laughs. So

long heyday-riffraff. So long unsure  
and dangerous. So long ransom,  
risk and risk's guarantee. So long  
asking little. So long less.

# Girl Fight

by Shelly Reed

Where I come from  
the hardest thing to do is hit hard

We all try, but our punches come out too soft,  
our female bodies rebel too rough a sentiment

We hide bricks behind our backs,  
wear long jeans on dangerous days,  
never wear earrings too easily grabbed

Our size doesn't matter,  
it is the fear that counts,  
makes us strong

and I am adrenaline driven, fierce beyond need  
Our anthem, "The fight isn't over 'til someone calls 911"

I feel her cheekbone through my shoe, her face is pressed to the road  
Her mother says, "Finish it. It's the only way she will learn."

There is blood on my jeans,  
I must have missed her face once or twice,  
hit the road instead

The crowd chants, "kick, kick",  
but I walk away

The next day I wear sunglasses to hide;  
a boy says I have a black eye

The rumor says: I am finally defeated  
I don't say a thing, leave the glasses on

# Heavy Metal

by *Ellen Birkett Morris*

Laura's body felt heavy. Heavy was the word her son Jason had used when he could no longer lift his head up or hold the controller to play video games. She'd sat by his bed reading to him like he was eight, not 16. He'd been dead for four months now. She still had trouble getting out of bed. Sometimes she stayed there until noon.

She lay there while stacks of patient charts waited in her office to be coded. 204.00 was more polite than acute lymphoid leukemia without remission. In her darkest hours, Laura thought of getting 204.00 tattooed over her heart. She spent hours drawing the numbers across her chest with her fingertip.

Laura drifted off and woke to the sound of drums pounding in the apartment below. It was noon. She pulled on sweatpants and Jason's flannel shirt, and went down to apartment 2D. She knocked on the door. The drumming didn't stop. She kicked the door hard. Then she reached down to rub her aching foot.

"F-ing door," she shouted. The door opened to a boy, about Jason's age, with stringy jet black hair and a nose ring.

"What do you want lady?"

"I want you to stop that damn drumming; some of us are trying to sleep."

"Don't you have, like, a job or something?" asked the kid with a smirk.

"Shouldn't you be, like, in school or something?" replied Laura. They glared at each other. A look of recognition crossed the kid's face.

"Hey, aren't you the cancer kid's mom? Jason, right?" It had been so long since anyone had spoken Jason's name. She savored the sound of it, in spite of his attitude.

"Yeah, I'm Laura," she held out her hand stiffly.

"I'm Ike," he said, lightly slapping her palm in greeting.

"Did you know Jason?"

"He lent me a pen once to take a test."

Laura smiled to herself. She could imagine him handing the pen

over, his long gorgeous fingers holding it out like a prize. Her mother had called them “piano player fingers” when Jason was a baby. His fingers were long even then and so fine that the light shone through them.

“So, like, what did you want?” Ike asked

“What were you playing?”

“Symphony of Destruction, Megadeth, do you know it?”

“No, actually I don’t.”

“Wanna hear me play it?”

“Sure.” She followed Ike into the apartment and down a hallway lined with pictures of him at every age. She hadn’t touched the pictures at home. She half expected them to come to life, like something out of Harry Potter.

Ike’s bedroom walls were covered with posters of bands. A drum kit filled the corner of the room. Laura sat on the edge of the unmade bed.

“These sticks are new. I’m still getting used to them,” said Ike. Laura nodded.

One, two, three,” Ike counted off and began drumming. The noise was fantastic. Laura could feel her heart beating. She nodded her head in time. Ike smiled. His hands flew as he beat the drums. He closed his eyes, lost in the rhythm. The cymbals crashed. Ike raised his arms, sticks in hand, in triumph. Laura laughed for the first time in months.

The music stopped, but she could feel it echoing in her ears, filling up the empty spaces.

“You wanna try it?” asked Ike, holding out the sticks. Laura took the sticks and sat behind the drum kit.

The sticks were light in her hands. Ike gave her the thumbs up and counted “One, two three . . .”

Laura raised her arms, waiting to feel the drum beats vibrating through her fingertips straight to her heart.

# Cul-de-Sac

*by Richard Robbins*

He made a wish, finally, the veins of his hand run to the sea.

He made a wish the red moon cruel.

He talked to the home on the short street ending at a circle. He smelled  
oleander leaves, the dust falling there from sky. He talked to the  
Chinese elm, to the ghost of a white dog, the outlawed incinerator,  
to the versions of boy walking in and out the door.

He walked into an empty church next to the ocean. Each candle flickered  
in wet air, a kind of speech. A kind of speech, he prayed to no one  
at the altar. He bowed to the polished stone.

He walked, finally, across sand, past living and dying gulls, past flea, past  
marbles of tar, to the thumbnail moons of foam.

He tasted their salt. Not iron, not evil, not a long disappointed message  
from lunar dark. Just a mineral he could bathe in, those two vowels  
only an angel—rubbing two halves of a man together—knows how  
to say.

# Ed From the Garage Stops In to Talk Philosophy

by Trent Busch

“The tool you order is  
never the same in person:  
take this wrench here, as  
advertised on TV  
able to loosen the hind  
quarter of a moose, a limp,  
pussy-levered fidget  
that couldn’t jack the nuts  
off a sixty-seven car;

“just as the person you  
get is never the same tool,  
whoever he or she  
happens to be—I name  
no one in particular,  
say Lucille Ball, maybe,  
or W.H. Auden, huddled  
up little roundbacks with  
dip-snuff mouths in a bar.”

Now wait a minute, I look  
at him, W.H. Auden?

“Hey, man, never think I  
don’t read my novels;  
or that big-boobed Lara  
game on the new Playstation:  
I’d like to see her climb  
up on my roof without

getting anything dirty,  
then try to save poor old  
Le Breun when he's loaded."

You got me there, I say.

"And a crescent can't be  
a monkey wrench like on  
that *Parasite Eve*—  
but I see I'm losing you here;  
the point being, that which  
you make must be useful.  
Sometimes, friends got to  
drop by friends to keep  
them on top of reality."

I'm much obliged, I say.

"You don't, it won't set fields  
on fire; by example, I'm losing  
this wrench faster than a gnat  
can lick its ass and remember,  
as always, you need me, whistle."

# The Missing and the Found

by John Grey

There's men still scouring the woods  
for a young boy missing years ago.  
It's a ritual, a passion, an obsession, for some.  
For others, it's just something to do  
on a warm, clear weekend.  
That's the background to our story.  
That's the familiar footfall  
to our daily lives, the arguments,  
the kisses, the meals, the games  
of badminton in the backyard,  
even the trips to the bathroom.  
The family may hold together  
only for the fact that we all share the same name  
but I like to think that it's the hunters  
stomping through the pine forest  
that do it for us,  
their caring, in all its shapes and guises,  
gluing together the homes they pass  
in their inveterate seeking,  
the ones that haven't lost a child to the deep,  
forbidding woods,  
that don't require a search party  
for the boy who, under pressure,  
admits his mother love  
or the other for whom there's no quest required,  
merely a swift hand to the rear end  
when he shoots the BB gun at passing cars.  
They may never locate the body.  
Maybe there isn't one to find.  
But there's bodies aplenty in our house.  
And when there's people out looking,  
then we're never done finding.

# Day Hike

*by Kenneth P. Gurney*

We stopped seeking the druids,  
the mistletoe on centuries old oaks,  
the sacred groves now ash blown  
by a two-millennial wind.

We stood at the brown river bank,  
no ferry or crossing apparent.  
The terra cotta shards below the muddy surface  
reside too deep for our shod feet to feel.

We stopped seeking the old gods  
the wild hunt run through the woods,  
the in-grave kings and queens of legend  
placed under Glastonbury's hill.

So what if we forget all the old names  
of ghost towns lost to the eye  
and find the century old grave stones  
have all been rubbed bare.

So what if we trod the long ago creek beds  
that, now, are the ridges of hills.  
So what if we are lost in songs sung  
with a beer steadily grasped in one hand.

# 108 Suitcases

by Cynthia Gallaher

“That’s it,” said Diane at the party. “I will not drag one more suitcase into my house. I’m finished. 108 suitcases are enough.” You might be familiar with the riddle about a garage found with 52 bicycles, a gun and a dead body. At this particular party, I was drawn into a conversation that featured a lass who lives out of 108 suitcases in her house, filled with everything from the mundane to absurd.

The 52 bicycles riddle has a solution. There are 52 bicycle design cards in a standard deck of playing cards. As the story goes, two people play a hand of cards in a garage, have a disagreement, one shoots the other, then flees.

Aside from the dead body, the 108 suitcases situation is a little more complex. Why would someone want 108 suitcases in her home? Or more than four or five, for that matter? According to Diane, she has little furniture in her house outside of a bed, a couch and a kitchen table. She has no bureau drawers, armoires, nightstands, and bookshelves, file cabinets or desks. “I do keep a few items of clothing on hangers,” she admitted.

Instead, she collects vintage suitcases in which she keeps her clothes, table linens, books, important papers, and sundry other personal items. “My husband’s mother collected giraffes of all kinds: ceramic, metal, wood, cloth,” said Diane. “When she died, we inherited the giraffes, and now they have their own suitcase.” She also has a suitcase filled with bookends. Unfortunately, they don’t do her much good, since all her books are in other suitcases. One suitcase is devoted exclusively to books of poetry, which, as a poet, impresses me. She even has an open suitcase crafted into a bed for her dog. “Totie loves it!” she said.

Diane herself, though of normal weight, has a squareness to her figure. Dressed in simple black from head to toe, the monochrome lends a compactness to her structure, while her thick and wavy dark hair atop gives some sense of wild and human relief. Words pour from her mouth in bursts; a rapid fire of expressive phrases, followed by silences; an unleashing and shutting. “The suitcases are color coded, but I prefer know-

ing from memory which holds which,” she said. Her husband erected large metal floor-to-ceiling shelves in one room, stacked with the suitcases.

So the suitcases have “a room of one’s own?” “Well, yes,” she responded, rather sheepishly. What does her husband think about suitcases taking up a room that might have served instead as an office or exercise room? “He doesn’t have a chest of drawers,” was all she answered.

They say a woman’s purse can be compared to her vagina. Can a suitcase be likened to her womb, and numerous suitcases to a gallery of feminine potentials?

The question of travel arose. When a woman who owns 108 suitcases, all filled, is ready to go on a trip, is she then without a suitcase? Does she just shove everything into a paper grocery bag? Ship things ahead in cardboard box? Travel light and leave everything in its color-coded and shelved glory at home? “I do try to keep at least one suitcase empty for travel,” she said.

