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**FRIENDS OF THIRD WEDNESDAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mrs. Amy Gray</th>
<th>Robert Spencer Anderson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jack Griner</td>
<td>George Dila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Schreiber</td>
<td>Rick Solomon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Niedringhaus</td>
<td>Ken Meisner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley D. Rose</td>
<td>Sophia Rivkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirley Barney</td>
<td>Joan McLean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl W. Fanning Jr.</td>
<td>Richard T. Conner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brad Rose, Ph.D</td>
<td>Mary A. Mills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Taylor</td>
<td>Jack Ridl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam Correll</td>
<td>Emily Hoche-Mong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin H. Levinson</td>
<td>Mary H. Bruce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Dacey</td>
<td>Jeffrey DeLotto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. J. Kennedy</td>
<td>Linda L. Casebeer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heath Brougher</td>
<td>Dianne and Rudy Bernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Liskin</td>
<td>Phillip Sterling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert E. and Sylvia P. Bowman</td>
<td>Dan Gerber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Editor’s Note

It’s summer at last and here is issue 3 of volume XII. This issue features the winning poems from the third edition of our popular One Sentence Poetry Contest. Once again our contributors have come through with some fantastic examples of what a poet can do with the basic building block of writing – the sentence. In addition to the winning poems, we have published a number of poems we found of “considerable merit”, our euphemism for honorable mention. This time we lead off the contest poems with a fine example of a one sentence poem from 13th Poet Laureate of the United States, Ted Kooser.

Until August 15th, we’re accepting entries for the 3rd annual George Dila Memorial Flash Fiction Contest (named in honor of Third Wednesday’s first fiction editor). Flash fiction is a fast-growing sub-genre with new outlets springing up daily. We’ve notice a lot of poets beginning to experiment with this art form. Perhaps that’s because poetry and flash share the obvious need to pare work down to the essential. Our guest judge for this year’s contest, Jeremy Griffin, is the faculty fiction editor of Waccamaw, A Journal of Contemporary Literature, a wonderful publication of Coastal Carolina University.

Our featured poet is Jennifer McGowan, who lives near Oxford, England. We were taken with her experimentation with a traditional form. As she says in her introduction, “My sonnet sequence starts with a perfectly traditional Petrarchan sonnet then, through the sequence, modifies form, vocabulary, rhyme, and theme, to see exactly how much violence I can enact upon them and still have them be recognizable.”

The issue is rounded out with three pieces of short fiction, our usual feature of student poems from the InsideOut Literary Arts Project, and poetry by voices, both new and familiar, to Third Wednesday’s audience.

David Jibson, Co-editor
# Contents

Afternoon Walk at Chesapeake Beach Boardwalk  *Angela La Voie* ........ 1
Trompe L’Oeil  *Pamela Miller* ................................................................. 1
[Untitled]  *John Stanizzi* ........................................................................... 2
Moving  *Raymond Byrnes* ......................................................................... 3
Bitterroot Flowers  *Mark Hamilton* .......................................................... 4
The Old Waiter  *Jacob Appel* ................................................................. 5
Working Outside  *Daryl Scroggins* ............................................................. 6
Pronoun Reference  *Janice Northems* ...................................................... 7
Jigsaw  *Buff Whitman-Bradley* ................................................................. 8
Sealing the Envelope  *Judy Kaber* ............................................................... 9
Falling in Church on the Feast of St. Blaise  *Ann Wranovix* .................... 10
The Secret  *Devorah Uriel* ........................................................................... 12
The White Dove  *Tracey Ranauro* ............................................................. 13
Icicles  *Robert Hardy* ............................................................................... 14
The Problem of Twoness I  *Rebecca Gould* ............................................ 14
Because of the Reunion  *Laurie Kolp* ...................................................... 15
Loudonville, Ohio  *Madison Garey* ........................................................... 17
Easy to Use as Modeling Clay  *Fred Shaw* ................................................ 17
Hovering in Midair  *Bill Wolak* ................................................................. 19
And the Days Roll  *David James* ............................................................... 20
Salt and Light  **Rebekah Hewitt** ................................................................. 20
Everlasting  **Molly Murray** ......................................................................... 22
Home Economics  **Jeremy Griffin** ............................................................ 22
Country Music on the Radio  **Mark Simpson** ............................................. 23
Boy Leading a Horse  **Joan Poole** ............................................................. 24
Footfall  **Paul Bemstein** ............................................................................. 25
Monologue in Silence  **V. P. Loggins** ......................................................... 26
The Spectator  **Wendy BooydeGraaff** ......................................................... 27
Still Life with Cat  **Gary Wadley** ............................................................... 29

