

Gyroscope Review

fine poetry to turn your world around



*The
Crone
Issue*

*Issue 18-4
Fall 2018*



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Constance Brewer & Kathleen Cassen Mickelson

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Submissions: *Gyroscope Review* accepts previously unpublished contemporary poetry submissions through our online submissions system, gyroscopereview.submittable.com/submit. Please read our guidelines before submitting.

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FROM THE EDITORS

It's finally here, the Fall 2018 Crone Issue that we've been anticipating all summer. When we first conceived the idea that this issue would be dedicated to women poets over 50, we knew there would be a decent response. We knew that many of the poets who submitted to us over the past few years already fit into this demographic and that there needed to be more outlets for mature women poets to publish their work. What we didn't know was that we would hit such a big vein of rich material, a mother lode of women's poetry that the world needed to read. The sheer number of submissions overwhelmed us (and our submissions system). So many women wanted to take part; it broke our hearts to have to send out rejection notices. We simply didn't have room for all of it.

Gyroscope Review isn't the only poetry publication that has expressed an interest in this area of poetry. QuillsEdge Press is dedicated to publishing women over 50. Two Sylvias Press runs the Wilder Series Poetry Book Prize for women over 50. Passager Books is also dedicated to writers over 50 (not limited to women). And there are others out there, but when we consider the sheer number of poetry journals available right now, women poets over 50 could use a little more prominence. A little more respect. A little less invisibility. Because that is what happens to many women once they are mature: they disappear. They don't wish to. There is a tendency by some to view older women as irrelevant, even now in 2018. It's like being picked last to play kickball.

But women over 50 have a lot of kick. They've seen the world, earned their money, spoken their minds. They've been bruised from discrimination and abuse, they've left partners who didn't love them enough. They've watched a president take office in spite of his offensive treatment of women, and they've welcomed the #MeToo movement with a collective *it's about time* feeling. They've refused to be boxed into some past definition of what it is to age as a woman, redefined the crone. They've put on their hiking boots and headed out alone, ready to take on the wilderness. And they've returned with renewed strength and voice.

We are so proud to offer you these strong voices. Even with our themes, we always keep our doors open for general submissions and were pleased to see pieces from this submissions period that went so well with the work from the over-50 women poets. You'll find those pieces at the end of this issue, work from other strong-voiced poets who understand the value of poetry in this divided world.

As we move through autumn toward the winter holidays, when families and friends tend to spend more time together, we hope our little journal of poetry finds its way into those spaces with you. Share us, share our poets' words, start a discussion about art and all the ways it can make our world better.

We dare you.

Constance Brewer, Editor
Kathleen Cassen Mickelson, Editor

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POEMS

HONORING THE CRONES AMONG US

A WOMAN SAILS AT FIFTY
BY HILARY KING

A pirate looks at forty.
But a woman sails at fifty,
a vessel of her own making.

*You can't rename a boat,
my husband says,
if it's already been christened.*

I say I can do what I want
especially when the wind is waiting for me.
So step back and hand me the champagne.

WELL OVER 60
BY DOTTIE JOSLYN

We hang on anyway,
regardless of hurdles,
moving from one birthday
to the next with anticipation,
pushing our way through the crowd,
looking for the next adventure,
and there are plenty—
if we make them,
join them, create the circumstances.
We are creators and instigators,
putting aside reticence
and fear of failure.
We have nothing to lose,
and it shows.
We reach out and grasp what we want
and sing our own successes.
We have the power to change the course
of our country, maybe the world—
if we choose to do so.
We have the power to change ourselves
and recreate who we will be next—
and we do it daily.
We don't languish in the shadows;
we step out into the light
and show our faces and our hearts.
We can and—
we do!

BIO

BY CHARLENE LANGFUR

Did I get it right this time?
Starting over. Putting everything on the line.
Loving too much and not little enough.
Risking getting it wrong to be right.
Tending the garden and the plants like they are
part of the family. The yellow calendula,
the sunflowers attached to the bamboo poles,
someday they will be tall as I am.
And I'm learning how the solar lights work.
Explaining over and over how I have always been
how I am, a gay woman, a Tibetan Buddhist,
a hard worker with malas on my wrist
to remind me compassion counts more than
anything else in life, the beads from the seeds
of the Bodhi tree under which Buddha sat.
I am reminded of this no matter how far out
on a limb I travel or how many people don't like
who I am and how I keep getting up time after
time no matter how many times I have been
betrayed, it is easy to betray a single gay woman.
And with all the published poems and essays in magazines
and journals and the ones written on the backs of envelopes,
I have lost track of the numbers but never where
they come from, the truth is powerful and it changes
in time because that is how life is. Only change
stays with us. Nothing changes but change itself.
I keep at it. Looking out for all the panaceas,
ways for women to rise up again and again, saying
what happened even when it is unpopular until
it is easier for others to do the same. Not giving in
to what is wrong. Watering the herbs again,
planning a new garden no matter how much
is lost or how many times we have to start
over. And love. What matters most even at the very
end.

EVIDENCE

BY CAROLYN MARTIN

The fact is I could eat the same meal everyday.
The fact is I do.
The fact is I despise playing games.
The fact is I love playing games I can win.
The fact is Druids knocked on wood to startle trees awake.
The fact is I don't like trees observing me.
The fact is behind my façade there's a scared kid who hopes no one calls her out.
The fact is I hate parties unless I'm in charge.
The fact is the hardest character to impersonate is me.
The fact is I prefer the stark mystery of koans to biblical poetry.
The fact is we will be remembered not for what we build, but for what we destroy.
The fact is people don't improve much; however, there are exceptions.
The fact is I walk pigeon-toed – although pigeons do it better.
The fact is elbows can't be licked.
The fact is vertical swirls of wine on the glass's side are *legs*.
The fact is arteries pulse different tones in the body's bloody symphony.
The fact is I'd rather play with aquatic humanoids than those carbon-based.
The fact is yetis are more probable than fairies.
The fact is I could be too good to be true, but I am not.
The fact is bunk is bunk and there's lots to go around.
The fact is death is impermanent. Ask any perennial.
The fact is 300-pound gorillas in any room are over-rated primates.
The fact is I don't own pets because I fall in love too hard, too fast.
The fact is beauty's felt before it's seen.
The fact is when I can't climb a mountain, it bends its top toward me.
The fact is when little is at stake, risk is a breeze.
The fact is on this day something happened somewhere.
The fact is happenstance delights more than plans.
The fact is I've filed 97 "Words of the Day" and haven't sentenced one.
The fact is *fact* found print in the 15th century, arriving with *brainless*,
foolishness, *hodgepodge*, and *mockery*.

THE SEDUCTION OF SABI
BY KIRSTEN MORGAN

We of loose summer days
and louche summer nights,
who newly loved scotch,
caroused until dawn,
found lately the power of skin
to hold, or give,
and knew for certain
what others had never guessed,

you remember us, don't you?
We owned the earth
and deserved the best, with endless
fortune as our birthright.

Well, we grew up, and then
grew old and now we smile
in sympathy at those who can't
separate the sidewalk from the city,
who search for their faces
in storefront windows, renounce
the flaws in their unlucky
bodies, yearn for perfection

ever beyond reach,
and still believe there's more
out there if only they could sniff
the wind to find the right direction.

We smile because we know
that they, too, will grow loose
of skin and louche of habit,
become wildly grateful for days
with only breath and sun and
trusted friends as fortune.

With luck they will
one day find sabi,
the shabby elegance of years,
and wear, and quiet joy.

EULOGY FOR FISHNETS
BY JUNE BLUMENSON

*And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane
by those who could not hear the music. - Friedrich Nietzsche*

I slip my feet into the legs
of the pantyhose,
slowly roll the netting over my ankles,
my shins, my thighs,
and slither the black seams
up the back of my legs to end
perfectly straight, like fishing lines unfurled.
Such care, such precision would serve
other parts of my life as well.
The diamond-shaped mesh digs
into my flesh as I step into tap shoes.

What madness is this to come late to the dance,
to cast my net and snag a dream
that likens a charmed fish with sequined
scales—my body,
an oar pivoting around its lock—sheer
audacity calibrating
my arms, my legs, my weight.