Or does an owner of 108 suitcases even need to go anywhere? Diane’s suitcase room is like the hold of a ship or the baggage compartment on an airplane. It might be freeing, living somewhat like a rock star, a private jet of a domestic dwelling and countless pieces of luggage always in tow.

Diane wakes every morning, already arrived at her destination. She opens a door and finds, at any time, that a virtual bellman has delivered her luggage in perfect order, waiting to be unpacked. Or rather, packed and ready, destined to launch her through another day, another year of her own making.

# Reality Was the Dream

by Paul Freidinger

I dreamed the phone rang,  
popped up, and ran, cradled  
the receiver to my ear, and heard  
the drone of the dial tone.  
In the dream it was 5:00 a.m.  
The haze, March gloom,  
the clock glared at me:  
it was 5:00 a.m.  
and the fog of doom.  
The dream was reality,  
reality the dream.  
It did not stitch the seam  
of dislocation, did not seem  
surreal until I said hello  
and no one answered,  
and I was caught downstream  
in the chaos of the unconscious,  
the shrill shriek of the bell, the ring  
echoing, my feet buzzed by the sting  
of cold, my ear wondering  
whose ghost was trying to reach me.



# Basement

by Michael Hettich

Hanging my grandfather's undershirts on the line down in the winter basement, my grandmother danced a little jig when she thought I wasn't looking, and laughed when she realized I'd seen her. So I danced too and we shared another secret. I loved to follow her down there, to explore the damp dark while she ironed and folded and told me things I don't remember now. So in Denver, years later, I rented a basement apartment and huddled down there without a phone, down the back stairs where no one could find me. I hid myself so well that when she died no one told me for a week. Too late to fly home for the funeral, or to cry much. She'd been very old. Her husband, my grandpa, had died twenty years earlier—just mumbled *goodbye* one afternoon while we were walking, holding hands; he turned away from my father and me on the sidewalk and shuffled home in the sun. She found him when she came up from the basement, sitting on the edge of their bed, and she saw him fall back with a sigh when she came in, as though he'd wanted to look at her one more time. My father and I were still out walking, telling stories in the cocoon of contentment we often inhabited in those days, as though we had actually vanished into our own private world.

# By the Basin

by *William C. Blome*

The plumbers plainly weren't wild about Andrew standing there, hawking over them, as they took turns pushing their snake down the basin drain. What absolutely would have galled me was Andrew's weird gesturing with his body and his almost-chanting call of instructions, like "little to the left, little to the left, that's it, put your backs into it, fellas, keep going, keep going..." After just less than a minute or so of this, one of the plumbers—the burly, blonde-haired guy with a long stem plastic rose growing out of his back pocket—stood aside from the snake and his partner, faced Andrew directly, and said, "What would we do without you here, huh, pal? Talk about your crucial, your indispensable, your vital: why, you're all of those in one, swivel hips, all of those in one goddamn one!" I surmise Andrew certainly sensed the plumber's annoyance—oh, I absolutely know he did—though the plumber never raised his voice. But the oblique side of Andrew (which can be quite a sizeable side) continued to predominate (just as dirty water continued to slosh in the basin), and Andrew next said (with peacock pride), "Not to worry, men, not to worry, I'm here for as long it takes, till we break through, till we see this thing completely through."

# Whiskey Tango Foxtrot

by John Davis

Wicked piss we said  
hung like a hamster, fuck like a rabbit,  
inched our shoulders. Little flinches  
so cool: Timmy & me,  
kept fresh condoms in our back pockets  
every day just to be ready. Just to be cool.  
Yeah, frost-my-balls cool.

Timmy said *Smile if you're getting any*.  
Any—the closest I got to *any* was the man  
next to the downtown bus stop who  
glowered up to me, asked if I wanted the girl  
olive-skin, leaning against the jewelry store window.

Foxy, he hissed. He said she worked for him, said  
other stuff too. Asked if I was gettin' any and other  
x-rated junk about her ass.  
Then my bus came and I rode home thinking of  
raiding my closet piggy bank and going downtown.  
Of course I didn't. I was back to *chaps my ass* attitude.  
Timmy said nothing. Probably got some.

# Ugly Hat & Red Hook

by Sean Brendan-Brown

You need a night at Hofbräuhaus  
one block down from Shenanigan's  
where fish shops gas the evening  
and squash-headed wharf rats screech  
at feral cats. It's beautiful

staring through pitchers of Red Hook  
two jiggers of Ugly Hat in one hand  
a shot of Oso Negro in the other—  
alone on the deck in drizzle,  
pretending the few lights at St. Regis  
are flickering candles. Lions  
roar from Point Defiance zoo—  
something always sets them off  
then peacocks cry e-awk! e-awk!  
Christ what a sound—maybe Ted Bundy's  
ghost, drifting in rain and fog by the gift shop,  
disturbs them. That's where he'd stand  
sniffing chowder and watching girls.  
Animals know.

From the restaurant side someone  
coos “pretty like nice little”; what's it mean?  
You've been away too long. Through glassbrick,  
seafall, beerglass voices describe new & old  
wars, fresh baby purpling as they speak. Its holder  
unfastens the left flap of a nursing bra, pulls  
pink nipple forward, milk pearling her fingertips:  
*pretty like nice little.*

Beautiful, baby in the bar, waves swishing  
under the deck, tide slapping barnacled posts  
as blue crabs drop from rocks *plop!* The odors  
of diesel, offal, and mudflat rot fill you up.  
Lions roar, peacocks answer.

# Waiting

by Josh Goller

“So how did she meet you?” the husband asked. He stood next to me, staring out at the half-filled hospital parking lot as I struggled against the wind to light the penultimate cigarette from my emergency pack. I exhaled and watched the plume spiral out into the rain.

“We were reading the same book,” I said, daring to look at him. “At a coffee shop.”

She’d told me he was a college professor, but I never expected him to so exactly look the part. Crop of silver hair with matching beard, bifocals, corduroy pants. He could have been her father. Despite my love handles and crow’s feet, he made me feel like a kid.

“But I suppose she didn’t collapse in her nightgown at the *coffee shop*.” The husband shuffled in place, as if the damp cement would climb his legs should he keep them still.

“No, I suppose not.” I balled my fist in my pocket. I’d never been in a fight.

A siren pierced the dark and grew closer. I noticed a glob of her froth still clinging to the spot over my breastbone, where her head had slumped as I carried her from my bungalow to the car after her seizure. For a moment, I thought about keeping it there. But I loosened my fist, pulled out my hand, and wiped.

“Did she say anything?” the husband asked. “After it happened? Did she come to at all during the drive over?”

The ambulance shot into the parking lot and its brakes squeaked in front of the awning. The paramedics rolled an old woman on a gurney past us and into the emergency room.

I looked at the husband, his eyes dark and wet with hope. If I could have remembered his name I would have said she had called for him.

“She opened her eyes once, for a second or two, but that’s all. I’m sorry.” My words tasted like chalk. Clouds overhead flickered with cloaked lightning and winked out again.

“You’re not the first, you know that right? You’re not special.”

I wanted to say I didn’t know what he was talking about, that he was

mistaken, that this had all been a misunderstanding. I wanted to offer him my last cigarette.

“Usually, they’re much younger, fitter.” The husband eyed me and I sucked in my gut. I stared at a hole in my shoe. “They’ve usually got their shit together.”

“I should probably go,” I said, but I only sunk my hands into my pockets, as if tethered to the unconscious woman who had bled onto me from her nose.

“Did she even tell you about the tumor?”

I peered back through the sliding doors, at the pale man sitting in the waiting room, his hand swaddled with a towel soaked in red.

“She used to at least use that as the excuse,” the husband said. His hands were white. “At least disclosed that much to the other boys she found.”

Looking at the blue veins etched along his nose, I wanted to ask him about her, if she liked to knit or paint or shoot guns, if she slept with her socks on, if she was someone’s mother. The husband fussed with his mustache and I wanted to ask him the world.

The doors behind us parted and a portly nurse emerged. The future trembled in the lines of her face. “She’s awake,” the nurse said. “She’s asked for the man she loves.”



**NIKE Antiques** Effingham, IL, July 2010, Polaroid 667  
*by Matthew Morrow*

# The Ladybug Orgy Tree

by Meg Pokrass

I'm not taking painkillers though they say I should be. Everything hurts but not enough to do anything to stop it. When the tree branch fell, I couldn't see the ladybugs mating. Dan's head was squashed, and not the way a cartoon makes it seem.

Once a year, we went to see their orgy. One tree had more ladybugs than any other, and drew the largest crowd. People called it the "Ladybug Orgy Tree".

"Do you remember who you were with?" one of the doctors asked.

I was hurt but not killed. I wasn't ready to say Dan's name out loud. It felt like a careless bubble, his name, from my lips. The world is tilting and this is well known. My aunt who has more money than God insists I go away to a healing camp. On the phone she says, "Do what you need, you shouldn't even be here, you're a dot of light." She's a manic depressive and interesting and loves me. I attribute most people's kindness toward me to some kind of mental disorder.

There's a rustic village in the mountains where people vacation to "get over" things, and that is where she wants me to go. People make pottery and nap and bring their own personal sound soothers. She sends me a video of the place. It features a big solid looking wooden lodge-like room where people gather to "boost social endorphins." The title of the video is "Connecting Mindfully." Men and women move and smile, touch each other's arms and play cards with sealed smiles. I stare at a dark haired man with glasses, clutching playing cards in his hand, spreading them out like a fan. "Haw, ha, ha!" a woman's voice crows.

In pictures now, I love Dan's glasses more than I did when he was alive, and further, I love that he looked completely different underneath them. I can't kiss him because he's far away and possibly worse, and it feels like the earth breathes smoke sometimes.

# Refugees

*by Tom Clayton*

For years, a large fir tree stood in the back garden of my parent's house. It towered over the rest of the garden, casting shadowy fronds on to the grass in summer, tense with the weight of snow in winter. Two woodpigeons set up their home every year in its boughs.

One day in July last year, my parents decided the tree was getting too big for the garden. It cracked under the surgeon's saw. And when it finally rustled to the ground, they saw that the back of the tree was dead, a mere collection of sticks, a gnarled basket of firewood. It had been this way for years. The porcupine spines shed dust into the lawn, and that dusty stain was all that remained when it was taken away to be burned. I came home from university to find a desert where my dens had been.

Now the two woodpigeons come and peck around the tree stump, heads bobbing confusedly in the leaves.

And I sit in my childhood bedroom, trying to roost once more.