Prize Winning Poems from our Third One Sentence Poetry Contest .......... 30
   Official Business  **Ted Kooser** ................................................................. 30
   Objects in the Mirror  **Jane Wheeler** ........................................................ 31
   Yo-Yo Ma at the International Bridge  **Carol Flake Chapman** .............. 31
   Tallahatchie River Speaks of Loneliness  **Krystal Nikol** ....................... 32

One Sentence Poetry Contest Poems of Merit............................................... 33
   We Were Down in the Basement  **Leslie Schultz** ................................. 33
   On the Way to Tataouine  **Ann Farley** .................................................. 34
   Yokogami-yaburi  **Sarah Russell** ........................................................... 35
   The Preview  **Rebecca Yancey** ............................................................... 35
   Tuesday at Peebles Department Store  **Irene Fick** ............................... 36
   Delicate Erhu  **Rivaka Marie** ................................................................. 36
   Cruising Along  **Hope Hart Petrie** ........................................................ 37
Mirage  Jerome Gagnon .................................................................37
A Life Sentence  David James ......................................................38
An Oak Felled by a Storm  William Cullen .................................39
Postcard  Mark Madigan ..............................................................39
Luminosity  Jane Wheeler ............................................................40
Afternoon on Lick Creek Road  Ashley Memory .........................40
Snapshot  Gloria Heffeman ...........................................................41
At a Cafe in Montreal  James Crews ............................................41
The Night Tom Petty Died  Michael Hill ......................................42
Left  Kevin Griffin ......................................................................42
Hearing Distance  James Toupin ..................................................44
Afternoon Affair  Sarah Colby .....................................................44
Hearken  Cynthia Pitman ............................................................45

360  J. Ray Paradiso ......................................................................46
Mary Oliver 1935-2019  Ahrend Torrey ......................................47
End of the Trail Café  David Bauman ..........................................47
White Crane  Kelly Talbot ...........................................................48
Someone Left The Ocean Running
  And Now The Planet Is Flooded  Kelli Russell Agodon ..............49
Passover Cleaning  Jacob Appel ..................................................50
Soap: Snow  M. J. Iuppa ..............................................................51
Working Order  Chris Dempsey ...................................................52
Silver Spoon  Janice Northems ...................................................53
What's Left  Lin Benedek ................................................................. 54

Enough  Claire Scott ................................................................. 54

When You Try to Apologize Cento  Laurie Kolp ............................... 55

Floodplain Forest  Robert Hardy .................................................. 56

On Being Third  Rebecca Gould .................................................. 56

Transit  Gary Wadley ................................................................. 58

Featured Poet: Jennifer A. McGowan ............................................ 59

Introduction: ................................................................................. 59

The Boy Who Went Back to Singapore ......................................... 60

The House You Never Lived In .................................................... 61

1. Daphne ................................................................................ 61

2. Callisto ............................................................................... 62

3. Echo ................................................................................... 62

4. Sulis .................................................................................... 63

5. Danaë .................................................................................. 63

Burial (Tenerife)  SEIGAR ............................................................. 64

Cadre  Fred Shaw ...................................................................... 65

Hell Yes  Mark Simpson ............................................................ 66

Postcard from San Diego  Laura Thorp .......................................... 67

Building the Boat  C. M. Donahue ................................................ 68