After the last dance, I will cleanse
the stockings like a corpse
prepared for viewing. The black dye will bleed
and darken the basin.
I will hang them outside to dry
kicking in their empty casing.
It is right to acknowledge the dead.
No one can take from me what we have danced.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION
(*ARGUMENTS FOR OBESITY*)

BY JAN BALL

This is my body. I don't want to be as svelte as Tyra Banks with reconstructed body parts in Issac Mizrahi while she executively produces America's Next Top Model or as muscular as Hugh Jackman who works out with a personal trainer five hours a day, I've read in *People Magazine*, so he can sing and tap-dance but I can haul myself down the street when I'm motivated like a big brown bear goddess.

This is my body, sometimes bloated like an August tomato after heavy summer rains. I don't want to brag about the jellied donut rolls that have developed center or my oatmeal-raisin thighs but I can still find flattering black beaded sweaters at Macys and 3x plus pants on-line at Land's End and decorate myself attractively (so people tell me) with glittering earrings that swing like lit chandeliers when I walk. I talk, laugh, love possibly as well as trim Michelle Obama. This is my blood.

MAKING UP
BY CONNIE CLARK

I had myself shored up
enough to go into the world:
At thirty-two, with reddened hair,
I wore a lot of royal blue,
I wore high heels to test my legs,
at sea within the business world.

I wore expressions meant to be
friendly but not flirtatious.
I stuffed my burning spirit's quest
where I thought no one could see it,
not even me.

I wore it all: mascara, hose, lace,
earrings, suits. It was a hard fit
for a girl who loved trees, dogs, books,
piano, the smell of the woods
when you get lost (a welcome state).

I am found now. Over sixty,
bare-faced, undone, I have found
my true uniform. Whatever
I wear, wherever I go, in jeans
or skirt, priest's robes or swimsuit,
nothing is too tight, anything
will do. I just need to temper
the joy on my face:

I don't want
to overplay the radiance.

RUNNING MOUNTAINS AT FIFTY
BY CINTHIA RITCHIE

Who knew when I was young, running because I could, because I liked the taste of my own blood, scraped knees, bruised ankles, the soles of my feet raw because I never wore shoes, striding through pastures and over cow patties, the sound of the creek so familiar it echoed like my own breath, who knew that this would lead me to running mountain trails in Alaska, the moon as fat and full as my pregnant belly, years and years ago, the night expansive and wide, temperatures close to zero, the snow lavender and hushed, I follow a friend until I fall in love with her footsteps, the way we always fall in love with those we follow, snow crunching, dogs running ahead, we pass a moose but it ignores us and so we keep going, trail slippery as we crest the first hill, mountains opening in front of us, white and fierce as God, as that moment of absolution, that glory of stillness, every breath singing, and the stars, the sky, the mountains, it's colder now that we are higher, face numb, chest prickled, my heart beating on and on inside the moon-shadowed silence.

Is this happiness, then?

No matter: I'm warm enough as long as I keep moving.

ON THE ROAD

BY JANET LANDMAN

Always traveling unraveled her. That scramble home when she was ten, back from the corner Woolworth where a guy in black leather jacket and duck's ass smirked: *Come on back in a couple years, SweetThang*. In a couple of years the wolf-whistle and a boy biking in lathered pursuit down a gravel backroad. She pedaled so flat-out fast she hit an already-hard already-flattened possum carcass, its only scatheless body part two rows of sharp little teeth. Spooked, she pedaled double time to the filling station at the town's edge, where she watched him swing his bike around and flip her a dismissive bird. In the dark she confessed her sin: being an occasion of sin. From the Catechism: *Q. 771. What do you mean by the near occasions of sin? A. By the near occasions of sin we mean all the persons, places and things that may easily lead us into sin*. Fear of the foreign toilet seat she must have picked up from her mother. At the quarry a single contrail threaded through strands of cirrus, gold fibers of sunlight floated in green water, a pimply teenager appeared at the rim, thickly intoning: *I love your body and your hair*. She, Midwest-nice, not having it in her to shoot back: "So whaddya got against my face?"

Now, now that her waistline has spread, her hair snarled into mouse-gray mass, her face sprouted tangled vines—now she is unseen and blithe. And not afraid of traveling.

SOCKS, THEN AND NOW
BY GABRIELLA BRAND

We're drinking the water that used to be sky,
We're standing on ground that used to be sea.
The turning is constant, it's all on the wheel.
See these socks? The hand-made ones with the stripes?
Do you know where they came from?
Before the skeins of wool? Before the sheep was sheared?

Why, they were stars, of course. And storms. And blades of grass, like tongues.
They were buzzing clover. And sucklings of milk.

We should never cease to marvel. At our socks. Or anything else.

(Honeycombs, for instance)

I tell you this because I am old.

When I was younger, I didn't understand about comings and goings.
Back then, if a seam scratched, if the socks sagged,
I'd snarl and sulk, even as the aunties would knit me a new pair.

But now, I smile, because it all seems so clear,
I'm breathing the dust that used to be rock,
I'm eating the bread that used to be dirt.
And I'm pulling up socks that used to be galaxies.

You can try to look for separation between yourself and the rain, but you will not find it.

Now that I am ancient, I expect my socks to rub and gape and finally unravel.

LOWERING MY STANDARDS

BY JANE K. KRETSCHMANN

Over drinks, on the July porch,
my sister's question slides in:
Have you secured a girl to clean?

Hired help at the cabin? A foreign notion,
where housework, like clothing,
is loose and comfortable.

Why, no, I reply. She comes back,
hateful as a hummingbird:
*I'd have to lower my standards
if I didn't have someone.*

It's just a cabin, I start to say—
but stop to think about lowering
my standards, freeing myself

of expectations that I can take care
of my family, pay our drawer of debts.
What a relief not to have to be
responsible, dependable.

Lower my standards of appearance.
Forgo the makeup and mascara.
Accept the pounds, appreciate my plumpness.

Cultivate a palate for the merits
of mediocrity. Release, let go,
forget, worry less, care less,
I could learn to like that.

OLD COWGIRL'S RUMINATION
BY TRICIA KNOLL

Can I still sit the saddle
of the leathery past
that I never rode bareback?
My hand up to the mare's nose,

she blows back warmth.
I pick crud from mudded hooves
that once split thunder.
I comb out her winter coat

come May when always
May comes on time.
Her mane hair whirlpools
in barn wind.

She nickers to her buddies,
minces through the pasture gate,
trots to the levee. When shadows stretch,
she comes for my carrot.

Never having rode her bareback
doesn't matter now.
When she sniffs my palm,
her whiskers tickle.

ON BARE GROUND
BY GUNILLA NORRIS

I

In childhood I'd have sealskin
swan feathers
a lamb's wooly coat

and so be dressed
as I thought
might be my true self

But now I shed night
beloved rag
grown soft and ragged

I am naked and see
stretch marks bones
skin as thin as paper

the veins raised
pulsing with intent
At any moment

a simple nick
will let me touch
everything with blood

II

In time bones grow
light and hollow
Air lives in them

carries them
The core breathes
circles ascends

becomes
simple marrow
space for the wind

III

When I was a child
I wanted life wild

Now near gray
and open water

I stand on bare ground
Out there floating

on a sheen of silver
ten geese circle

around a sound
they make a call

a bleat or the perfect
pitch passed around

in an orchestra
Then sudden quiet

They face west
where the land fades

the way light does
in a theater or in a life

allowing wind its violin
I am lifted from within

bones filled with music
I bow up the sweet air

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER SODOM AND GOMORRAH:
LOT'S OLDER DAUGHTER MAKES HER CASE
BY CAROLYN MARTIN

(This interview has been edited for clarity and length.)

Incest? Call it securing legacy.
When your world is pulverized,
what else would you expect?

Our plan? Two nights plus two daughters
equals two sons to carry our bloodline.
Brothers/sons, sons/grandsons.
How's that for lineage?

On the ridge in a cave.
Oh, what an ugly thing: a soused old man
with lusty dreams that weren't dreams.
At first dawn-light, I remember how he glared,
rubbed his grizzled frown, glared again.
Scared? Confused? Aroused?
We hid our laughter in the waking wind.

Guilty? Of what?
What father offers daughters to a mob?
Our rape for his guests' sodomy?
Call that righteousness? We called it treachery.
Anyway, those strangers in our house?
They weren't men ... Angels, of course.
If you're up on the literature, they arrive
when their god seems like he cares.
Ask our cousin Isaac. An angel called off
his father's knife, but what god even asks?