# We Were Trees First

by Chasity Vigil

We were trees first  
Rooted to Gaia  
Our first mother  
We were trees  
Arms raised  
Fingers spread  
Growing, reaching towards the Sun  
Our father  
Grown on drops of clear ambrosia  
Until we dared to move  
Hardened bark fell away  
Leaving the soft pink flesh bare  
Uprooting feet  
We walked away, forgetting  
The trees dream  
Of our return  
Because  
We were trees first



# My Life as a Lover

by Mary McGinnis

I claim it with my fingertips;  
tonight they are cold, my ears remembering rain,  
I claim it with my voice,  
husky, lower than it used to be.

I claim it with my arms,  
with my elbows that can hold nothing,  
with determination, with my Clark's sandals flapping through  
rain, with my nose for intrigue.

It is my love of pears that keeps me in this life,  
my love of flat stones from a beach in Cape  
May, New Jersey; sand dollars, mesquite  
chips, petrified wood abandoned on a windowsill;

a friend's hair full of wind and sun,  
a blue plate from a friend I rarely see—  
it's a moment of comfort holding another poet's hand  
as we leave a reading,

it's rain in air,  
tiny bits of gravel that end up in my kitchen:  
they keep me here  
in my incarnation as a lover.

# The Forest

by *Lauren Camp*

Standing in a crescent of conifers,  
we peer up two hundred feet into limbs and leaves,

this unkempt forest. Trees pitched  
and fell while we were in our lives – driving our cars,

screwing, typing, fighting –  
the sapwood desiccate and hollow.

Only forest ears heard  
as a slump became an open book. The oracle

burrowed, sticking seeds of luck  
in damp dens and rotting logs.

Walking between trees, we leave  
the season of accomplishment, hold hands

with the summer of patience,  
trample over roots and tufts of moldy moss.

The forest is the beginning,  
the place we must travel to touch our fortune.

We watch a frog melt into a leaf on a hidden lake;  
I become muddy; you climb up

to scratch the sky. Birds nest, drum, reproduce.  
We hear mammals, spiders, worms. Each day

the forest swells with victory. It is the law  
of the world that we will never see enough.

# Her Fingers

by Nancy Wing

Her hands  
weave threads  
around the loosened  
edges of a basket  
her fingers  
are deft  
as they grasp  
the string  
slipping it through  
the woven twigs  
and knotting the twine  
to restrain them

She kneels on a  
patterned rug  
in her living  
room  
sun streams in  
through the brilliant  
yellow leaves  
of fall  
and joy  
comes  
with the sun

Looking down  
at her fingers  
in their industry  
she is overcome  
with  
thankfulness  
for her hands

for women's hands  
and fingers  
that weave and  
turn to all the  
tasks a household  
holds

# Broken Bird

by *Leia Barnett*

Your crumpled body,  
like little origami paper  
painted black and blue

and broken.

Folded in all wrong directions.

No flapping crane.

Broken bird. Mama bird.

I washed the blood from your feathers,  
Your silvery white feathers,  
Silvery white curls,  
Waves we share,

Now quelled by the starch of hospital sheets.

You,  
sailor on the pacified seas of morphine,

Drip, drip.  
Careful not to splash.  
Where was your life vest when you needed it most?

Fallen overboard,  
my little Origami Bird,  
No Mother Ocean to catch you,  
only unrelenting palm of Mother Earth.

And there among the boulders  
You communed,  
Mother to Mother.

And you sacrificed  
Blood and Bone,  
lung, wrist, and the curve of your sweet cheek.

Kneeling to your enduring sailor's spirit,  
I love you was all I could say,

Swollen little crane,  
Folded in all wrong directions.

# Thank You Suzanna

by Behzad Dayeny

Just another ordinary morning  
In the cafeteria  
Marie is here as always  
For her two over-easies  
Nick is waiting patiently  
He only wants his coffee  
Jamie's getting her scone  
And a fresh-squeezed orange juice  
Brad is covering his yawn  
Staring at the menu board  
The cook's frying hash browns  
Cashier is ringing up  
Everyone in a different world  
Here in this four-walled world

And then in walks Suzanna  
With her little come-on smile  
In a short tight black skirt  
That barely conceals a volcano  
On the verge of eruption  
She lightly bites her lower lip  
And then licks her upper teeth  
A boy wearing a yarmulke  
Very shyly looks her way  
And then blushing, turns away  
She feels proud and flattered  
And giggles passing behind him

"Can I get some service here?"  
Jokingly shouts Alfonzo  
No one pays him any mind  
No one even hears him

Everyone is mesmerized  
By Suzanna's slutty strut  
She just walks around and walks out  
She doesn't come for pastries  
She doesn't come for breakfast  
Not even a cup of tea  
She just comes for attention  
And to wake everyone up

Oh, thank you Suzanna



# Colcha Treasure

by H. Marie Aragón

Where did it come from?  
I'm not sure  
Carefully wrapped  
in mother's archival chest of scented cedar -  
an embroidery-stitched colcha shawl

Push Pull Loop Anchor

Made of long, wool strands from churro sheep  
herded from New Spain to New Mexico  
Natural, indigenous dyes –  
Charma bush, Brazilian wood chips  
and traded indigo,  
Touched by earth and sky

Pull Loop Anchor Push

Smoky-blue sabanilla cloth  
Rough, textured tapestry -  
Motifs of flora and fauna,  
Long tassels sway in the  
high-desert breeze -  
A simple grace

Loop Anchor Push Pull

My bones inform me that -  
traveling from San Geronimo to Torres  
over the Sangre De Cristo Mountains  
along the Purgatory River  
Mi Abuela, Apollonia Benavidez  
packed her dishes, a silver cross

and the colcha shawl in a chest of scented cedar

Pull Push Loop Anchor

Wrapped in familial history  
One ancestral strand connects  
my body and spirit  
in my broken moments -  
A tender embrace

Anchor Push Pull Loop



# Monsoon Season

-for Ed and Marcia Ward

by John Macker

*The presence of absence pervades as time marches on.*

— David Meltzer

I'm lying on the floor listening for  
the distant thunder,  
sounds like deep songs,  
like old lost friend's voices milling  
around the cosmos,  
their chairs scraping the floor  
in the El Chapultepec Bar.

The heat lightning of revelation strobes:  
LA, Denver, Albuquerque,  
old outposts  
where flashes of inspiration  
became epic burns  
and the smoke tonight  
drifts beyond  
all proportion  
under these  
black gloved  
clouds.

Memory, not as mellifluous as camaraderie  
but I can hear them  
there is more than  
echoes and ashes dancing in time  
to see or feel  
or praise. The  
changing features of the sky  
can alter life and the lightning

so close,  
burns holes in their names  
as the standing rain fills them  
with an unforgettable beauty.

# The Day I Lost My Mother at Ross Dress for Less

by Jane Tokunaga

I lost my seventy–nine year old mother in Ross Dress For Less, somewhere between the Knits and the Active Wear. I had spent most of my adult life avoiding or side-stepping her critical eye. Quick to judge anyone who did not measure up to her standards, she had a sharp tongue and lately she had dropped the inner censor; you know, the little person inside each one of us that says, *You can't say that. That will hurt them. Or Don't say that, that could get you killed.* Also gone was that little person who said, *Don't put your feet up on the couch; it's not polite.* Well, now I hadn't just avoided her, I had lost her. At Ross Dress For Less.

She and my father had arrived in Santa Fe in the heat of August to cool off from Arizona. That was their story. I suspected my 85 year old father needed a break. But he wasn't willing to tell me why just yet. When they arrived I saw the change in my mother. Even though he watched her every move, my father could not compensate for her increasingly bizarre behavior.

"What's wrong with Mom?" I finally cornered him alone.

"Nothing. She's just a little forgetful." He patted my hand.

*Nothing, huh?* I decided to invoke the shopping test. If we could go shopping together and emerge with an outfit that met her approval, then I would know she was alright, even if I was a little damaged from her fashion sense.

The De Vargas Center in Santa Fe isn't very big as far as malls go. So it seemed a safe choice. At Ross Dress For Less we worked our way up and down the aisles. Somewhere along the way, I got distracted by a pair of jeans. When I looked up my mother was gone. *No problem*, I thought; *she's just looking down another aisle.* I casually draped the jeans over my arms and headed up the aisle and down the next, and the next and the next. Where was she? I started calling out, "Mom," then a little louder, "Mom," and then just started yelling, "MOM, MOM!"

Enlisting the help of anyone who would listen, I asked them to keep

an eye out for a little grey haired lady in white sneakers and a Green Valley visor. Finally I set the jeans down and scanned the checkout lines. Not there. A very nice girl at customer service offered to use the P.A. system to locate her. Soon the heavily accented voice of the young sales clerk sang out across the store, “*Ma-ree-on Woods*, please come to Customer Service.” No response. In my whole life my mother never got lost. She always knew where she was and where she was going. And she usually knew where everyone else was and where they should be going.

In desperation I walked out into the Mall. There on a dark green carved bench sat my mother. She looked up at me as I rushed over. “Mom, where were you? I thought I lost you,” I held on to her hand as I sat down next to her.

With a dazed expression, she reached up to touch my face. “I’m so tired,” she said.

I could no longer deny that something was very wrong. I drove home with my mother seated comfortably beside me. My thoughts raced on ahead. *What if I couldn’t find her? What’s wrong with her? What if I lose her forever?*

At the house, my father greeted us with resignation. It was time to talk.

He agreed that there was something wrong.

“But, I’ve been handling it. I only let her drive part way here.”

“Part way here? Dad, I don’t think she should be driving at all. She’s confused. She puts her feet up on the couch and gets lost in Ross Dress For Less, for God’s sake.” I took a breath in, breath out. “What are you going to do?” Without waiting for an answer, I picked up the phone to call my know-it-all brother. And he did know it all.

“Put Dad on the phone,” he said.

“Yah, yah, ok, yah,” my father said into the phone and then handed it back to me.

“Listen,” my brother said, “they’ve got to go back home and see a neurologist. But I think I know the diagnosis.”

I refused to drive back with them to Tucson. To this day I’m not sure why.

Maybe it was the certainty that if I did, I would never return home. As the only daughter, I would be expected to give up my husband, my

job, my life in Santa Fe and take care of them. Neither of my brothers had that worry. At one point my father did ask me to do exactly that. We settled on regular visits.

On my first visit to Tucson after they got the Alzheimer's diagnosis, my mother told me, "Your father's worried. But I'm not. God is watching over me."