When A Friend Talks About Pants  Kevin McDaniel ....................... 69

Hummingbird  Janice Northems .................................................... 70
Little Stories Buff Whitman-Bradley ................................................................. 71
Learning to be Still Robert Fillman ............................................................. 72
A Matter of Timing Rick Blum ......................................................................... 73
Recipe for Hope David James ............................................................................. 74
Jeremiad Madison Garey ....................................................................................... 75
Fontanka Icebreak, St. Petersburg, Russia Diane Martin ...................................... 76
Church Fire Jeremy Griffin ..................................................................................... 77
Leaf Blowing at Eight in the Morning Jack Ridl ...................................................... 78
Apologies To The Dead Rose Maria Woodson ......................................................... 79
A Good Number Phillip Sterling ........................................................................ 80
Tortoise Diane Martin .......................................................................................... 83

INSIDE/OUT LITERARY ARTS PROJECT FEATURE ........................................ 84
If the World Is Without Amariana Diaz ............................................................. 85
You Calen Hickman ............................................................................................... 85
The Lovedrops Calen Hickman .............................................................................. 85
You Will Get Burnt Calen Hickman ........................................................................ 85
Every Word Was Once an Animal Danna Carbajal-Martinez ............................... 86
I Didn't Feed My Fish Danna Carbajal-Martinez .................................................. 86
What If Camila Murillo ......................................................................................... 86
In the Zoo of My Imagination Amariana Diaz ......................................................... 87
On the First Day of the New World Christopher Gonzalez .................................. 87

The Weekend Balls Party SEIGAR ....................................................................... 88
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Afternoon Walk at Chesapeake Beach Boardwalk

It’s the kind of afternoon, wind blustering, skies clear—the Chesapeake tinted gray-green, toothed with whitecaps, when I can almost see one of those Miocene sharks trolling the ancient calving grounds of whales

but it’s the young man in checkered, baggy shorts pulled low, hat turned sideways, cigarette smoke trailing its white stick, who prowls these shores now on his skateboard, flicks his cig before he rumbles down the sidewalk, lands a kickflip.

Across the road, the boardwalk meters my steps. Every now and then, a bench bears a plaque to a daughter gone too early, a father lost at sea. Out beyond, in the great estuary, salt water mingles with fresh. Here we are, bound together by the same thwip-thwap of wind.

Angela La Voie
Highlands Ranch, Colorado

Trompe L’Oeil

I am not what I appear to be.
Does my blouse hide four red electric breasts
I can switch on one by one?
There’s not an inch of me you can trust.

My molecules were bred to deceive you.
I’m a mannequin rolled in a carpet of lies,
my voice disguised in tangled anthems.
I am not what I appear to be.
Take a guess at what I’m made of.
Scrape off my face and you’ll find … what?
If you unzip my skin, will I crystallize?
There’s not an inch of me you can trust.

Affix your eye to my soul’s secret keyhole.
Are those spangles you see or are they spikes?
Like a coaxing doorway painted on a brick wall,
I am not what I appear to be.

You think you’ve sussed me out, but are you sure?
My legs collapse in prayer
but my arms are filaments of mischief.
There’s not an inch of me you can trust.

I am not what I appear to be.
There’s not an inch of me you can trust.
Just when you’re convinced I’m the algebra of anguish,
my heart pops open like a bottle of spooked champagne
and joy shoots out everywhere.

Pamela Miller
Chicago, Illinois

[Untitled]

1.6.19
7.44 a.m.
34 degrees

Paned surface fitted, like stained glass, with a long white fence.
Offscreen a red-bellied woodpecker rasps at my approach;
nettled sparrows, having vanished during the rain, are back,
dominant and quarreling, filling the air with their grieves.
1.7.19
7.43 a.m.
19 degrees

Poisonous cold settled hard last night; oaken bitterness snapping the deck stairs loudly, and the nesh sun huge and brilliant and useless on the horizon does nothing but imply, Don’t go out! Don’t go that way!

1.8.19
1.13 p.m.
38 degrees

Proclamation of the wind; freeze the pond and the obscurant vapors will float metaphors into the air, though they cannot null the stillness there, which is not so much a metaphor as it is a dream-worthy fantasy, a reverie about tranquility, warmth, and joy.

John Stanizzi
Coventry, Connecticut

Moving

It’s not the weary, cat-raked couch or creaky kitchen chairs or the burnt-out 25-watt bulb stuck in a socket for 100.