Our mother? Now there's a tragedy.
Don't look back. Did she even hear?
When you're wrenched from home,
senses collapse and there's no time
for reasoning out a consequence.
A pillar for an over-shoulder glance?
All she did was send a last good-bye
to friends she didn't criticize.
Where's the wrong in that?

No. I don't know if he ever saw himself
in Moab's eyes or in the way Ammon frowned,
or if he realized what their names meant.
You're interested? ... "from my father"/"son of my kin."
Want the truth? I don't think he ever thought to care.

Write this down to set the record straight:
we never walked behind, never looked back.

VIOLET

BY MARY KAY RUMMEL

calls to me in near total darkness, color
beyond all colors, nameless flower
pulls me close as I walk home,
empty-handed in the dusk,
calling as if I've already agreed
to pass this wayside vine
to neighbors and strangers,
to root cut-stems in water jars,
give them all away, as my mother did,
for once and future gardens.

All I know as light, fed by
mystery, sees by way of darkness.
Visual purple, indigo pigment
at the back of the eye
echoes twilight.

This has happened before.
Ten thousand years ago
a nameless purple bush-herb
sings to a woman under stars,
who swerves her off the path to kneel
before the sacred color
because what she's given here
she will give in return.

Note: Visual purple (rhodopsin) is a living pigment that turns visible light into an electrical signal. In humans and other seeing animals, it is required for vision in dim light. Visual purple is created only in darkness.

STILL DANCING

BY ZVEZDANA RASHKOVICH

She only slept after being cuddled like a selfish fat baby with colic and an *O* shaped mouth that never stopped keening for its mother's limp breasts. How lucky that there are now cures for her every mood, sprinkled through the day, like a pinch of pepper in her grandmother's polenta. The colors in her pillbox reminded her of her mother's flowers. African violets, Frangipani and Jasmine. Planted, in a pot of now parched river mud. She licked her plump, pill-brushed lips and closed her eyes. In her mind, she is as before, and myrrh and frankincense smoke swirled like *jinn* -that became her breath. Before she fell in love with a man whose skin was the color of mangoes and whose words, I love you, *Babebek* - sounded like unripe limes on his tongue. Before she grew his mango- seed inside her flesh and before she mothered and before her father lay in his earthworm filled grave and before her face looked like her mother's. All this happened. Before. Running through poppy fields. Drinking purple plum brandy. Shimmying her just budding hips to the keening of skintight drums, played by men in turbans. Henna twisting on her hands and feet. Dancing under a desert moon and the pulsing music in the pungent night stroking her insides, her heart. Her heart. And everyone knows - sleeping is impossible when you are dancing.

TILL THE FAT LADY SINGS
BY LESLIE SMITH TOWNSEND

You might learn something yet,
you, my almighty daughter
and you, my omniscient son.

I haven't emptied myself
to fashion a future not my own —
a dried out yellow husk,

a dead or dying cicada.
I live, breathe, create,
climb — Watch me!

Won't you be surprised
when you look to the summit
of mountain, sky, and stars to see

this woman you call, Mother.
Cock your head up, not down;
She's not in the ground, life over;

She's flying —
blowing you kisses from mid-air.

INHERITING A DOG
BY JANET M. POWERS

You belonged to someone else
before me; the first time we met
you danced on your hind legs,
but I misunderstood and tried
to calm you, not knowing you too
misunderstood, thinking perhaps
the one you were devoted to
had come sweetly back to life.
We started off on the wrong foot,
but now we are making amends,
trying to adjust to each other's
days and ways like a couple
marrying in late middle age
who have lived too long alone
and find a constant companion
somewhat unnerving. We vie
for the same end of a soft couch,
though I think you have no need
of the lamp arched overhead.
Last night you tried twice
to share my bed, once as I read,
and again in the cold darkness.
I pushed you off, with expletives,
not yet willing to admit to you
or to myself, that I wanted you
to stroke, to nestle with,
a slice of reality to save me
from excesses of imagination,
from incessant invention of scenes,
conversation, and gentle touch.
You're here to help me understand
that the human companion I crave
already belongs to someone else.

HEARING LOSS

BY DOROTHY HOWE BROOKS

She is talking to the wind,
her words blow away.

She is talking to stones,
they stand mute.

Silent she stares at the light,
the glow that could be sound.

Sound is a river running,
that cricket outside the window
all morning all night.

At the river she picks up her words
one by one shakes them off
sets them right again,
vowels, consonants, diphthongs.

She tries to capture the cricket.

Her words are bread crumbs
to lead him back to her,
eaten by the birds.

The birds whose songs
he used to love.
He used to hear.

ADDRESS UNKNOWN
(NO SUCH NUMBER, NO SUCH ZONE)
BY JAN BALL

She was my musical convent friend
who played the church organ for weddings
and funerals at St. Joseph's in Wilmette and
Pied Piper elementary school children
with keyboard, violin and guitar, so the night
I left the convent for good she played:

*Jeanie's packing up
Jeanie's leaving town...*

from Brigadoon on the recreation room piano
because my convent name was Sister Jeanclare,
(even now hard for me to say)
while I waited for my non-religious teaching
partner, JoAnn, to bring me a skirt and blouse
to wear back home. All the other nuns
conveniently disappeared after dinner like
anchorites to their cells even though we were
an active order except for Della who eventually
drove me to my parent's apartment in Chicago.

Soon afterwards, my musical friend was
promoted to superior in Mississippi where
her Wisconsin dialect betrayed her liberal
thinking. She said that the sixties locals
could only pronounce *negro nigra* at
principal/parent conferences so, savvy
to the situation, she tried to be pro-active
for a few years accompanying families
to unfair court cases. Then, as disillusioned
as the other 25,000 nuns who left their
convents during this decade, she left, too.

We got an apartment together and we thought
we were *tres chic* in the fitted dresses we
lent each other while the scabs on the underside
of our skins were still healing. Once I asked her
to please close the refrigerator door more quietly

and she reacted by opening it then slamming it so hard that I thought the butter would jump off the butter dish, but my non-Catholic fiancé thought this was ok; so, I said it was ok, too.

She played the guitar like Joan Baez and sang at our wedding in Lincoln Park: *Today while the flowers still cling to the vine...* and dated one of my husband's academic Australian friends who she said kept a whisky bottle next to him at night.

Last week I phoned her because the birthday card I sent to Madison, Wisco (as another friend calls the state) was returned **address unknown**, but not accompanied by a singing telegram from Elvis. She explained with slurred and slow language that she had moved into an assisted living apartment: *I have dementia.*

She excused herself to get a file where she writes down her friends' data: partner's name, children, where they live. When she returned to the phone, she wanted to know how Don was, (really Kevin) and what our children, Edward and Kate, were doing but didn't remember that Kate had been in a terrible car accident six months ago, fracturing twelve bones. When I asked her if she still played the piano, she laughed like a delighted child, as I'd remembered, and said, *yes.*

LET ORNITHOLOGY CALL THE DAY
BY NANCY AUSTIN

A phoebe awakens me on Monday.
Phoebe. *Phoebe?* Phoebe. *Phoebe?*
I'll stop questioning everything.

An eastern towhee on Tuesday.
Drink your tea, drink your tea.
I'll sip jasmine on the sun porch.

A robin on Wednesday.
Cheer-up cheerily, cheer-up cheerily.
I'll release yesterday's funk.

A hermit thrush on Thursday.
Here I am right near you.
I'll sort the photos in the shoebox.

A crow calls on Friday.
Caw, caw, caw.
I'll call back my friends.

The ovenbird on Saturday.
Teacher-teacher-teacher-teacher.
I'll read Rumi today.

On Sunday, a mourning dove coos
soft as my lover's sigh.
I'll lay lilacs on his grave.

IN A CEDAR-SCENTED DRAWER
BY MARY BETH HINES

Long after the long
winter, after the life
saving knife and the raw
boned surgeon's deft
handiwork, she left
behind shivers
of silky slips amidst old
lady underwear, sachets
of silvery scent, and a cool
cloth breast. Its lace-
trimmed lip opened
in my hand like a French
Angel fish, billowed four
round satin-kissed pillows,
slip-synced in sequence
for years to simulate
her size B-30
beneath her summer
sheaths, her winter
blues, a cocoon of bosom
buddies to fill the yawning
Bosom Buddy, who'd required
so little, only, according
to its faded tag, to be hand
washed warm and laid
on a towel to dry.