I nodded and held her hand. I was struck by her calm acceptance of what was to come. My father refused to move into an assisted living facility that had an Alzheimer's wing. Instead he took vigilant care of her at home until he became too frail. Over six feet tall, he had always towered over his petite wife. Now he realized she could easily knock him over. And if she fell, he could no longer help her up. At the nearby senior care center where he placed her, she followed around the Mexican women who cooked and cleaned, and cared for her. They barely understood English, but then, neither did she now. They embraced her and moved her gently along like a member of their extended family. My father made excuses why he would not go to see her. She was no longer herself; he was too sick; it upset him too much.

Finally he told me, "It is like a divorce." His head bowed with the weight of what he had to say. "I have to let her go."

I fought against his words. What did he mean? What did he know about divorce? Sixty years married, he knew enough to know she was lost to him. Soon she no longer recognized me.

# Vanilla

by *Chris Bursk*

My mother has forgotten my children's names,  
but not the twenty-eight varieties Howard Johnson's sold,  
though she never ordered any but vanilla.  
You'd think that at the age of ninety-six  
she'd be tired of its medicinal, stubborn sweetness,  
a flavor you have to ferret out,  
the way you might with a flower  
you must smell a long time before finding its fragrance.  
Tutti Frutti would better suit a woman so eccentric  
that when she turned forty, she'd been shot  
with so much electricity she'd still be trembling  
when I visited her. I remember how, every time  
my mother faced hospitalization, we'd run away,  
though only as far as the ice cream parlor.  
Fugitives making great escapes ought to feast  
on something exotic like black raspberry or Neapolitan,  
but we'd each get a scoop of vanilla,  
though she'd let me go crazy with jimmies.  
Once when she was locked up, I hid a bottle  
of vanilla extract so far back in the spice cabinet  
no one else could find it, and I could  
unscrew and smell the cap and sometimes  
make a rainy day bearable. At eight, I was too old  
to believe in magic, but young enough  
to wish for it. Now my mother can't eat anything  
on her own, except, it turns out, ice cream.  
For that she demands she hold the spoon herself.  
She can't put enough syllables together  
to say my whole name,  
but her upper gum and lower lip have no trouble  
with this little pod of consonants and obliging vowels:  
vanilla, my mother says

smiling down at her half-full dish  
with that cunning I've come to expect from the very old.  
Maybe she lets the ice cream drip on purpose  
on her blouse, arms, the lap of her skirt.  
Long after I leave, that illicit, seductive aroma  
is still with her. She licks the spoon  
till there's not a single dab of ice cream to be seen  
and then she licks it again  
as if she can't trust her eyes now;  
only her tongue knows  
there's more, there's got to be more.

# Swan Song for My Mother

by *Ursula Moeller*

All day every day  
these last two years  
I carried you with me.

I carried you along on my riverside walk  
passing downy ducklings, cottony cattails,  
spatterdock, starry waterlilies  
white pointed petals bursting skyward,  
glimpsed a wild Trumpeter Swan  
heard him calling

like the black swan  
at your retirement home.  
You said the swan knew you, remember?  
I pushed your wheelchair  
right up to the fence.  
Broad red feet paddled him  
and his wavering mirror image  
as close as he could get.  
The swan nodded  
his scarlet knobbed beak  
spread wide those  
great glossy wings  
ruby-red eyes gleaming, and yes,  
when you spoke to him  
in both German and English  
in the soft voice you used  
talking to small children,  
he swayed his sinuous neck,  
sang his sonorous song.  
Clearly you understood each other.  
I stood silent behind you



holding the wheelchair handles  
listening.

Times I wished for the swan's voice to reach you  
wherever you went during hallucinations,  
you told of fiacres and dancing chandeliers  
across the ocean in the land of your birth  
or perhaps further  
into realms I didn't know  
and couldn't follow.  
So we waited, mother, daughter and swan.  
I felt both inside and outside.  
The swan's fluting led the way.

# Password: Zephyr

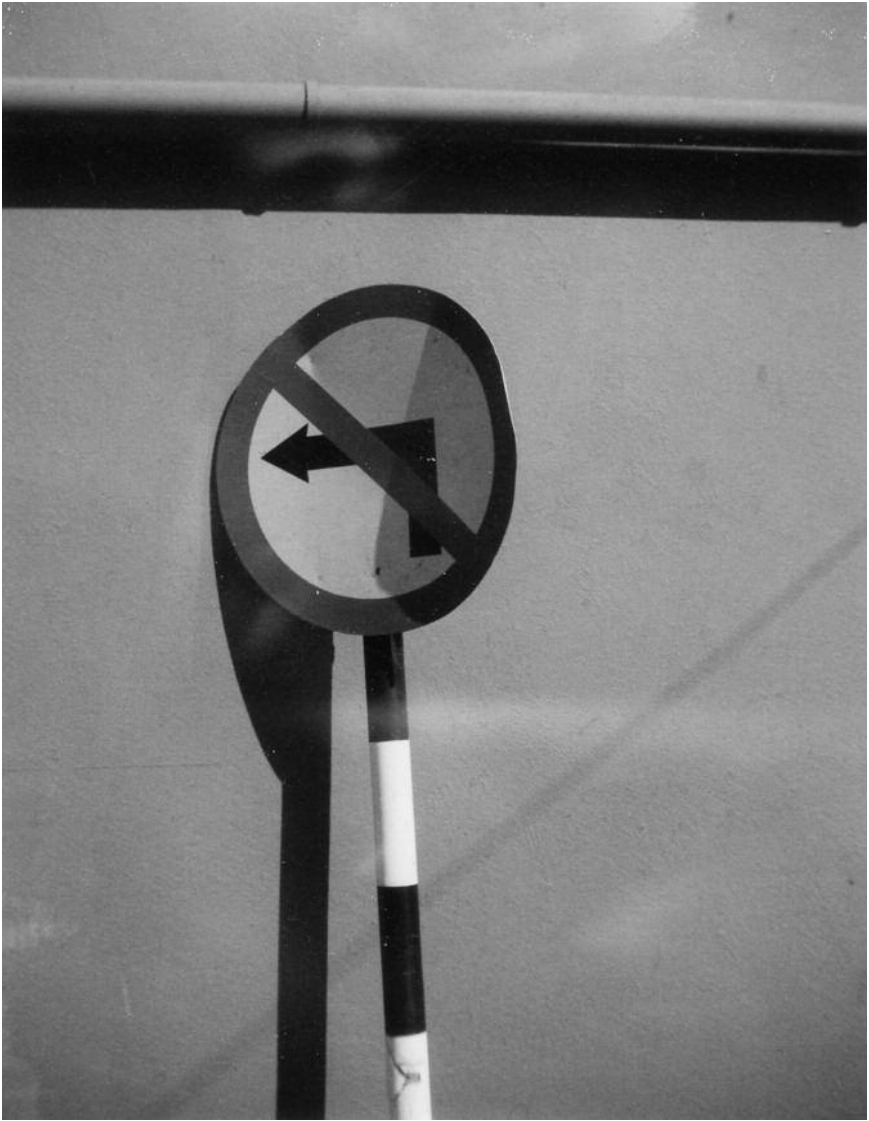
by Ann Filemyr

Everybody I call great-grand  
sailed west across the ocean  
hoping for what, thinking of what?  
Gold coin heavy in the pocket?  
Land for as many miles as you can see?  
A church without a wicked king?  
More Pioneer women died  
when their big skirts blazed up  
cooking around the campfire  
than died in childbirth.  
I want to shout, Idiots!  
Put on some pants!  
insert: taboo  
insert: immigration  
insert: consciousness

Last night the lead on *The Office*  
said, *What's good about the American Dream*  
*is you can fall asleep*. Cut to commercial.  
Somnambulists cruising malls.  
Neophytes punching debit codes.  
Lottery luck prayer to Jesus.  
Pistol in convenience store.  
Store clerk killed for ten dollah three cents.  
insert: heartbreak  
insert: gross domestic product  
insert: consciousness

Pulling off the road into gravel  
I stop the car. Step out onto dirt.  
A cholla cactus is blooming.  
insert: breath  
insert: flowering  
insert: consciousness





**Street Sign** Cong, Ire., August 2010, Polaroid 667  
*by Matthew Morrow*

# Essay, Reviews, and Interview

by Tina Matthews

## The Priest and the Professor

While teaching New Mexico History last year at the new History Museum, History Professor Andrew Lovato instructed his students to be present at the 400 year centennial celebration. The celebration, out at Marcy park had several tents set up for the interest of the community- I spent several minutes listening to interesting historians at the story tent. Next door was the book tent. As I wandered over, several books were placed on a table with the Franciscan, Fray Angelico Chavez on the cover. Who was this man who named himself after a monk in Italy some five hundred years before? In the ensuing months I forgot about it, until I was researching material on poets at the main library in Santa Fe. Leaving the library, and walking back to my car, the statue of a figure of a monk caught my attention. Reading the placard, it was dedicated to Fray Angelico. I noticed this library was also named for him- The Fray Angelico History Library and Photographic Archives.

Fray Angelico, (born Emmanuel Ezekiel Chavez) retired from the priesthood in 1971, yet his duties as a priest were not over. The Archbishop of Santa Fe then called upon him to catalogue the archives of the Archdiocese. It took him six years to complete this enormous task. He wrote several books about the people who came here from their Spanish roots and is mainly known apart from his priestly Franciscan life as a well known historian, yet I found he was also a poet, and a muralist. Thumbing through an old copy of his poetry book, *Clothed With the Sun*, I found an inscription in the front page. It said- "I like to drive stakes in the ground for climbing things..." The writing was small, and precise. It was signed- "gratefully, Fray Angelico Chavez," with the place and date noted as Pena Blanca, 1939. (Pena Blanca was the town he was assigned to after his ordination, and where he spent his first six years.)

As I flipped through the pages, I was struck by the timeless quality of

the prose, the lyrical movement of the words. In all of his writing one is struck by the spiritual. He never strays from who he was, the man who had, as a boy in San Diego, been enamored by religious saints, and at Mora the devotion of his teaching nuns inspired the longing to give his life eventually to the Franciscan mendicant order. He wrote this poem a few years after his ordination.

I Vowed  
I vowed that I would not possess  
Things having bulk of earthly dross,  
Because my Lord in emptiness  
Lay in the crib and on the cross.

The Lord was pleased, for He has blessed  
My body's poorness and my soul's –  
Behold the treasures that He pressed  
Into my hands are little holes.

One poem, titled “Pena Blanca,” tells a story of this town- the town he first traveled to after ordination as a priest. A poem caught my attention in the book titled *Morning*. “The morning is with me ever, a book I carry next to my heart: Noon but ushers its last part, Night is the dark, rich cover.”