It’s not the dresses, hats, suits, and shirts closeted for decades or the bulging photo albums and letter boxes underneath the bed.

It’s not the yellowed tax files documenting honest lives or a stack of school diplomas and framed training-course certificates.
What triggers sadness is their mutual intention to sort things out once they find sufficient time to hold each item up, think about it, then decide.

They could riffle through a thousand snapshots toss a few, add names and dates where nothing’s on the back or clarify notes like “Al and me at 5” they could shred old files, clean out the freezer donate pots and pans, but today is moving day and the condo cannot hold so much furniture, all these pictures on the walls, so many crystal angels, ceramic cats, plastic flowers and ferns.

Raymond Byrnes
Leesburg, Virginia

Bitterroot Flowers

'Towing my way up
has been the best kind of doing
to climb those distant mountains.

Wading chest-deep past cobblestone islands—the whispering muskrat now speaks in a language slightly familiar.

At the headwaters
local fishermen cast for lunkers,
seeking those secret pools.

Currents undercut the bank, the river becomes equal
to its melting mountain.
Cold river cut-throat

swim in the blue-ribbon waters
turning pink with sunset.
Cattle lowing on both sides, hoof prints crowding the river, the herd slipping through narrow, corner gates.

My feet go splashing through the suburbs of Dillon, Montana toward bitterroot flowers.

Past houses, past a weir, the kayak sliding over wet grass of mown lawns where I linger.

Mark Hamilton
Dunedin, Florida

The Old Waiter

No one left could say exactly when
He’d come to be “the old waiter”
But already his earmolds hummed
Behind curls of coarse grey hairs
And his hands shook with the soup
While we were still tenderfeet
Among the burgundy banquettes.

Zorelli steered him toward tourists,
Newcomers—where he might render
Less damage: This shadow of the days
When gentlemen carried Malacca canes
And rose for women as they left the table.
He had known Sinatra’s taste in oysters
(This from the campari-cheeked maître d’),
Had assisted the DiMaggio brothers,
Sozzled, into many a cab—and why not?
But he might as well have clipped cigars
For President Cleveland. And once,
Later, after Zorelli quarantined him
To a stool beside the bar, he placed
A tremulous, hirsute paw on my thigh,
Too high for any other meaning, saying,
(And me pushing fifty, waiting for my wife):
“We’ll make a head waiter of you yet.”

When Zorelli closed shop—no warning,
Just a faceless iron grate—he haunted
The block for weeks in threadbare livery
Like a grieving dog, and recognizing me
Once as a potential customer, he recited
The day’s specials with a wistful verve:
Vichyssoise, Quail eggs in aspic, Lobster
Newburg or Thermidor with fresh mustard
And cognac. “Otherwise, sir,” he warned,
Half-wincing, “It’s just scampi and cheese,”
A meal that captured all of life’s injustice.

Jacob Appel
New York, New York

Working Outside

In a suburb, in my twelfth year, I pumped the pedals of my Stingray bicycle hard
down hot streets, past the newlyweds’ house—and there they were! Out on the
lawn together pulling weeds. She in sleeveless white cotton, smiling—he in shorts
and flip-flops, muscled arms working a root-digger tool in the quick-tanning sun.
And, again, the thought came to me: They are out here pulling weeds when they
could be in the house right now, doing it!

Daryl Scroggins
Marfa, Texas
Pronoun Reference

A teacher and a nonbinary student walk into a bar… wait, no — scratch that.

A nonbinary student walks into my Comp I classroom and tells that joke, but it falls flat on classmates new to gender-fluid terms. Still, they quickly accept this wise-cracking self-proclaimed “they” as one of them, all struggling to stay afloat amid oceans of verb tense errors and comma splices.

Pronouns mean little to this group except points on a grammar quiz, but I fret for weeks over the looming review of pronoun agreement: *Singular nouns take singular pronouns; plural take plural* ….

Then we’ll get to the part that throws them: *The way we talk is wrong, using the plural “they” to refer to singular “everyone,” for instance* ….

These mostly first-gen students, who find the waters of English muddier than the Rio Grande, will trust me as arbiter of the rules, even as I explain how language changes over time, rules lagging behind, ice-age old conventions thawing slow as glaciers edging towards doom.