SAGE

BY BONNILEE KAUFMAN

thought by now, I'd be
sage enough
to slather wisdom
on morning toast

but I am still learning
to push aside
gnawing regrets

still tripping clumsy that gaping space
our rug used to be
plush thick with affection
worn bare, rotted

maybe I know this much:
don't get suckered in, don't believe
those breathy promises
rehearsed, they've been used before

lifted like quotations
those self-help books
imitating sincerity

everyone is endowed with
a jealous streak
corrodes compatibility, ruins everything

and really us queer girls instinctively know better:
steer clear compromises bleed wide
over time
everything shared
turns prickly

even the most virtuous ones
will slip in the mud
splattering you
numb with shame
for believing

maybe I know this much:
sometimes it's best not to question love
work around it like a jive magic trick; ignore the obvious
pretend.

I DON'T WANT TO READ A POEM ABOUT BASEBALL
BY CATHLEEN CALBERT

I'm tired of the American spirit,
the boys of summer and their fans,
team effort and hey batta batta.

Maybe it's just another thing
I don't understand. Like God or jogging.
Adopting babies in Romania.

I was that black-clad chick
behind the bleachers, smoking.
I don't know anything

about sports, period
(My brother shakes his head:
"There are many ways to be stupid.")

True, for me there was no beauty,
no satisfying crack of ball and bat,
just another chance to be a girl

without hand-eye coordination.
A ball coming in my direction
meant I should do three things:

duck, cross
my arms like an X
over my head, and wait for death.

I've got enough
adult humiliations
to write about already, don't you?

Shouldn't your poems be
about girls like me anyway?
How you loved kissing us in the rain?

How nothing was better
than the mist of menthol
between our shining lips?

Don't get me wrong.
I don't care if you play the game.
Have fun. Slide into home.

But I don't want to
bask in the amber glow
of another boyhood in Brooklyn,

hear about your World Series
heartbreak or existential loneliness
first encountered in the outfield.

Don't try to prove
you're not as fey as a poet
by applauding jocks, please.

I don't want to read those poems
just like you don't want to
read about my body.

Since you're the editors,
you win, you rock, you rule.
The rest of us are pussies.

WOMAN OF AN AGE
A POETIC PROCLAMATION
BY KATHIE GIORGIO

“You can come, but it’s probably not your thing,” my young friend said to me.
Not my thing.
Bare bodies on a beach, pounding balls, roasting hot dogs, staring into fires and singing.
Not my thing.
Bare bodies pumping, humping the motions of The Act, exposed stabs of stimulation.
Not my thing.

HA!

I am a Woman of An Age.
Knowledge soaks my skin and
Experience whorls my fingertips.
Words thrill off my tongue to curve in the ears of men
who thrill even more when my Consonants touch their chests
and Verbs writhe against the roofs of their mouths.
My Vowels activate erogenous zones they don’t even know they have.

I know everything there is to know and
I am Satisfaction-soaked to my core.
There is no frantic in my thighs
but the patient thrum of knowing what will come,
that it will be good, that there is always more, and that
a held breath can be as intense as a scream.

Hours of experience are so much deeper than the minutes of youth.
Hunger saturates me, but I know I will be fed and that I will grow hungry again.
There is no end. I see God and my Heaven is here. Certain Death is to be repeated.

I am durable.

An erotic education has eased my hips, my thighs, my wrists and my jaw,
once stiff with the fear of performance, of low grades, of another’s dissatisfaction.
Now I undulate undercover in a mix of silk and salt as
my joints all unhinge for multiple exchanges of joy.
Everything about me is high grade.
Everything about me is satisfaction guaranteed.
I bask in the heat of an ageless sun and what radiates from me
melts the most hardened of men.

Not my thing, my young friend said.
Not my thing.
As if my thing is bare bodies low on the learning curve.
The translucent facsimiles of the future. The stabs of stimulation
And hurried inexperience.
In years to come, he will know the luxury of age
And patience and all 20,000 leagues of lust.
He will remember me
And wonder just what he missed.

A Woman of an Age.

FALLING IN LOVE AT A CERTAIN AGE
BY JOYCE MEYERS

*When yellow leaves, or few, or none
do hang ...
William Shakespeare*

What surprises is how much
it feels the same as in the time
when everything was spring.
The winter heart begins to thaw
like mountain snow, at first
a drip, then two, and then a flood,
a rushing creek that wets the banks
of everywhere it goes, the greening
of the earth, as tips of ferns
that seem to sprout from barren ground
unfurl to lushness, cover
the forest floor. The air is full
of song, and you walk down
a wooded path to a cliff's edge,
look out and take a step
and then another into open air,
nothing beneath you but the pull
of gravity, so you spread
your wings and fly.

VORTEX OF SEDONA
BY JUNE BLUMENSON

I lick salt on the rim of margaritas
as if it were earth
nibble crackers sautéed sweet
potatoes watch an older woman spin
heavy trays of cocktails

what were her bowls of bad
luck choice of olives
sun-dried tomatoes I study
the fashionistas envy the stilettos

suddenly I am exhausted
invisible
a vortex swirling down the drain

I take one long last sip
I am not like ancient people
who it is said
could live without water in the desert

urgent I leave the waitress a huge tip
conspire to jump
in the hotel fountain turbulent as prayer

ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER
BY TRICIA KNOLL

Astro-physicists need not weigh in.

Those lonely old women in Chernobyl
poach and struggle, a limbo dance
to the motherland and home sisters
who wear aprons to the graves
of ancestors at Easter, plant potatoes,
witness the footprints of roaming
horses, moose, wolves, boars, and deer.

We chug down the track
from birth to death. Gold leaves
go to ground to feed the soil.
Winds dart off for those parts
I know nothing about
while I understand
radioactive decay
and the spirals
of love affairs.

CHANGING MY RELIGION

BY KATHLEEN GREGG

Everything changes.

My long love affair with the sun
has ended. Age and skin cancer
have soured me, covered me
under layers of cotton, straw hats,
sunblock. I laugh

at how much I now resemble
my mother's cousin, Louisa, who was
a Mennonite. True to the teachings,
she always wore plain black,
long sleeved, ankle-length
dresses (probably homemade),
black lace up boots,
and a black sun bonnet tied
under her chin. Witch-like,
in my imagination, even though
she would smile and joke with my mom
as we strolled down the rows
of her neatly tended garden,
picking out perfect green beans,
or asparagus, or cantaloupe,
or strawberries. Still, I felt thankful

that my family was Methodist.
Mom wasn't about to hide
her light under a bushel. She wore
bright, flower-print sundresses,
a string of pearls at her neck,
pearl clip-on earrings, and red lipstick.
As a kid, that choice
couldn't have been more clear.

Seems the devil was in the flash.

STRETCH MARKS
BY CONNIE CLARK

I would undo you if I could,
erase your rippling, bright-white lines.
I need a potion nobody makes
to move you off my once-smooth skin.

Truth is, you weren't invited;
my DNA never sprung you out
on stomach, hips, thighs, upper arms.
I have sometimes wondered

just exactly how my skin puckered so,
and why I couldn't stop the rise,
fall, rise of your nacreous scars.
Why couldn't I have stayed the same?

Today I see you were like bellows,
expanding/contracting
as pressure built up, then dropped,
as I grew larger or starved to smaller,

as I fought the bitter battle
of fitting the model given to me.
I failed. So many losses, no triumphs.
Then the wrinkles came, and I saw:

This competition was not for me
and was never meant to be.
I have retired from body combat,
and I almost, just a little, like

the space you made for growth,
the opalescent tracks of my story.

TÊTE-À-TÊTE AT TRADER JOE'S
BY GAIL GOEPFERT

Tightly tucked petals of peony buds bobbed
in the plastic tub. I nearly missed them.

An older woman with a bright face stood in front
of her walker holding a fistful of stems, and I backtrack

sensing I've found someone else who crushes on them.
Do you know the secret to getting peonies to bloom? I ask.

*I've tried everything to resurrect the costly five stems
I purchased elsewhere. Try these, she says, and cut*

*the stems at the deepest angle possible, then put them
in room temperature water; not warm, not cold.*

As she describes the bounty of peonies in her yard,
her eyes light, but she's lost her husband, needs to move,

she knows she does, because she can't afford to stay,
and she's 84, and it's hard to be transplanted,

and her son's here somewhere, in from Philadelphia.
And finally I say I can't really buy any today

because I'm going out of town. *I'll mind them for you.
Call me and tell me you're the lady in Trader Joe's,*

and I'll remember, I will, and we stand in our own vortex
of bloom-love deciding which color to rescue,

the pale pink or the raspberry-sorbet. And I open
my phone and enter her name, *Jane Horowitch,*

she says, *witch like the one on the broomstick.*
Her son wheels up with his cart, and I move on

as I know he's likely to be troubled that his mother's
given her number to a stranger so I say goodbye.