Who did that remind me of? I was soon thinking of another poet, a professor at the community college named Joan Logghe. She too felt a deep love for New Mexico; her several books of prose were also metaphors and images of the desert landscape. They speak of the solitude of the rural New Mexican. I then thought that the two had much in common, in their sacred bonding with place. Having been a transplant myself, I knew I wanted to write about two people who, divided by one generation, embodied a fierce devotion to their community, describing the relationships with neighbors and friends in a similar, mystical, faith driven way. Logghe is a well known teacher, a married wife and mother; Fray Angelico, the priest-historian, whose love of the saint whose austere rules were sanctioned by Pope Honorius the III humbled and defined him; both were poets schooled with the discipline acquired from loving

the art form.

Fray Angelico was born in Wagon Mound, New Mexico in 1910. He lived to be 86 years of age. He began writing poetry at fifteen, while attending seminary school in the Midwest. Always the precocious student, he learned to read and write in both English and Spanish by the age of five. While a young boy in school, deeply impressed by the lyrical poetic styles of Donne, Tennyson, and Robert Lewis Stevenson, he decided he wanted to write poetry like that and began what he called *Cantares*, in 1925. He later would recall he had also been influenced by his love of Spanish odes and musical verses sung by performers in medieval Spain where celebrations included jugglers and entertainers. The book of verse was dedicated to his parents, with no intention of publishing it. It was only later that his brother Tom Chavez encouraged him into publishing under the name of *Cantares: Canticles & Poems*. The poems show a discipline for the art and a grasp of descriptive imagery quite beyond his fifteen years.

His name was given to him by a rector who had been impressed by the mural paintings he produced in Cincinnati. The rector dubbed him Fray Angelico after a famous painter and Florentine artist, Giovanni da Fiesole who lived in Spain in 1387. When he took his vows that was the name he chose to be called by. Unfortunately, the murals were destroyed by some well-meaning but misguided priests upgrading the cathedral where they were lodged. Tom Chavez comments that his brother was embittered and saddened to see them destroyed. He felt it was his best creative work. His poetry, fortunately was preserved, a selected works was his last book personally selected by Fray for his friends and his admirers of his verses.

Joan Logghe was recently named Poet Laureate of Santa Fe, came to New Mexico from Pennsylvania. I met this warm, seriously funny person when I was working on my creative writing certificate. Our class was small, around 13 or 14 people, a definite benefit to all of us, giving more chances to read aloud from stuff. Joan introduced us to several major poets: Lorca, Bly, Gilbert, Neruda, Sagan, and Greenbaum, to name a few. She called herself the handout queen. Occasionally she read aloud from her own works, sometimes writing something new along with us.

In 2004 Logghe published a small book of prose titled *Rice*. She called them sonnets. I think they are some of the most personal and esoteric of her body of work. In her intro she divulges meanings, “This book is held together by rice. It is as formal and formless as those grains.” She echoes a kind of eastern philosophic approach, the ideas culled from her own rich vocabulary that leans into her Jewish faith, and towards the minimalism of her teacher Robert Bly and Zen Buddhism.

There is the love of word play, something she appears to use to transcend the ordinary; raising children, honoring marriage vows, being the non-native amongst generations of those with Spanish ancestry. She uses her prose to fit herself into a soulful desert world of big rivers, majestic mountains and savannahs of juniper and pinon. There is a love of the palpable beating hearts behind the body. Her words are stories about the epoch of a life she has chosen, not an easy path for someone who found herself possessed by the desert landscapes and culture of New Mexico. Human experiences central to her work involved the pueblos nearby, the cowboys and the crooners, the peace and turbulence of living in the Espanola valley. Intrinsic to her trade is the poignant loneliness the mountains surrounding her evoke. Her palette is the landscape of her community, the rural New Mexican life where she set down her roots. In *Rice* we get a glimpse of this life, at home in the desert where she roams behind the wheel of her car, cruising through the crusty surfaces of a solitary world.

Yesterday, eve of my birthday. I changed  
My tune. I turned the word “crisis” instead  
Said “our marriage woke up.” Drove alone  
To a country zendo set among pines, bears, raccoon.  
I drove east. I drove west. Sang my way home.  
I canned the last peaches of the first tree.  
I loved. I tried very hard not to hate.  
I cut the biggest cabbage for my friend.

Two poets unlike as oil and water, except that the Spanish world had anointed them both. In some odd way they both needed to conquer this place they inhabited. Fray Angelico felt the need to Christianize and

reform, infected as he was by the Franciscan spirit that believed the new world of America was a pure and unadulterated place compared to the corrupt influences of Europe (Columbus may have been a Franciscan tertiary or at least a novice in the third order.)

When Fray Angelico writes of the Pueblo and the Navajo tribes the fervor to reform is part of his priestly script. Logghe, on the other hand, settled into the life Angelico had been born into; she borrowed the Spanish speaking ways as an immigrant from the east, willing to make a life for herself and her family- denying for many years what she had studied and trained herself for. One, a priest, looking from the inside out, hoped to transplant the seed of Christianity in a pure land where they would root and thrive, and the other, a poet, denying the fanfare of the intelligentsia to raise a family that would eventually grow up, leaving her to her first love — writing down in a kind of terrifically driven way, a life. Driving into Espanola, avoiding the weekend crowds, she ends her poem “But Espanola,” with a cryptic message.

But Friday I pull the plug  
And the Rio gurgles away  
Sucking the town with it, the fields too,  
Each down their acequia from the source,  
The apple orchards north,  
And all you smell is earth.

The beauty of poetry is somewhere I know I need to go, a solitary space to be in a world that spins quickly around me. Indeed, these two poets that are a single generation apart are like Milagros shining brightly. Their books are expressions of time and space circling in a desert orbit, bounded by the mountains of the Sangre de Cristo.

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## “The Sun” Review

As an on again, off again reader of *The Sun* magazine for years, I found a letter to the editor in the June Issue (issue 414) that explains my own ambiguity fully- A letter from subscriber Thomas Bloch divulges- “I’m overwhelmed by the pain, negativity, and suffering of the writers. Then, often in the same piece, I’m ambushed by hope, change, empathy, and compassion.”

The layout of this literary rag is fairly simple, save for a few exclusively signature pieces the publication has run for years. There is always a long interview included that is not focused on writing, but on current issues. When I asked a friend of mine what he liked about *The Sun* he mentioned an interview with Pema Chodron, the Buddhist who has written several books on the subject. She is a writer known for religious views and a well known lecturer- Theology is a central topic along with ecology, racism, and politics. Violence and solutions by peaceful resolution are often part of this social commentary in the form of essays. The editor, Sy Safransky, started the *Sun* some thirty five years ago. His roots are journalism; he worked in NYC until he ended up in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. When he wrote about the Navajos in an issue back in the nineties he said, “I can’t imagine feeling that rooted. I no longer consider NYC my home...but where do my roots connect with earth?” He had been on a trip to Arizona, and stayed for a night in a Hogan on the Navajo reservation. He found it uncomfortable, used to as he was to the city and the air-conditioned comfort of his office. Yet he had compassion and awareness of a Navajo’s beliefs to write a long essay on his experience there. He is unashamed to write about his own search for meaning (go to “Sy Safransky’s Notebook” in the back pages) in life. His NYC roots are reflected in his philosophical and intellectual leanings.

Anyone enjoys a good story. In “Reader’s Write,” the unabashed

unedited stories of The Sun's readerships are part of the reason I pick up and buy a copy. The topic covered in the June issue is Taking Chances. Here is an excerpt that one reader mailed in—"I began to sabotage my mother's drinking during the summer between fifth and sixth grade." When she wasn't looking, I poured the remaining beers in the fridge down the drain. I also found a water bottle filled with vodka in the bath-room closet, and I emptied it into the sink, then refilled it with tap water, I was afraid she would catch me." I always find the Reader's Write something I can relate to in a thought provoking way. (Send your typed double-spaced submissions to Readers Write. The Sun, 107 North Robertson Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27516. Include e-mail and phone number.)

Before I forget, The Sun is a wonderful place to see photographs (black and white) that reflect imaginative editors who frequently choose to spotlight the natural world. The cover of the June issue is of a man holding a pig that seems to be smiling- No Kidding! The man is smiling too. Why is this man grinning? Pick up a Sun and find out. Or send in your submissions to the address above or go to [www.thesun-magazine.org](http://www.thesun-magazine.org) for submission guidelines.

## "Nimrod" Review

Nimrod International Journal is a selection of literary works published by the University of Tulsa. In this spring/summer issue, the journal explores the emotional needs, drives, and desires that inhabit our human psyche, with some of the more courageous works taking on the darker side of human nature, whereas other lighter fiction speaks of the evolving relationships between sons, fathers, daughters mothers, couples, and the dead- pieced together in a fabric of need for connections in a disconnected world.

Nimrod's summer/fall 2010 calls itself "The Map of Yearning." Editor Francine Prose introduces this issue in her commentary "- It is, therefore, not surprising that in story, poem, and essay, yearning even to the degree of insatiable craving, is expressed in a multiplicity of designs."

One of my favorite stories deals with families that don't work, dys-

functional in the extreme. "Holes," by Teresa Milbrodt, is a brutal, yet tender narrative of a daughter who vainly struggles to support her broke and penniless family by driving holes into her hands and then joining the circus as a freak. A tale within the story relates how her grandfather, who had holes in his own hands as well, managed to support his family. This impressed upon his granddaughter a sordid longing to do what he did. Its content and words are not so much abrasive as painful to read. We are left gasping for air by a humanity that is beyond rational. The daughter feels she has to be a parent substitute—weaving her narrative through self abuse and mutilation with the candor and desperation of a helpless child.

The poetry in *Nimrod* gives the writers a lot of space and therefore lets them take chances with different forms that improvise and devise. A twenty first century ghazal ends every other line with the word green; evergreen, across the green, boiled greens, ending with the naming of Errin, by his mother as dismal in this writer's mind. "Erinn," she says, "I named you for an island, and I see how she sees me, foundering at sea, a doomed speck of green." (By Erinn Batykefer; thus an autobiographical prose.) A poem by Susan Dworski Nusbaum is somewhere between the comic and the divine. In "Psalms," she sings praises to a husband who, "spot cleaned my green sweater, sorted my underpants, underwire bras, nightgown, without a word, all accounted for, shining." In "The Disowning," by Jessica Moll, one grows nostalgic for Stephen Crane's "A light in the Forest," as she recalls going out into the world, leaving family, "Beyond the town, forest beyond the forest, swamp more forest. Animals I do not know, Gods I do not know." These writers have gone out into the literary world with a body of excellent work, some armed with college diplomas, others with freshness and honesty that are a joy to read.