They’ll be confused by rules that are not rules, so I ponder the time to spring this surprise, secretly hoping my “they” will be absent,
solving my own pronoun dilemma.
But as I make copies of the handouts,
somewhere within me, the waters stir and shift.

I picture this singular student, wry and brassy
in their combat boots and tats, and the roil
within me stills and settles. I stop copying.
And just like that, the polar ice caps of language
melt away, flooding these dry Kansas plains
with a welcome sea change in praise of they.

Janice Northems
Liberal, Kansas

Jigsaw

These days when I get out of bed,
Arise from a chair,
Exit an auto,
I have the momentary sensation that
My bones and joints
Are pieces of a jigsaw puzzle
Scattered across a table top
And that I’ve got to fit them all together
To form the picture on the cover of the box --
Van Gogh’s sunflowers, say
Or Yosemite’s Half Dome
Or a field of poppies and wild oats –
Before I can take a steady step
Without a crick or creak or stab of pain.
So I pause,
Do a little twisting and leaning,
A little stretching and bumping and grinding
Until the pieces fall mostly into place
And then I can go forth into the day
With an energetic gait,
As Vincent might have wandered the countryside
Around Arles,
As John Muir certainly hiked the Sierra Nevada,
As Walt Whitman strode amongst the choiring grasses,
Wildly in love with the world.

Buff Whitman-Bradley
Fairfax, California

Sealing the Envelope

Today I write a letter
to my mother who’s been dead
for forty years. I tell her
about the weather, about chopping
wood for kindling, and shopping
in the rain. I write about the trip
I took last week to see my son
and his family—my grandson
who reads so fluently, raising
his voice in excitement, capturing
both words and meaning. And
the baby, his trouble with latching,
yet how happy he seems. Maybe
I’ll mention politics, a word or two about voting. But not the caravan of immigrants, the way women’s rights are slipping away under the knife-point of the right. Not school shootings or the synagogue or black boys gunned down in the street. Or how our president is an idiot. Why cause her worry or pain? There’s nothing she can do about it now. My letter is long and covers the important things. How much I love her. How much I miss her. What I am planning for dinner tonight.

Judy Kaber
Belfast, Maine

Falling in Church on the Feast of St. Blaise

The candles barely press against my throat right over the lymph glands, not swollen but ripe for blessing by St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, early master of the Heimlich maneuver, patron saint of reflux and goiter, strep throat and croup, cancer of the esophagus, and all illness of the throat and other ailments.

He must have cushioned my left hip when it hit the marble floor beside the altar railing where I fell. No harm done, but the signs are there for the crowd
of witnesses peering down at me
like Donne’s map-reading doctors in that poem
where his sick body lying on the bed
becomes the world laid flat before their eyes.

Here I am flattened like an open book,
and we’re already in the mood for frailty
that blessings can bring on. We’re primed for dire
devotions, follow the lectionary
for encroaching age, and we all know
that you can’t not read a thing once you know how,
that word leads on to word as frail, fall, fracture,
as bedbound, pneumonia, and intensive care.

I’m fine, though, if a little stiff-necked,
laughing to have escaped the narrative
that wants to box me up. Anyway the signs
are shrouded. I know each side-stab, eye-droop,
heart-cramp breeds ambiguities as rife
as rumor, any one of which could do
me in. That mean leads on to do leads on
to reconstruct what can’t be circumvented.

I’m thinking of our year of signs and wonders,
the blessings of its cracked prognostic arc,
how the falling backyard ladder, jolted
lung, and coughed-up blood had nothing to do
with the hieroglyphic cells that killed you,
nothing at all to do with my fingers
tracing our geography of loss
on the beautiful planes of your skull.

Ann Wranovix
Memphis, Tennessee
The Secret

He stares at his ratty sneakers and kicks the gravel, stirring up dust. A shoe-lace has come untied and several burrs cling to it; small prickly hitchhikers. He considers pulling them off but they're nasty little buggers. Best to leave them be.

Jean emerges from the Stop & Shop with two sweaty Cokes and a warm smile. “Hi, honey. Ready to get going?” she says as she approaches.