And as I reach for pretzel bread and bananas
not far away I hear him say, *No*, and I hear
her reply, *But I'll pay for them. I will. I'll pay.*

CRONE

BY JOYCE MEYERS

At seventy she learned
to dance, her first steps
halting, joints creaking
to the beat of music
she could hear
with only one ear. Still,
she swayed her hips,
moved her feet, found
pattern, whirled,
soared, arms
outspread like wings.

At eighty, after decades
of silence, she tried
to sing. She squeaked
and croaked, her
unaccustomed throat
rasping like rusty gears.
Undaunted, she tried
to hum, found a note,
another. It took months
to find a tune, more
to pry her taut lips open,
to let her long-caged
voice take flight.

Some say she died
at ninety-eight, but I
have my doubts.
On quiet nights I'm sure
I hear her humming,
and when the moon is full,
if I remember to look up,
I often see her slender
silhouette gliding
across its wrinkled face.

CLEANING DRAWERS

BY SUZANNE S. RANCOURT

How many pair of underpants does a woman need?
Is more than a hundred too many?

Filigree of fancy or fantasy
of spidery vine delicate touch
a role-playing moment of pleasure
to be wanted for the right reasons

Blueberry print thongs of spandex and microfiber
the blue of childhood
a first job in the endless fields across ledge outcrops
blueberries
our bodies browned - sun rise to sun set
August heat
wind streaked our flesh with adolescences
like thunder's voluptuous raindrops sliding across the windshield
smearing bug guts
knees banging stick shifts
deft fingers on zippers

White cotton crotch dainty dance in Cuba
and Saint John and the fabric breathes
lightning rhythms
stains of blood on blood browned copper
from excessive bleach and hot dryers
iron made solid and stern

Did I wear these
the day molten blood erupted from my creviced thighs
and flood its burning gush through
layers of crisp whites to my knees
making women gasp in the wooden bathroom stalls
between cool white porcelain and cracked mirrors?

Tangerine, purple, turquoise thongs
worn through miles of rowing, literally
tons of leg presses, dips, and flies
hours of hard full body sparring, thousands
of leg lifts, sit ups, pull ups
marching marching marching
designated grannie panties
pragmatic in their ability to hold up panty hose

when worn on the outside
under Dress Greens
or when suits are required for job interviews
and other various career failures -
there are the favorites worn
to entice the few
I loved

There was no cleaning my uterus enough
so I had it removed

A drawer full of stains I no longer wear
because I've given up trying to be clean
trying to be that young and innocent again
I'm tainted with this concept of revelry
in the notion
that no underwear is best
when a sea breeze flutters about the hem
of the blue dress with turquoise salamanders and Kokopellis
brush with god
a twist of sweet grass

Semen soaked cotton crotch panties burn brightest
in the backyard fire pit at equinoctial midnight
brighter
than Venus as Morning Star

DEAD HUSBANDS' MAIL
BY JILL SELL

five pieces of mail
in the mailbox
today

four addressed
to my second husband
who died two years ago

one addressed
to my first husband
who died so many years ago
I don't remember
and he wasn't living here
anyway

no mail for me

I am not sure
what this means
if anything at all

I tossed all the mail
into the trash
and wondered if I was
still alive

I am
and I am glad

the hell with the mailman

SPEAKING LATIN
BY SHARON SCHOLL

Only you could announce
super flumina, knowing I would laugh
and answer *Babylonia*,
that both of us would fall to humming
an ancient Latin tune.

What strange pleasure, this rattling
among the ruins of half a century
to find the nugget only one other person
on the planet would recall.

Strange revelation of the glue
that holds two lives together,
this small act of intimacy
that acknowledges without me
you'd have no one to talk to.

RE-ENTRY INTERVIEW
BY CAROLYN MARTIN

Say what? You can't renege now.
We gave you a century of beaches, forests,
and day-trips around the Milky Way.

We re-filled your request for a fine-tuned set
of vocal chords with added tips on how
to project your voice beyond the orchestra.
We imagine if you practice hard this time,
you might earn a slot on some "Got Talent" show.
Although, as we reminded you before,
success requires discipline and abstinence
from dairy, sugar, and alcohol.

You were right: you were too flabby
your last life so we designed traffic stopping
breasts and hips with a penchant for styles
you'll adore ... The catch? Decades of guessing
if you're wanted for your body or your mind.
We guarantee relief when gravity kicks in.
So prepare for the inevitable by working
through *The History of Thought* and buffing up
your magnetic personality.

No, we cannot assure a Pulitzer.
It's up to you to write worthy poetry.
However, we advise against an MFA.
Such academic drudge is unbearable
and the cost makes us choke. Rather,
study Williams, Frost, Yeats, Collins,
Szyborska, Ryan, Trethewey.
They'll rev you up to roll out of bed,
put the coffee on, and scavenge the day
for what may evolve into a poem.

Come now! It's too late to re-script
you as a pro athlete. That's incongruous
with your new body type and the years
you'll spend learning rhythms and scales.
File this new request as soon as you die
and, if there are roster openings,
we'll set you up with try-outs
for the sport of your choice.

To be blunt, enough is enough.
You've had a refreshing R&R
and your passport is stamped.
However you choose to shape this new
go-around, we wish you the best.
You're scheduled for rebirth next week.

THE SINGLE GATHER
BY TRICIA KNOLL

*The single gather is an early German process for making a toy marble by hand.
The artist builds up a glob of glass, one layer at a time, on the end of an iron rod.
When the marble is round, the artist cuts it off the rod.*

I am a twist
of blue and green,
slid off curved,
hard and fragile.

As rules dictate
and practice taught,
my game began
with a knuckle down,
thumb up, knees
on the ground.

After decades rolling,
the circle game turned
from quicken to dreamy.

Night's little soul boat,
a slime-green canoe
under fog-smother.
The sigh of my dead mother
slides downstream before me.

I swish cold fingers in the shallows.
Coyotes run the silent shore
toward the falls on feather feet.

I crawled first, later learned
why we drop to our knees,
humble in the circle game
shooting glass that does not float.

BLUE GLOVE HARVEST

BY JC SULZENKO AND CAROL A. STEPHEN

The woman from Arles wears blue leather gloves, hand-stitched,
stretched over skin that catches on cotton, over fingers
bent as the willow basket holding each lemon, each orange,

her harvest of succulence she'll render into tart-sweet marmalade,
jewel-toned jellies, fragrant pomanders to freshen her closets,
thin threads of peel for fruitcakes.

The man whose groves supply tables and villages all around
ignores her artistry at home,
no longer brings his lips to her worn, rough hand.

Instead, she caresses her own fingers, soothes them
with fine creams, each bearing the scent of citrus, shields them
in soft blue gloves, and remembers

how calluses on her mother's palms hardened over fine lines
presaging her short life, her heart at risk from hours
at the stove and in fields of disappointment.

Remembers her promise: to bend like the willow
in her garden, never to become brittle as the lindens, always
to move forward out of shadow and into the bright sun.

- After an oil painting by Vincent Van Gogh

THE TOUR GROUP IN SOUTH AMERICA
BY JANET KAMNIKAR

We speak often of our knees –
of those replaced
and those that may be soon –
knees, those essential hinges
that come with no warranty.
But this trip we still have in us,
so we sling on our backpacks
like college kids,
silver hair notwithstanding.

We tell each other
which animals we saw in Africa,
where we first tasted ceviche,
why we like our carry-ons,
and what future destination
still intrigues us.

These things bring us pleasure:
hearing, smelling, touching
something new –
seeing a bird, tasting a stew
we could not have imagined
on our best, most fanciful day.
The joy of surprise abides.

Tonight we'll watch as sunset
shades the Pacific from blue to orchid
and gaze on constellations
reconfigured here
casting old, familiar light.
We'll bless our creaky knees,
grateful once again
to be intoxicated by awe.



DON'T EVER STOP DANCING.

Original artwork by Constance Brewer, © 2018.