Awards are given for works submitted. Fiction can be up to 7,000 words, and poetry can be short or long (3 to 10 pages.) Deadline for submission is April 30th, with an entry fee of \$20. For submission guidelines, go to [www.utulsa.edu/nimrod](http://www.utulsa.edu/nimrod).

## “Glimmer Train” Review

All that glimmers may not be gold, but in the fall, 2010, seventy sixth issue of Glimmer Train, one is struck with the silver- this is honest and gutsy writing- nearly perfect stories that shine. The word glimmer, defined by Webster means to shine feebly or intermittently. I envision a glimmering light on a train going forth in our sometimes incomprehensible world, bringing some semblance of meaning to our lives.

Two sisters, Linda Swanson-Davies and Susan Burmiester-Brown, are the editors of Glimmer Train. They began publishing twenty years ago, at what they describe as a transition point in their lives. In the editor's notes, they describe this transition- “In 1990 East Germany and West Germany reunified, the USSR agreed to withdraw all 73,500 troops from Czechoslovakia, Mikhail Gorbachev was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize...as part of the year's news, they continued, “It was a year of connections and boundaries, and a fruitful time for the human condition.” This journal is consumed with love of family or grieving and loss of those who touch their lives. The fiction shorts center around the universal experiences we all suffer through: loss, grief, redemption, the longing for a chance, a change. Linda and Susan send out their own vibes of loss, their spring 2010 issue was dedicated to the memory of their father who passed away this year.

Matthew Saleses, one contributor in short fiction speaks of a loss he experienced while growing up observing his own parents involvement in their parishes grief ministries. He focuses on that central theme in his story “The grief ministry,” writing from the viewpoint of a grief ministry's responder. In one passage, another responder changes sides when his own loss contradicts everything he has been trained to use in helping others grieve. “Fuck the grief ministry.” He yowls, as his own life feels irreparably damages when his wife passes away. “You can't help me,” he said. “There are no rules of grief.”

Also worth noting are the two interviews and the short nonfiction essay by Sarah Whyatt. She gives us a telling report of the imprisoned artist and activist Liu Xiaobo. He wrote “Manifesto '08”, hoping to inspire other Chinese to work for democratic change. The Chinese gov-

ernment thought it was subversive, and sentenced him to a long prison sentence. After the publication of this interview in *Glimmer Train*, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for his human rights work in China, an award he, for obvious reasons cannot accept. His wife was put under house arrest after the Scandinavians bestowed this honor upon his weary shoulders. Vietnamese writer Nam Lee is also interviewed in this issue. A lawyer, who turned to writing, found refuge in freedom of expression more to his liking than a job that requires a suit and tie. We find glimmers of how a successful lawyer could manage that complex switch in his life choices and why writing appealed to him. Submissions are accepted all year long. Awards are given to new writers in best short and standard fiction. Just go to [www.glimmertrain.org](http://www.glimmertrain.org), and click on yellow tab.

## Interview with Adalucía Quan

Adalucía Quan was born in Lima, Peru. A Continuing Education Spanish teacher here at SFCC, she holds a BS in Modern Languages from Florida International University, Miami, Florida and a Masters degree in Art Education from The University of New Mexico. During the time she was working on her degree, she was also writing a novela that she named “La Chica de Mendiburo.” The book was the winner of the 2007 International Latino Book Awards for Best Young Adult Fiction Book in Spanish. *La Chica* is used widely in high schools in the Advanced Placement Spanish Programs and at the college level for intermediate courses. It is an open window to life in a Latin American country and the perfect complement to the grammar and conversation classes. It also introduces students to Spanish and Latin American Literature in a fun, easy way. It is used at Whittier College in California, UNM, Lingua Franca Language School in Albuquerque, The Waldorf School, St. Michael’s High School here in Santa Fe, to name a few. I met Adalucia while she was teaching a workshop to a group of New Mexicans that use her novel. Later, I called her and she was kind enough to give me a few reasons for writing the book.

TM: What was original intention for writing “La Chica de Mendiburo?”

AQ: I noticed that my students were having difficulties making the transition from the basic grammar classes to the literature courses. I thought they needed something to bridge the gap, so I wrote this novel. Mendiburo was actually the name of the street in Lima where my grandparents used to live. In the novel, it is the name of the town where Marifer, the main character, lives with her grandparents and the rest of her family.

TM: How did you go about achieving your goals; what kind of research did it take?

AQ: It took me three years to write this novel because I wanted to make sure I used the most commonly used words in Spanish. I researched many words to make sure they were familiar to native Spanish speakers in Spain, Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean. At the same time the vocabulary had to be easy enough for non-native Spanish speakers. Liliana Valenzuela, an excellent editor and translator, proof read my novel and helped me with some words so that the Spanish could be as “universal” as possible.

TM: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your book?

AQ: Grupo Santillana, the educational giant for Spain and Latin America, bought the rights for *La chica de Mendiburo* for four languages and my book is now published abroad by this company. I went to Lima, Peru this past April invited by Grupo Santillana. In the week that I was there, I visited 17 schools where middle school and high school students were reading “*La Chica*”. I didn’t have enough time to visit more schools but *La chica* is even read in schools in remote places like the Andes and the Amazon. The book is doing very well in South America. The students love learning literature and culture while, at the same time, having fun with the multicultural fictional characters. I am very happy that *La chica* is reaching such wide and diverse audiences and also helping students in the process of learning a language.

TM: Thank you, Adalucia. I congratulate you on all the hard work and your awards for your book.

You can find out more about “*La Chica de Mendiburo*” at [www.adalucia.net](http://www.adalucia.net)

# Bios

**Dick Altman** continues to scratch at the verbal earth, laying words row by row, until something grows. He writes corporate stuff by day and poetry and music by night. The Santa Fe, NM, denizen earned an MA in English Literature at the University of Chicago.

**H. Marie Aragón**, member of High Desert Poets lives and writes in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her work is often grounded in her ancestral history of New Mexico and Colorado. In a former life she taught writing at a center for gifted students in Chicago.

**Lorenzo Atencio**: Having my story published by the SFLR is exciting for me. It marks the first milestone on my new path. After running a general law office in Espanola for thirty years, I began my metamorphosis into a writer. My family settled in Santa Cruz in 1695 and has lived on the same land continuously since then. I have always felt a calling to write about my family and Northern New Mexico. Good fortune puts me in a position to reinvent myself now. I am a product of the sixties and "The Great Society." Affirmative Action allowed me to work for IBM as an engineer then attend the University of Michigan Law School in preparation for this newest odyssey. My health compelled me to retire recently and opened up the opportunity to study writing at SFCC. Only in America.

**Leia Barnett** was born in Nambe, New Mexico and has remained in and around the Santa Fe region ever since. She finds herself continually falling for the unexpected beauty of the high desert landscape and the infinite ways in which it unfolds itself. The poem "Broken Bird" was written in remembrance of an accident that occurred in 1997 at Heron Lake when her mother fell off a cliff and nearly lost her life. She dedicates this poem to her mother, Jeni Barnett, who shines brighter every day.

**William C. Blome** is a writer of short fiction and poetry. He beds down nightly in-between Baltimore and Washington, DC, and he is an MA graduate of the Johns Hopkins University Writing Seminars. His work has previously seen the light of day in such little mags as *Amarillo Bay*, *Prism International*, *Taj Mahal Review*, *Pure Francis*, *Salted Feathers* and *The California Quarterly*.

**Ace Boggess** currently is incarcerated in the West Virginia correctional system. His poetry has appeared in *Harvard Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Poetry East*, *RATTLE*, *Atlanta Review*, *Southeast Review*, *Florida Review*, and other journals. His books include *The Beautiful Girl Whose Wish Was Not Fulfilled* (poetry, Highwire Press, 2003), *Displaced Hours* (novel, Gatto Publishing, 2004) and, as editor, *Wild Sweet Notes II*, an anthology of West Virginia poetry published in 2004.

**Mickey Bond**: I was born in Israel to parents from Poland & Bulgaria and later raised in west suburban Boston. After attending Colgate University as an undergraduate, I spent some years in Ann Arbor where I received my MA in American Literature from the University of Michigan. I have lived in Santa Fe since 1994. Currently I am researching material for a book about accidental procedure and artistic inspiration. I teach workshops in mixed media and career development in my studios in Santa Fe and Tubac, Arizona.

**S.L. Bond** grew up in Santa Fe. He currently lives in Albuquerque where he is an American Studies major at the University of New Mexico.

**John Brandi**, a New Mexico resident for forty years, is the recipient of an NEA Poetry Fellowship, and a Witter Bynner Award to teach poetry in the Santa Fe schools. His recent books include *Facing High Water* (selected longer poems) and *Seeding the Cosmos: New & Selected Haiku*.

**Regina Murray Brault** has twice been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. Her awards include 2007 Euphoria and Skysaje Enterprises Poetry Competitions, and the 2008 Creekwalker prize. Regina's poetry has appeared in 130 different publications.

**Sean Brendan-Brown** works as a photographer for the Insurance Commissioner's investigations office (affectionately called the "yuck" unit). He has published with the *Indiana Review*, *Southampton Review*, *Texas Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, and the University of Iowa Press anthologies *American Diaspora* and *Like Thunder*. He's received Fellowships from the NEA for poetry (1997) and fiction (2010).

**Debbi Brody** is an avid attendee and leader of poetry workshops throughout the Southwest. She has been published in numerous journals, magazines and anthologies of note. She is currently working on her newest full length poetry manuscript.

**Erin Brooks** moved to New Mexico in 2003 and earned a B.A. in creative writing and politics from the College of Santa Fe. She has received awards for her poetry and creative nonfiction. Interested in wine, Erin is currently pursuing her second level toward a Master Sommelier certification.

**Chris Bursk**, recipient of NEA, Guggenheim, and Pew Fellowships, is the author of nine books, most recently *The Improbable Swervings of Atoms* from University of Pittsburgh Press and *The First Inhabitants of Arcadia* from the University of Arkansas Press. In addition to working as a volunteer for three decades in the corrections system, with those on probation and parole, he teaches at Bucks County Community College and is most importantly the grandfather of six.

**Trent Busch** is a native of rural West Virginia who now lives in Georgia where he makes furniture. His poems have appeared in many journals including *Best American Poetry 2001*, *Poetry*, *Hudson Review*, *Southern Review*, *Georgia Review*, *Threepenny Review*, *Shenandoah*, *The Nation*, *American Scholar*, and more recently in *Notre Dame Review*, *The Evansville Review*, *Agni Online*, *Rattle*, and *Boston Review*.