He can’t stop staring at the burrs on his laces.

“John, what is it?”

Forcing himself to look up, he meets her brown eyes now filled with concern. “I need to tell you something.” He says.

She sets the Cokes on the hood of the truck. “Okay, tell me then.” She puts her arms around him, moving her hips into a familiar alignment as she leans into him.

God, I love her. I shouldn’t tell her. Why does she need to know anyway? What’s done is done.

He pulls her close, whispering in her ear. “I need to put more air in the tires.”

Placing both of her hands on his chest, she pushes him away. But his wide smile and flashing blue eyes soften her and she laughs loudly; a gust of sound that ruffles his heart. She bounces back a step and turns, swatting him on the butt.

“You jerk. You had me worried!”

“No worries baby. It will only take a few minutes and we’ll be out of here.”

She slides behind the wheel and waits on him. She knows something’s wrong, knows it’s not a new something. They’ve kicked it into dark corners for years, and when they were ready to move, they packed it up and brought it with them. The Rocky Mountains looming ahead seem a reflection of this unspoken thing. As they get closer to Denver, to the new life they’ve planned together, the further apart they seem to be. John hops in and leaning over kisses her softly on the lips. It’s the only thing he ever does in a leisurely way.

“Let’s hit these mountains!”

She smiles at his enthusiasm even though it’s a little forced and pulls out of the station and onto the I25 ramp. John thumbs through the music on his phone, chooses some classic jazz, and turns up the volume.

The landscape passes in a blur of browns and beiges. With his head turned away from Jean and his focus turned inward, John only sees his fears, only hears the endless rationalizations running in his head. Some secrets are best left unshared. If Jean hasn’t figured it out by now, maybe she never will. People are allowed to have a previous life, right? He was only nineteen—so long ago. She was so sexy, he was so flattered by her interest.

“John?”

His eyes refocus and he notices that clouds are gathering. He turns towards Jean. “Humm, yeah?”

“Is this about my mother?”

Devorah Uriel
Denver, Colorado
The White Dove
Photograph
Tracey Ranauro
Las Vegas, Nevada
Icicles

We live inside a cave of ice.
We look out ice-barred windows ablaze
with frozen sunlight
and watch them form,
the icicles,
sharpened to the melting point,
tapering to liquid flame,
candle’s
polar opposite,
like some Pleistocene
calendar-clock
lengthening with the days,
seasonglass
slowly
spill
into
season

Robert Hardy
Northfield, Minnesota

The Problem of Twoness I
after Chagall

Chagall understood:
our longing for another
is ungendered.
Our desire for the other
is for our missing selves.
I conceive words

when he inhabits
the spaces of my mortality
& he fills me

with something I lack.
My desire for him
is masked as desire for another.

In fact it is me, extending
my self into him. Then
& only then

do my legs bend.
Then & only then
does my belly implode.

Then & only then do
I find myself loving
my beloved as myself.

Rebecca Gould
Ashland, Oregon

Because of the Reunion

Ask me to tell you a secret, I’ll tell you about
Bud Lite beer and badminton in the backyard

corner where no crawfish tails litter the lawn.
Did you know being drunk doesn’t make you better
even though you think it does, everyone watching as you foolishly hit the shuttlecock into the pool, dive in to get it. God, it’s awful—the giggles you hear as your hair floats around you. Humiliation is worse because your first crush is there. You just want to sink to the bottom and drown. Even katydid can’t sing loud enough to cover his laughter. He is your brother’s childhood friend, Mike. You remember the sleepovers, how at night you used to watch him undress, the closet door opened wide enough to sneak a quick peek while pretending to be invisible. A quick look kept hidden, quiet kisses while the rest of the family slept. Yes, you have to admit this secret was killing me. I’m glad I’ve found someone to tell it to finally. I wasn’t out back then unless you count that first encounter. Underwater voices still crowd my drunken mind. Under the water, I hear the words of my big brother x-ing out my identity. I’m beating him in badminton, though.

Yesterday I told everyone about you as Mom’s infamous zucchini bread baked in the double oven. Nobody heard my whisper.