RUTHANNE REPLANTS HERSELF

BY PAMELA MILLER

I was bored with my click-clack factory job
stamping sunbursts on the heads of pins.
I was fed up with pleasing my husband
and his penis full of sludge.
I was sick of scrubbing floors
made of corned beef hash,
of spending my nights laying empty eggs,
squatting on a God-awful nest.

That's when I wrenched myself up by the roots
That's when I wriggled out of gravity's straps
That's when I grew my spider legs
and galloped across the land

That's when I rolled out my own DNA
like pulsating sheets of cookie dough,
transfigured myself into a pinwheel of pistils
with a jones for living alone

That's why I draw a red
line around my heart
and wear it like a
wedding ring of spikes.
This is where I
replanted myself:
this invisible Eden where
nothing blooms but me.

HER FIRST PEACH WITH A MAN
BY JOHN GREY

She was reluctant, at first,
to accept the proffered peach
but she was famished
and the succulent pinkish-skinned fruit
was tempting.

But she was wasn't at home,
where dribble down the chin,
flesh between the teeth,
a dripping stone in her palm.
could be laughed off,
celebrated even.

She was with a man
who would be seeking out sensuality,
in the way she bit
through the downy surface,
how her tongue handled
the flood of juice.

For the first time in her life,
her hunger made her self-consciousness.
It would happen again
but without the peach.

KATHERINE
BY SARA EDDY

You had cataclysmic orange hair
and smooth ruddy deer-legs
and for years we fell into ponds
and told our stories
and dressed each other up.
But then we had a falling
out from which we never climbed
up or back. Does that make
the days spent skinny-dipping
and thunderstorm-dancing--
days that fill me up even now
even 30 years later--
does that make them null,
the stubby ends
of mowed-off weeds?
You are married, have children,
like me you love them.
Your hair is long.
I do not know your mind
anymore, though we would have sworn
we were linked, we were tethered
for life. Ours felt like,
seemed like, the friendship that would
hold our courses steady, that would
curl around us like a tattoo vine.
But I've spent a lifetime
figuring out how to have friends
and still I don't know how to keep them:
I explode with them
and burn them alive,
and then tell myself
not to look back.

AFTER WORD FROM THE ORTHOPEDIST
BY BETH KONKOSKI

Back handspring and front tuck
now words that slice like this hibachi
knife before our eyes. We are here
for dinner because she can't be

anywhere or there, at her gym,
where she should be for these hours.
We have heard the worst
and now distract ourselves

with comfort and the shoveling
of meat. Afternoons have simply
unbraided, like her hair. Loose
around her face, it flows, but

strangling when she settles
down to sleep. The pain comes
at night or the nibbling of truth.
Teeth of the dark chew and chew

at her confidence, her spark, the pink
that was her promise. It becomes
my job to help her heal, not where
ligaments tighten and contract

but where the cup of her joy
leaks away, where the basket
cradling her dreams
now sits empty.

OCTOBER HAIBUN
BY MARK MURPHY

i.m. Paul Randall

Death is palpable, we taste it in the air –
the leaves turn
in the wind, carrying our sorrows
down the valleys, up and out past Jackroyd Lane
where your mother is weeping.

One hundred years on since the Bolshevik Revolution
and the world of extremes is none-the-wiser. In later life
we seldom spoke of our youthful activism, our passion
for the cause of humanity, or how we came to meet,
only that we were firm friends, comrades by '88
at the Alexandra Palace rally where we undressed
a thousand girls in the heat, listened and applauded
Esteban Volkov (live from Coyoacan, via satellite link up)
as if the revolution was just within reach, as if the old man
was Trotsky himself. We never knew then a lifetime later
we'd still be waiting. What happens to time over time
is that it becomes a byword for failure, the hopes of youth
become bookish, nothing more than an exercise on paper,
ten days that shook the world.

So the moon rallies
in the October night,
cries us all to sleep.

SLASHED
BY TOTI O'BRIEN

1.
The horizon spread left to right, quick
a thick line, and dark
like a sentence typed on a defective machine
wildly sputtering ink
like listels hemming obituaries
on newspapers
singling them out in sadness
like the mourning bands
men pinned around their sleeves
over regular clothes.

2.
Scissoring the ashen sky, the horizon
split the lone tree imprudently erect
on the left, naïf, dreamy
perhaps absentminded. Snap.
Beheaded without the time of a sigh.
A belt whipping sideways
slashed the crown, now suspended
aerial, an ill-designed cloud
scrambled bunch of twisted squiggles
penned by a too nervous hand.

3.
Underneath, the trunk hasn't wavered.
It stays perfectly upright. Maimed, it ends
in flat nothingness, bared, exposed, mortified.
Its roots till the soil, fingers
playing an underground keyboard
drilling a tune no one hears but
the subterranean dwellers, moles
worms, insects, some deaf, irresponsible
some intent at their duties
dull, eternal, unsound.

HONEYCAKE
BY SARA EDDY

My Son, my beautiful boy
how are you this brave
that when every part of you aches
to blockade the door
and crawl into a corner
you instead say 'what'
when I knock.
I celebrate you;
I celebrate your strength
and your soul wisdom
that made you tell me
your mind had gone dark
that you were straying
and you needed me.
I'll throw a party
with balloons and streamers
for the open heart
that helps you explain
to all your friends
that sometimes you just can't
go to a party, talk on the phone,
get out of bed.
I'll bake a cake for you tonight
and drip a sugary glaze
across its bundty mountain shoulders
for your courage and beauty
and I'll bring a piece to your door
and I know you won't be able
to get out of bed
and I know you won't be able
even to meet my eye
but I will be prouder than any mother
has ever been of a star athlete
or an honor roll king
when you say
"thank you, Mama,"
and take a mouthful of honeycake.

MAN! YOU SCRIPT THE MIC.
BY MICHAEL BERTON

these poets scrawl
brawl on the arm
flex clenching pen
who know curiosity
like a sonnet
to success some
go along turn
verse around
them self gesture
with fist knotted
in their windpipe
trilling to loosen
that angst from
every beat weary
café slam
odd even words
on to page
into microphone
cursing slang
dialects poppin'
bi-polar odes
stompin' a kick-ass
chisel groove into
their epicstone
manic memorabilia
worn like regalia
when pronouncing
yourself or forever
hold your voice
in your gut

PHONE BOOTH

BY JOHN L. STANIZZI

I found one of the phone booths I used to call you from 40 years ago. It was in the white room of a museum, not connected to anything. It was just a "piece." When no one was looking I rushed inside and called you. When you answered I couldn't talk.

ON LEARNING THAT ONE OF MY BOOKS WAS FOUND
AMONG A DEAD POET'S POSSESSIONS
BY PAMELA MILLER

*I actually found [Pamela Miller's] book
among the belongings of a poet who had passed away
and his papers were chucked to the sidewalk
in cardboard boxes....
—Amazon.com customer review*

Who were you, perished patron,
your shimmer too dim to be archived or inherited
instead of carted out to poetry's curb?
That stick-like old coot from the reading in Detroit
whose hand I had to crowbar from my knee?
A commando pilferer from small-town library stacks?
An emeritus prof who spent a sleety afternoon
tunneling through the ant farm of my poems?
Once upon a time, you consumed this book;
oblivion spat it back out. When you died,
someone rummaged through your ashes
and found a piece of me, sparking like an ember.

CONTRIBUTORS

Nancy Austin moved to the Northwoods to write and has been cranking out poems ever since. In between, she runs an unofficial bed and breakfast on Bear Lake for family and friends. Her work has been published in various journals including *Adana*, *Ariel*, *Midwestern Gothic*, *Portage Magazine*, *Sheepshead Review*, *Verse Wisconsin* and the *Wisconsin Poets Calendars*. She has a collection of poems titled *Remnants of Warmth* (2016, Aldrich Press).

270 of **Jan Ball's** poems appear in journals such as *ABZ*, *Atlanta Review*, *Calyx*, *Main Street Rag*, *Nimrod*, *Phoebe* and *Verse Wisconsin*, in Great Britain, Canada, India, Ireland and the U.S. Jan's two chapbooks, *accompanying spouse* (2011) and *Chapter of Faults* (2014) were published with Finishing Line Press. Jan's first full-length poetry book, *I Wanted to Dance with My Father*, was published by Finishing Line Press in September, 2017. When not working out, gardening at their farm or traveling, Jan and her husband like to cook for friends.