**Lauren Camp** is the author of *This Business of Wisdom* (West End Press, 2010), and is also an accomplished visual artist and professional radio host. Her poems have appeared recently in *Leveler*, *dirtcakes*, *New Verse News*, and *Upstairs at Duroc*, and her work has been honored by the Gaea Foundation and Recursos. [www.laurencamp.com](http://www.laurencamp.com).

**Tom Clayton** studied Creative Writing at Bath Spa University, England, and has had his flash fiction published by Leaf Books in the UK and Fast Forward Press in the US. His reviews have featured in *The Sunday Times*. He is currently working on a collection of short fiction, and a debut novel, *Other Harbours*, due for completion in 2012.

**Jack Cooper's** first formal collection of poetry, *Across My Silence*, was published by World Audience Publishers, Inc., New York, NY 2007. The world premiere of his play, *That Perfect Moment*, coauthored with Charles Bartlett, ran for 12 weeks in 2009-10 in San Fernando Valley, California, where he currently resides. His poem, "Transitory Endings," published in *The Georgetown Review*, was nominated for a 2008 Pushcart Prize. His work has also appeared in *Bryant Literary Review*, *Argestes*, *The Evansville Review*, *Tundra*, *Runes*, *The MacGuffin* and many other publications. Cooper holds a bachelors degree in biology from the University of Redlands and a second bachelors from the University of Norway in psychology and English.

**Tom Crawford** lives in Santa Fe. He has published widely in America in journals, literary magazines, anthologies. He is the author of seven books of poetry and the recipient of many literary prizes, among them, two National Endowments for the Arts. His forthcoming book, 2011, *The Names of Birds*, will be published by Western Edge Press.

**Brian Cronwall** teaches English at Kaua'i Community College in Hawai'i. His poems have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies in Hawai'i, Guam, the Mainland United States, Australia, Japan, United Kingdom, and France.

**John Davis** is the author of *Gigs* (Sol Books) and *The Reservist*, a chapbook. His poems have appeared recently or are forthcoming in *Blue Collar Review*, *Cider Press Review*, *New York Quarterly*, and *North American Review*. He lives on an island in Puget Sound, Washington, teaches high school and performs in rock n roll bands.

**Jon Davis** is the author of six collections of poetry, most recently *Preliminary Report* (Copper Canyon, 2010). He has received a Lannan Literary Award and two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships. For twenty years, he has taught at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**Behzad Dayeny** is Director of Food Services at Santa Fe Community College, born in Iran, has been living in Santa Fe since 1984.

**Joseph Delgado** was born and raised along the dwindling banks of the Rio Grande in Albuquerque, New Mexico; attended the College of Santa Fe and now resides and writes out of Mohave Valley, Arizona.

**Carol Denson** wrote *Shell* while living in Chicago, where she took long walks by the lakeshore and spent so much time alone that everything seemed to come alive. She now lives in Austin and has poems published in *Gulf Coast* and *The Weight of Addition*, An Anthology of Texas Poetry.

**Ann Filemyr**, Ph.D. is the Academic Dean of the College of Contemporary Native Arts at the Institute of American Indian arts. She is also a poet, photographic image-maker, and practitioner of the healing arts.

**Paul Freidinger** is a poet who splits his time between Chicago and Edisto Island, South Carolina, a contrast that lends perspective. He has poems recently published or forthcoming in *After Hours*, *Atlanta Review*, *Bayou Magazine*, *Big Muddy*, *Chicago Poetry*, *Confrontation*, *Existere*, *580 Split*, *Grist*, *Florida Review*, *Mason's Road Review*, *New York Quarterly*, *Potomac Review*, *South Carolina Review*, and *South Dakota Review*.

**Cynthia Gallaher**, a Chicago-based poet and writer, is author of three books and a creative writing workshop leader in libraries, schools and arts centers. She is on the Chicago Public Library's list of "Top Ten Requested Chicago Poets" and tweets about food and poetry at [twitter.com/swimmerpoet](https://twitter.com/swimmerpoet).

**Roxane Gay**'s writing appears or is forthcoming in *Black Warrior Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Cream City Review*, *Annalemma*, *McSweeney's* (online), and others. She is the co-editor of *PANK*, an assistant professor of English at Eastern Illinois University, and can be found at <http://www.roxanegay.com>. Her first collection, *Ayiti*, will be released in 2011.

**Josh Goller** sprouted in Wisconsin soil, but the winds carried him to the gloom and damp of the Pacific Northwest, where he is a MFA candidate at Pacific University. His fiction has appeared or is forthcoming in *Sententia*, *Jersey Devil Press*, *The Santa Fe Literary Review*, *Used Furniture Review*, *Titular*, *Seahorse Rodeo Folk Review* and many others. His art house film reviews appear in *The Alchemist Weekly* and *Clever Magazine*. He was a finalist in the 2010 NYC Midnight Flash Fiction competition. He founded and edits the flash fiction e-journal *The Molotov Cocktail* ([www.themolotovcocktail.com](http://www.themolotovcocktail.com)) and is a guest editor for *SmokeLong Weekly*.

**Ariel Gore** is the author of seven books including *The Traveling Death and Resurrection Show*, *Atlas of the Human Heart*, and *Bluebird: Women and the New Psychology of Happiness*. *All The Pretty People: Tales of Carob, Shame, and Barbie-Envy* is due out in 2011. She founded the zine *Hip Mama* and now teaches writing workshops in Santa Fe and Portland, Oregon. Click to <http://arielgore.com>.

**William Greenway's** seventh full-length collection, *Everywhere at Once*, winner of the 2009 Ohioana Poetry Book of the Year Award, is from the University of Akron Press Poetry Series, which also published his seventh collection, *Ascending Order* (2003), winner of the 2004 Ohioana Poetry Book of the Year Award. He's Professor of English at Youngstown State University.

**John Grey** is an Australian born poet, US resident since late seventies. Works as financial systems analyst. Recently published in *Connecticut Review*, *Alimentum* and *Writer's Bloc* with work upcoming in *Pennsylvania English*, *Prism International* and the *Cider Press Review*.

**Ken Gurney** lives in Albuquerque, NM, USA. He edits the New Mexico poetry anthology *Adobe Walls*. For a full biography, listing of publication credits and available books visit <http://www.kpgurney.me/Poet/Welcome.html>

**Michael Hettich's** books include *A Small Boat* and *Flock and Shadow*. His most recent book, *Like Happiness*, was released this past fall from Anhinga Press. A new book, *The Animals Beyond Us*, is forthcoming from New Rivers Press. He lives in Miami.

**Michelle Holland** lives in Chimayó, teaches all things English at Los Alamos High, writes a poem a day with her husband Tom, prepares to see her daughter off to college in the fall, and runs the barrancas behind her house as she trains for her first half-marathon in May.

**Ann Hunkins** is an award-winning poet, photographer, and translator of Nepali. A former Fulbright grantee with an M.A. in poetry from UC Davis, she has been published in various journals. She recently finished translating a Nepali novel on an NEA Translation Grant and is working on a book of her poetry.

**Joseph Hutchison** is the author of 12 collections of poems, most recently *Sentences* and *Greatest Hits 1970-2000*. Among his full-length collections are *The Rain At Midnight*, *Bed of Coals*, *House of Mirrors*, and *The Undersides of Leaves*. His work appears in the 2010 anthology *New Poets of the American West* and in several recently issued journals, including *Cerise Press*, *Consequence Magazine*, *Lilliput Review*, *Naugatuck River Review*, and *Xanadu*. He lives with his wife Melody Madonna in the mountains southwest of Denver and makes his living as a writer and itinerant educator.

**Dallas Huth** moved to Langley, Washington from Santa Fe, New Mexico in 2009. She won first place for poetry in the Whidbey Island Writer's Association 2009 contest, *In the Spirit of Writing*. Her poems have appeared in *Small Canyons Anthology*; *the Harwood Anthology*, *Looking Back to Place*; *The Manzanita Quarterly* and the *Santa Fe Literary Review*. Her chapbook is entitled: *Unseasonable Rain, Almost a Memoir*. She has purchased a green burial site in the Langley cemetery.

**Alexis Ivy** is from Boston, Massachusetts. Her poems have appeared in *Main Street Rag*, *Amoskeag*, *Off The Coast*, *Spare Change News*, and upcoming in the *Chiron Review* and *Eclipse*. She is currently sending out her first manuscript entitled *Romance with Small-Time Crooks*.

**Paul Lamar**: I live with my partner, Mark, in downtown Albany, NY, where I grew up. We have three grown children and a delightful granddaughter, the inspiration already for a new poem. I teach English at two local colleges and review theater for one of our local newspapers. I'm blessed.

**Jeanne Lohmann** has five collections of poetry in print, and two books of prose. Her most recent poetry books are *Calls from a Lighted House*, 2007, and *Shaking the Tree*, 2010. (John Daniel & Co.) Just completed is *As If Words*, a book of love poems. Her work appears in chap-books, journals and anthologies, and has been read on *The Writer's Almanac*. She lives in Olympia, Washington.

**John Macker's** latest book is *Underground Sky*. He is also the author of *Woman of the Disturbed Earth*. Most recently, his work has appeared in *Malpais Review*, *New Mexico Poetry Review* and *Adobe Walls*.

**Tina Matthews** has a creative writing certificate from SFCC and is working on her associates with a concentration in the Liberal Arts. She is fortunate to have had both Miriam Sagan and Joan Logghe as teachers par excellence while attending the college.

**Mary McGinnis** has been living, writing, working and laughing in New Mexico since 1972. She has recent work in *Alimentum* and *Malpais Review*. She was a recipient of the New Mexico Literary Arts Board Gratitude Award in 2009 and has upcoming work in *The Sow's Ear* and *Sin Fronteras*. She participates in three writing groups.

**Miranda Merklein** was born in Asheville, North Carolina and grew up in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She has a PhD in English from University of Southern Mississippi, an MA in liberal arts from St. John's College in Santa Fe, and a BA in political science from College of Santa Fe. She currently works as a freelance writer and the publisher and editor of *Journal of Truth and Consequence*, a magazine for the arts. Merklein's work has appeared in *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Oxford American*, *Natural Bridge*, and others.

**Karla Linn Merrifield:** Award-winning poet, National Park Artist-in-Residence, and assistant editor of *The Centrifugal Eye*, Karla Linn Merrifield has six books to her credit, including *Godwit: Poems of Canada*, which received the 2009 Andrew Eiseman Writers Award for Poetry, and her new chapbook, *The Urn*, from Finishing Line Press.