Laurie Kolp
Beaumont, Texas
Loudonville, Ohio

I sift through stones in a wooden box alongside
my sister. It’s sticky August, vacation.
The “Indian Store” smells like incense and leather,
moccasins lining the back wall behind women
in long skirts with earrings made of turquoise.
I am two steps into the store when Ally points to where
they sell tumbled crystals for three dollars a bag.
We kneel near the entrance, carpet digging a pattern in my skin.
Stones are smooth and cold against my hand as I shove down,
clinking together as I part them and rushing out like the tide.
We fill translucent bags with rocks, pushing broken ones to the side,
our hands bumping as we search for the most radiant rose quartz.
I snatch one quick and she laughs, startled. I keep it for myself.
Ally hands a rock to me that looks like a lemon wedge.
I press it to my chest and resist the desire to bite it, to see if it is sour.
That night, we lay on the patio and hold up lapis lazuli,
compare it to the river of Milky Way we’ve never seen from home.

Madison Garey
Washington, D. C.

Easy to Use as Modeling Clay

Elbow-deep in the smells of grease
and rust, I’m stuffing the guts
of Grandpa’s workbench
into a cardboard box--mismatched

nut and screw by the pound, a stray
door knob from a Pittsburgh house,
those tiny bulbs for signal lights, 
his car always a beater.

Tucked beneath one last shelf, 
small jars of “Plastic Steel” nestled
in grimy cartons, 
their black and gold script claiming

“a million uses” for just a buck. 
Dried under each tin lid,
something leaden and gray 
like what might’ve rested

at the bottom of this man I once adored, 
a Hunky pipefitter known
to pack heat, to wear a wig 
when stoned, to bully

when he didn’t get his way. 
I was six when he let me slug

his beer-gut until my fist hurt. 
Leaving the cellar, it’s the dewy side

of his favorite glass I almost feel, 
holding one hand against it,
skin and nail 
helping him measure
two fingers of chilled vodka 
until I could do it all on my own.

Fred Shaw  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Hovering in Midair
Digital Collage
Bill Wolak
Bogota, New Jersey
And the Days Roll

You mowed the lawn Tuesday, mulching the leaves
and by Thursday
there’s a new blanket of yellow,
with some red and green, covering the whole yard.
One step forward, five steps back—
that’s your story. When things go well, you feel like a thief
lifting a huge diamond out of the glass case
expecting sirens and alarms,
but there’s only silence.
The day rolls quietly on track
toward the stars. The trees empty,
blessings come and go, the steady rain
follows behind the gray skies.
Somewhere in the future, moving inch by slow inch,
winter is deciding when to arrive,
when to fall flat on her face
and hunker down for months.
You can curse the heavens and ask why,
but it’ll make no difference:
everything turns and grinds toward the end.

David James
Linden, Michigan

Salt and Light

In the shower I notice a bruise
where the nursing baby missed and sucked
the wrong part of me.

The definition of sin
to miss the mark.
I don’t know if I’m doing anything right or in the right order.

Last night I woke up worried about money. The internet says that’s what dreams about your teeth mean – grinding until they fall out like sawdust or ash.

Women on insta keep posting about side hustles.

The baby just threw up on my sweater sleeve and another child is hungry and asking for eggs - with salt.

I am supposed to be salt and light.

Somehow preserving and cleaning, lighting a path and side hustling while sprinkling flax seeds in everyone’s oatmeal.

God help me, I’m an arrow astray.

These days I don’t like the word sin. It’s out of vogue – shame and all.

But last night I made popcorn on the stove a few kernels landed beneath the burner caught on fire. The flames licked the range above and all I could do was stand there, stunned.

Rebekah Hewitt
Verona, Wisconsin
Everlasting

_Helichrysum newii_

Sage gray slips 
of leaves cup 
    a fragile head 
moth-white 
ghosts of petals 
blossoming 
on the ice-cap 
in arid winds 
the airless elevation 
of Kilimanjaro 
flourishing on 
the peak-slope 
    where life is 
a fragile rare 
commodity.