Michael Berton has had poems appear recently in *Cold Noon*, *Perceptions*, *Cacti Fur*, *Blaze Vox*, *Otoliths*, *Shot Glass Journal* and *The Opiate*. He lives in Portland, Oregon.

After a career as a therapist and human resources director at a community mental health center, **June Blumenson** reinvented herself as a poet. She is a member of Minnesota Poetry Therapists Network, teaches poetry classes, curates a poetry reading series and reads in various Minneapolis venues. Her work appears in over a dozen literary journals including *Adana*, *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Comstock Review*, *Literal Latte* contest, and *San Pedro River Review*. She was a finalist for Nimrod's 2012 Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry and in 2014 won the Loft/MIA Sacred Shorts Writing Contest.

Gabriella Brand lives in New Haven, Connecticut, where she teaches grown-up French and baby Italian. In her spare time, she has been known to go on extensive treks across entire countries writing stories in her head. When she is home, she cultivates a domestic side by making yogurt and bread.

Dorothy Howe Brooks' work has appeared most recently in *Tampa Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Poet Lore*, *Cumberland River Review*, and *Broad River Review*. Her full length poetry collection, *A Fine Dusting of Brightness*, was published in 2013 by Aldrich Press, and her third chapbook, *Subsoil Plowing*, will be published later this year by Finishing Line Press.

Cathleen Calbert's poetry and prose have appeared in many publications, including *Ms. Magazine*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Times*, and *The Paris Review*. She is the author of four books of poetry: *Lessons in Space*, *Bad Judgment*, *Sleeping with a Famous Poet*, and *The Afflicted Girls*. Her awards include The Nation Discovery Award, a Pushcart Prize, the Sheila Motton Book Prize, the Vernice Quebodeaux Poetry Prize for Women, and the Mary Tucker Thorp Award from Rhode Island College.

Connie Clark has worked as a piano teacher, secretary, marketing consultant, copywriter, psychiatric hospital chaplain, and, now, small church pastor. Years ago, she published poetry

regularly in literary magazines, but only now, in later life, has she returned to writing it regularly. She lives with her husband and two dogs in Earlysville, Virginia.

Sara Eddy teaches writing at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. Her poems have recently appeared in *Panoply*, *Surreal Poetics*, and *Parks & Points*, along with Terrapin Press' anthology *The Donut Book*. She lives in Amherst, down the street from Emily Dickinson's house, with three teenagers, two hedgehogs, and a cat. It's all almost as precious as it sounds.

Kathie Giorgio is the critically-acclaimed author of four novels, two story collections, and a poetry chapbook. In 2018, her first collection of essays, *Today's Moment Of Happiness Despite The News: A Year Of Spontaneous Essays*, will be released. In 2019, her second poetry chapbook, *When You Finally Said No*, will be released. Nominations include the Pushcart Prize, the Write Well Award, the Million Writer Award, and the Best of the Net Anthology. Her story, *Snapdragon*, was performed for the Stories On Stage series at Su Teatro theatre in Boulder, Colorado. Giorgio is the director/founder of AllWriters' Workplace & Workshop.

Gail Goepfert has three passions--poetry, photography, and teaching —hard to nail down a favorite. Currently, she is an associate editor of *RHINO Poetry*. Her first chapbook, *A Mind on Pain*, was released by Finishing Line Press early in 2015, and a second book, *Tapping Roots*, was released spring 2018. Her first full-length book of poems, *Get Up Said the World*, will be published in 2019 by Červená Barva Press. Recent and forthcoming publications include *Kudzu Howe*, *Stone Boat Review*, *The Penn Review*, *Postcard Poems and Prose*, and *Beloit Poetry Review*. More at gailgoepfert.com

Kathleen Gregg has found a literary home within the vibrant writing community of Lexington, Kentucky. She recently completed an intensive, nine-month writing certificate program under poet and mentor, Jeff Worley. You can find her poems in *Lady Literary Magazine*, *Ghost City Review* and *Highland Park Poetry*, among others.

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in *Examined Life Journal*, *Evening Street Review* and *Columbia Review* with work upcoming in *Harpur Palate*, *Poetry East* and *Visions International*.

Mary Beth Hines studied English at the College of the Holy Cross, had a long career in human resources and project management, and is now an active participant in Boston-area writing workshops. An emerging poet, her work was recently, or will soon be, published in *Aurorean*, *Blue Heron Review*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *On Farm Pond: Poetry and Prose*, and Mass Poetry's newsletter and website. She lives near Boston with her inspiring, literature-loving husband and son, and spends as much time as possible in central Massachusetts with her daughter, son-in-law, and brand-new grandson.

Dottie Joslyn is a retired Certified Applied Poetry Facilitator in the field of Poetry Therapy, Certified Journal Facilitator, and Journal to the Self® Instructor. She worked with the chronically mental ill in her roles as poetry and journal facilitators. Her poems have appeared

in *American Tanka*, *Buffalo Bones*, *Poetry from the Trail Ridge Writers*, *Wellness & Writing Connections Newsletter*, and *Beginning Again: Creative Responses to Poetry of Presence*.

Janet Kamnikar reads, writes, and enjoys her life as a wife, mother, grandmother and retiree in Fort Collins, Colorado. At 77, she has been writing poetry for the past 16 years. She takes creative writing classes twice a year and attends every poetry workshop available, activities that not only hone her writing skills but also introduce her to creative, interesting people who enrich her life.

A Lambda Literary Fellow & QueerWise emeritus, **Bonnilee Kaufman's** poetry has appeared in several publications including *Ghosts of the Holocaust*, *Milk and Honey-A Celebration of Jewish Lesbian Poetry*, *BayLaurel*, *Conceptions Southwest*, *River's Voices*, *Sinister Wisdom*, *The Brillantina Project* and *Selfish*.

Hilary King lives in the Bay Area of Northern California. Her poems have appeared in the *Cortland Review*, *Blue Fifth Review*, *Vinyl Poetry* and other publications. She is the author of the book of poems, *The Maid's Car*.

Tricia Knoll is a Vermont poet in her 70's who decided to move 3,003 miles across country to begin a new adventure in a house in the woods. She reveres the word crone rather than despises it. Her most recent poetry book is *How I Learned To Be White* (Antrim House, 2018). Website: triciaknoll.com

Beth Konkoski is a writer and high school English teacher living in northern Virginia. Her work has been published in journals such as *Mid-American Review*, *Gargoyle*, and *The Potomac Review*. She has a chapbook of poems, *Noticing the Splash*, published in 2010 by BoneWorld Press. She has been a featured reader at local events such as The Iota Cafe, Miller Cabin Reading Series, and Takoma Park Poetry Series.

Jane K. Kretschmann is retired from teaching English at a community college in Ohio. Her poetry has been published in print and online, as well as broadcast on radio. Her chapbook, *Imagining a Life*, was published by FootHills Publishing. Most recently one of her poems received honorable mention in Passager's 2018 poetry contest and will be published in the fall/winter 2018 issue.

Janet Landman's poetry has appeared in numerous literary journals, including *The Dickinson Review*, *Icarus*, *North American Review*, *Rattle*, *Salmagundi*, and *Washington Square*. Her poems have received awards in national competitions, including: "Blue Fire," awarded first place in the 2002 National Writers Union Poetry Competition, judged by Adrienne Rich; and "Sinkhole," winner of the 2010 *Bellevue Review's* Marica and Jan Vilcek Prize for Poetry, judged by Marie Ponsset.

Charlene Langfur is an organic gardener, a Syracuse University Graduate Writing Fellow and her writing has appeared in many magazines and journals, a series of poems in *Poetry East* and *Weber*, in 2018 poems in *Gravel*, *The Connecticut River Review*, and *Bluestem*.

From associate professor of English to management trainer to retiree, **Carolyn Martin** has journeyed from New Jersey through California to Oregon to discover Douglas firs, months of rain, and dry summers. Her poems and book reviews have appeared in publications throughout North America and the UK, and her fourth collection, *A Penchant for Masquerades*, is scheduled for an early 2019 release from Unsolicited Press. She is currently the poetry editor of *Kosmos Quarterly: journal for global transformation*. Find out more about Carolyn at www.carolynmartinpoet.com.