**Devon Miller-Duggan's** poems have appeared in *CutBank*, *The Indiana Review*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *The Chattahoochee Review*. She has won a fellowship from the Delaware Division of the Arts and the Editor's Prize in Margie. One of her poems was nominated for the Pushcart Prize. She teaches in the English Department of the University of Delaware, is married to an historian, and has two grown daughters. Her first collection, *Pinning the Bird to the Wall*, appeared in November 2008 from Tres Chicas Books. Recent publications or acceptances include poems in *Rattle*, *The Chrysalis Review*, *Poem*, and *Your Daily Poem* (on-line).

**Joan Mitchell's** poems have appeared in literary reviews and anthologies, including *Southern Poetry Review*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Don't Go Away Hungry: Fifty Years of the Southern Poetry Review*, and the *Emily Dickinson Awards Anthology*. She was a first-place winner in the Southwest Writers' Annual Awards for Poetry. Joan attended the University of Michigan and St. John's College.

**Ursula Moeller** has been a full-time resident of Santa Fe for six years, part-time for fourteen and still cheers the blue skies each day. She writes poetry, prose and journals and has been working on a family memoir for several years. She delights in all outdoor activities as well as photography here in the Southwest. The *SFLR* has published some of her previous works and photographs.

**Ellen Birkett Morris** writes stories, poems and short plays from her home in Louisville, Kentucky. Her fiction is forthcoming in *South Carolina Review* and has appeared in *Paradigm*, *Salt River Review*, *The Pedestal Magazine* and *Alimentum*. Her story, "The Cycle of Life and Other Incidentals", was selected as a finalist in the Glimmer Train Press Family Matters short story competition.

**Kona Morris** is the co-founder and editor of *Fast Forward Press* ([www.fastforwardpress.org](http://www.fastforwardpress.org)), a publishing company devoted to condensed forms of literature. Her short stories and prose poems have appeared in a variety of publications. She received the Redwood Empire Mensa Award for Creative Non-Fiction in 2006, and she is currently finishing her first novel. [www.konamorris.com](http://www.konamorris.com)

**Matthew Morrow** was born and raised in Albuquerque and earned his B.F.A. in photography at the College of Santa Fe. He's exhibited two professional shows; *All Those Pretty Things, And You Thought We Were Dead*, as well as four student shows. He has also had photos published in the *Santa Fe Reporter* and the *Santa Fe New Mexican*. To see more of his work, go to [www.flickr.com/photos/matthewmorrow](http://www.flickr.com/photos/matthewmorrow).

**Jim Nawrocki's** poetry recently appeared in the anthology *The Place That Inhabits Us: Poems of the San Francisco Bay Watershed*. It has also appeared in *Kyoto Journal*, *Poetry*, *Chroma Journal*, *modern words*, and the website *poetry daily.com*. He writes regularly for the *Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*.

**Teresa Neptune** first picked up the camera as a teenager living in Paris and began her lifelong love of black & white street-photography. In 2005, Neptune was awarded the Willard Van Dyke Grant. Her photographs are in the collections of The National Museum of Women in The Arts, Washington DC; The Art in Embassies Program; The Palace of The Governors Museum; The State of New Mexico - Art in Public Places Program, and more. She has a studio and gallery in a historic adobe home at 728 Canyon Road in Santa Fe, New Mexico. [www.TeresaNeptune.com](http://www.TeresaNeptune.com)

**Jon Olsen** has made hundreds of extremely low-budget movies, including the internationally acclaimed bigfoot rape comedy *Ape Canyon*, and a forthcoming geology-themed hitchhiking epic entitled *Recent Life*. He was born in England and grew up among rednecks in northern California. He currently lives in Denver, Colorado.

**Marmika Paskiewicz** has lived in Santa Fe for a long time, where she has had a number of different lives and met nearly everyone in town. She is very happy to have time now to go to India, to Baltimore, to think & to write.

**Meg Pokrass** is the author of *Damn Sure Right* (Press 53) a collection of flash fiction. Meg writes flash-fiction, short stories and poetry. Meg serves as Editor-at-Large Frederick Barthelme's online magazine (formerly *Mississippi Review Online*) and before that, for *SmokeLong Quarterly*. Her stories, poems, and flash fiction animations have appeared in nearly one hundred online and print publications, including *Mississippi Review*, *Gigantic*, *Gargoyle*, *The Nervous Breakdown*, *HTML Giant*, *Wigleaf*, *The Pedestal*, *Keyhole*, *Annalemma*, *Smokelong Quarterly*, *elimae*, *Prime Number*, *Women Writers*, and *Joyland*. Meg creates and runs the popular *Fictionaut-Five Author Interview Series* for *Fictionaut*, and consults with Writing MFA programs about online publishing. Meg lives with her small, creative family and seven animals in San Francisco.

**Audrey Powers** is a St. Lawrence Island Yupik woman and a member of the Pugughileghmiit Clan. Originally she is from Alaska, but has resided in Santa Fe, NM for the past eight years. She is currently a student at Santa Fe Community College and is majoring in Accounting and Business Administration. She is a past recipient of the Zora Neale Hurston Award from Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado.

**Elizabeth Raby** is the author of three chapbooks and two full-length collections of poetry, *The Year the Pears Bloomed Twice*, 2009, and *Ink on Snow*, 2010, both published by Virtual Artists Collective (vacpoetry.org). Her poems have appeared in many journals.

**Shelly Reed** is the founding editor of Spire Press, holds a master's degree from NYU, and has been published in dozens of literary journals and anthologies. A few of the recent and forthcoming ones include: *The Oyez Review*, *Red Wheelbarrow*, *The Battered Suitcase*, *Karamu*, *Rougarou*, and *The Furnace Review*. She currently lives and creates in Brooklyn, NY.

**Timothy Riordan**'s poems have appeared in *The Sewanee Review*, *North American Review*, *Envoi* (UK), and other journals. His books include: *simulacrum*, *The Urge To Migrate*, *In A Fluid State*, and *Lesser Bird of Paradise*. A professor at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Mr. Riordan has had artist residencies in Prague and Reykjavik.

**Richard Robbins** was raised in California and Montana. His most recent poetry collections include *Radioactive City* and *Other Americas*. He currently directs the creative writing program and Good Thunder Reading Series at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

**Barbara Robidoux**'s poetry is widely published in anthologies nationwide. She has also published a full length collection of poems: *Waiting for Rain*. Currently she is working on a book of tanka and haibun and a collection of short stories. She lives in Santa Fe where she keeps six laying hens and a hive of bees as well as numerous friends and relatives.

**Barbara Rockman** teaches poetry at Santa Fe Community College and in private workshops in Santa Fe, NM. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Bellingham Review*, *Calyx*, *Cimarron Review*, *Louisville Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review* and *Terrain.org*. She is editor of the anthology, *Women Becoming Poems* (Cinabar Press). A graduate of the MFA in Writing Program at Vermont College of Fine Arts, her collection, *Sting and Nest*, is forthcoming from Sunstone Press.

**Kathleen Runyan**: I grew up in Flint, Michigan, moved to Los Alamos in 1942. The talented Los Alamos Poetry Posse tolerates me as a member. At 91, I still have my own teeth, still comb my gray hair, my legs move but don't run any races. I write to convince myself that I am still alive.

**Katherine D. Seluja** studied the art of nursing at Yale and Columbia University. She is currently translating 27 years of healthcare experiences into poetry and prose. Recent work has appeared or is upcoming in *Adobe Walls*, *Sin Fronteras* and *New Mexico Poetry Review*. She is co-authoring the forthcoming chapbook *Braided Voices*. Katherine can be reached at [kdseluja@comcast.net](mailto:kdseluja@comcast.net).

**Michael G. Smith** lives in Santa Fe, NM and has had poetry published in *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*, *the Kerf*, *Nimrod*, *New Mexico Poetry Review*, *the Santa Fe Literary Review*, *Sulphur River Literary Review* and other journals.

**Karen Stefano's** short fiction has appeared in *The South Carolina Review*, and *Ellipsis*. Other pieces are forthcoming in *Iconoclast* and *PilotProject*. Her non-fiction book, *Before Hitting Send: Power Writing Skills For Real Estate Agents* will be available later this year. She lives in San Diego where she practices law and writes.

**Nancy Stohlman's** books include *Searching for Suzi*: a flash novel, *Live From Palestine* and *Fast Forward: The Mix Tape*, the latest in an annual series of flash fiction released by *Fast Forward Press*, which Stohlman also co-founded. She's hoping all this writing business will eventually make her enough money to pursue her real dream of becoming a pirate.

**Jane Tokunaga** has been living in Santa Fe for over 25 years. A student in the creative writing program of Santa Fe Community College, she is grateful to have found such a fine program and community of writers. She often submits her prose and photography to local publications and this time she got lucky!

**Meg Tuite's** writing has appeared or is forthcoming in over 50 journals including *Berkeley Fiction Review*, *Hawaii Review*, *34th Parallel*, *One, the Journal* and *Boston Literary Magazine*. She is the fiction editor of *The Santa Fe Literary Review* and *Connotation Press*. Her novel *Domestic Apparition* has just been published, 2011 (San Francisco Bay Press). She has a monthly column "Exquisite Quartet" for *Used Furniture Review*. Her blog: <http://megtuite.wordpress.com>.

**Susan Varon** is a poet, artist and Interfaith minister, who moved to Taos 3 years ago after 40 years in New York City. She began writing poetry in 1992, after suffering a severe stroke. Her work has appeared in over 40 publications, including *Green Mountains Review*, *The Midwestern Quarterly* and *Notre Dame Review*.

**Sarah Velez** is a photography and creative writing major with an interest in exploring the beauty in seemingly dark themes. She enjoys acting, singing, forensic photography, and playing the banjo. Sarah hopes that her writing will one day let her travel the world.

**Chasity Vigil** is a Santa Fe Community College Alumna who is currently attending The Institute of American Indian Arts where she hopes to attain her BFA in creative writing by December 2011. She intends to go on to graduate school and eventually become a teacher in writing.

**Liz Wallace** is a full time jewelry designer and manufacturer. She loves writing when she can, and often uses her Native American background as inspiration. She also acts and bellydances.

**Linda Whittenberg** turned to poetry after retiring from Unitarian Universalist ministry. Two collections were published in 2009: *Dying Can Wait*, Pudding House Publications and *Tender Harvest*, a finalist for the New Mexico Book Award. Another collection of poems inspired by travel in Ireland is forthcoming in 2011. For more, visit her website: [www.lindawhittenberg.com](http://www.lindawhittenberg.com).

**Nancy Wing** is published both in poetry journals, as well as self-published. She is a first prize winner of the Poetry Society of Virginia. She is known for her poetry readings with and without original music. She also continues to organize and support poetry in her community.

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