Joyce Meyers taught English for a number of years, then practiced law in Philadelphia for nearly three decades, focusing on litigation in defense of the First Amendment. Her poems have appeared in *The Comstock Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Slant*, *Iodine Poetry Journal*, and *Common Ground Review*, among others. In 2014, she won the *Atlanta Review* International Poetry Competition, and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize the same year. Her collections include *The Way Back* (Kelsay Books 2017) and two chapbooks, *Shapes of Love* (Finishing Line Press, 2010) and *Wild Mushrooms* (Plan B Press, 2007).

Pamela Miller has been an active member of Chicago's poetry community for almost 40 years. She has published four books, most recently *Miss Unthinkable* (Mayapple Press), and is working on a new collection, tentatively titled *How to Do the Greased Wombat Slide*. Her poems have appeared in *RHINO*, *New Poetry From the Midwest 2017*, *Peacock Journal*, *Circe's Lament: Anthology of Wild Women Poetry*, *Nixes Mate Review*, *MAYDAY* and many other journals and anthologies. She is blissfully retired from a long, strange career in corporate communications, publishing and freelance writing/editing.

Kirsten Morgan has been writing poetry at stop signs, in dreams and on napkins, along with more traditional means for as long as she can remember. She has taught the craft in a private school, to homeless women at a day shelter and in a lifelong learning program for the University of Denver. A recent graduate of The Lighthouse Writers Poetry Book Project in Denver, she has assembled several chapbooks and her first manuscript, and is immersed in the second.

Mark A. Murphy was born in West Yorkshire in 1969. He has been published in over 180 journals and e-zines. His first collection, *Tin Cat Alley*, was published in 1996. His next collection, *Night Wanderer's Plea*, is due out this September from Waterloo Press in the UK.

Gunilla Norris is a mother and a grandmother, and is rounding out her eightieth year. She has published two books of poetry: *Learning from the Angel* (Lotus Press) and *Joy is the Thinnest Layer* (Homebound Publications). She has published eleven children's novels and nine books on the spirituality of the everyday. Her website is GunillaNorris.com.

Toti O'Brien is the Italian accordionist with the Irish last name. She was born in Rome then moved to Los Angeles, where she makes a living as a self-employed artist, performing musician and professional dancer. Her work has most recently appeared in *Iolit*, *Zina y Nari*, *Off The Coast*, and *Scryptic*.

Janet M. Powers, Professor Emerita at Gettysburg College, taught for 49 years in the fields of South Asian literature and civilization, women's studies and peace studies. She has published poetry in many small journals, including *Earth's Daughters*, *The Poeming Pigeon* and *The Little Red Tree Anthology*. Her chapbook, *Difficult to Subdue as the Wind*, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2009. This old lady still writes poetry and stands on street corners with signs -- trying to change this sorry world of ours.

Suzanne S. Rancourt, a veteran, is Abenaki/Huron descent from west-central Maine, resides in the Adirondack Mountains, New York. Her work appears in *the Same*, *Young Ravens Literary Review* # 8, *Tupelo Press Native Voices Anthology*, *Bright Hill Press 25th Anniversary Anthology*, *Dawnland Voices 2.0* #4, *Northern New England Review*, *Bear Review*, *Three Drops Press*, *Snapdragon Journal*, *mgversion2>atura*, *Sirsee*, *Slipstream*, *Collections of Poetry and Prose*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Ginosko*, *Journal of Military Experience*, *Cimarron Review*, *Callaloo*. *Billboard in the Clouds* received the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas First Book Award. *murmurs at the gate*, forthcoming May 2019.

Zvezdana Rashkovich (pen name) is an American writer based in Dubai, Arizona and the Balkans. She was born in the former Yugoslavia and raised in Sudan. An immigrant in Oregon, she is a mom to four and an interpreter for refugees. Her hybrid story, *The Tea Maker*, has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. Her work can be found in many anthologies and literary journals, both in print and online. She went back to college at 50 and graduated with a BA in Creative Writing from Southern New Hampshire University. Zvezdana is fluent in English, Arabic, Serbian/Croatian.

Cynthia Ritchie is an Alaska writer, ultra-runner and two-time Pushcart Prize nominee. Find her work at *New York Times Magazine*, *Evening Street Review*, *Sport Literate*, *Rattle*, *Best American Sports Writing*, *Mary*, *Into the Void*, *Clementine Unbound*, *Deaf Poets Society*, *The Hunger*, *Forgotten Women anthology*, *Nasty Women anthology* and others. Her first novel, *Dolls Behaving Badly*, was published by Hachette Book Group.

Mary Kay Rummel was Poet Laureate of Ventura County, California from 2014-16. Her seventh book of poetry, *The Lifeline Trembles*, won the Blue Light Poetry Prize. A new collection, *Cypher Garden*, has just been published by Blue Light Press. Her poems recently appear in *Nimrod*, *Askew*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Miramar*, *Pirene's Fountain*, and *Like Light* (Brighthill Press). She teaches at California State University, Channel Islands, and lives in Ventura and Minneapolis. marykayrummel.com

Sharon Scholl is a retired college professor of humanities and contemporary world studies. Her chapbooks in circulation are *Summer's Child* and *Eat Space*. Individual poems are current in *Two Hawks Quarterly* and *Rivers Edge*. She convenes a poetry critique group with a 12-year history and serves on several community arts boards.

Jill Sell (born in 1950) has been a full-time freelance writer for more than 35 years. Sell was a weekly contributor to *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland until 2017 and continues to write for *Ohio Magazine* and other publications. Her favorite journalism, essays and poetry focus on nature and the environment. She is an unapologetic treehugger.

John L. Stanizzi is author of full-length collections *Ecstasy Among Ghosts*, *Sleepwalking*, *Dance Against the Wall*, *After the Bell*, *Hallelujah Time!*, and *High Tide – Ebb Tide*. His work has been widely published, translated into Italian, and he has read in venues throughout New England. His new collection, *CHANTS*, a memoir in sonnets, will be out in 2018 from Červená Barva Press. A former New England Poet of the Year, John teaches literature at Manchester Community College in Manchester, Connecticut, and lives with his wife, Carol, in Coventry.

Carol A. Stephen's poetry appears in numerous digital and print publications. Her poems have received awards including the Canadian Authors Association's (CAA) National Capital Writing Contest, and she was featured as a Tree Reading Series' Hot Ottawa Voice, 2012. She's served on the board for CAA-NCR, co-directed Ottawa's Tree Reading Series, coordinated CAA-NCR's poetry group, and was poetry judge for CAA-NCR's 2018 National Capital Writing Contest. Carol is Ottawa manager for The Ontario Poetry Society and a selector for Bywords.ca. Originally from Toronto, Carol now lives in Carleton Place, Ontario. <http://www.quillfyre.wordpress.com>

JC Sulzenko, who also writes as A. Garnett Weiss, is widely published as a poet and a children's author, and her poetry made *Arc's* Poem of the Year shortlist. Her centos took top honors in *The Bannister* anthology (2013, 2016.) In 2017, Point Petre Publishing released JC's debut collection, *South Shore Suite...POEMS*. JC has presented writing workshops around Ontario. She serves as curator of *The Glebe Report's* "Poetry Quarter" and a selector for Bywords.ca. She in 2018 in the *Poet's Pathway*, *County CollAboRaTive* and Rednersville Road Art Tour projects. Ottawa provides her home base. www.jcsulzenko.com

Leslie Smith Townsend is a licensed marriage and family therapist who writes memoir, essays, and poetry. She is the recipient of the Betty Gabehart prize in creative nonfiction, a grant from the Kentucky Foundation for Women, and a fellowship from the Vermont Studio Center. Her essays have been published in *Louisville Eccentric Observer*, *Courier-Journal*, *New Southerner*, *The Louisville Review*, *Arable*, and *Church and Society*. Her poetry can be found in the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Literary Mama*, *Journeys*, and *Friends Journal*.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our next reading period runs October 1-December 15, 2018, **or until the next issue is full.**

Submissions accepted from this next reading period will be published in our Winter 2019 issue, which is planned for release on January 15, 2019. If you are a writer who loves to create seasonal work, we will be happy to read wintery pieces. Please do not send us warm weather poems for this reading period.

Please refer to our guidelines for further information. They are available on our website, www.gyroscopereview.com, and on *Gyroscope Review's* Submittable page at gyroscopereview.submittable.com/submit.

All submissions must go through our Submittable account. No submissions will be accepted via email, snail mail, carrier pigeon, text message, Snapchat, drone, singing telegram, or any other delivery method.

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