Molly Murray
Helena, Montana

Home Economics

_Usable space_, proclaims the host 
of the home renovation show, 
repeating the phrase every forty seconds 
like an incantation. Bricks 
today, tomorrow grass. 
She wants us to believe 
that every body disguises a better body, 
every wound a garden banking 
on the right vegetation. Once, I lived 
near a small college 
from which each afternoon 
came the noble clanging 
of marching band music. I could feel
the bite of the cymbals like handfuls of coins, the bass drums breathing in my sternum. From my yard I would listen, rapt, wondering if this was what it meant to belong to a place: to be tethered like a newborn to your own name. Home is the sum of so many dry kisses and unspoken pleas, a thing that matters once you’ve left it behind.

Reclining in the candy-green grass with all the pomp of a figure in a Seurat painting, the host declares It’s all about family, while the camera cranes above the eaves of the modest ranch house with its newly painted shutters and door like a tongue ready to be clucked at a joke lobbed across a dinner table.

Jeremy Griffin
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Country Music on the Radio

Gary Reynolds passed me in his pickup just east of Ewing on U.S. 275, going 70, I’ll bet, on a road made for less,

those stereo headphones clamped to his ears and country music on the radio, or the on the 8-track maybe, that Ranchero doing 70 I’ll bet, and Gary oblivious, looking straight ahead, the volume up, concentration in the way he slouched behind the wheel. No one did 70 on that stretch of U.S. 275 but Gary did, and God knows country music will
help you do it. That was over 40 years ago and I fear Gary’s dead now, like John Adams and Danny Philbrick and others, all of whom I’ve lost track of, but that’s what country music can do to you. I listen to it now and then but not too much.

I call out to them over the years of luck or lack of it, over the parched tableland, the Continental Divide, the great basin of failed desires. Or try to—I’m not sure what to say. Turn down the volume? Slow down? Listen while death blows its little trumpet in our ears?

Mark Simpson
Clinton, Washington

Boy Leading a Horse

Let the horse be graveyard gray and the boy match the mesa-beige of the hillside backdrop.

Allow pink to show through where the horse’s neck and muzzle touch; create that portal.

Tether the horse so loosely, the rope falls low on his chest, almost invisible.

Plant the boy’s left hand firmly on his naked
sliver of a hip; neither
hide nor highlight his penis.

Lend the boy the I-
don’t-care jut of chin,
the somewhat glum, stubborn
expression of adolescence.

Let pubescence be
contradictory:
fey and sportive,
elfin and masculine.

Make of the human
and equine--the gallant,
heath-haired horse and the
agile boy--You?—one.

Allow windblown air
to blow a seal over them
finishing them off for the future
those skittish, frisky bodies.

Joan Poole
New York, New York

Footfall

The souls of trees are silent
milky white and shy, rising
from heartwood to blink
between the elms like fireflies,
pricking the thickness of the night.
Crackled leaves beneath my feet
startle owls out of sleep
and spirits back to roots.

Paul Bernstein
Ann Arbor, Michigan
Monologue in Silence

Some know who they are by what is missing.
—William Logan

We never argued, though the splitting up was hard. And now it seems that centuries have passed. The wind still rushes round silent battlements where ruins stand beneath gray clouds and say nothing but that we were here.

So I have been falling rising falling rising like a leaf in the sweep of the same wind where in the wordless voiceless toneless timeless silence I have heard the song of love and regret.

As Aeneas in the chambers of the underworld. Or Orpheus singing his decapitated self to the indifferent stones.

When Dante was descending he was climbing upward to where the sky was pixilated with stars. Where Beatrice was waiting. Where are you?

V. P. Loggins
Annapolis, Maryland
The Spectator

When he stood there, in the thick crowd, bouncing on the balls of his feet to see over the Wellesley kids with their vodka and orange juices, when he saw Jane run by mile marker 21, the crinkled pain evident on her face, the intense focus propelling her forward, that was the moment the decision coursed through him like a warm sip of Scotch: he was going to run his own marathon. The exhilaration! He stomped and pumped his arm and shouted, “Jane, Jane, Jane,” over and over again to the rhythm of the rock song someone blared from a portable speaker. He was so proud of her, that after leaving that louse, she had started running, first 5Ks, then 10Ks, then suddenly she ran the Toronto marathon and qualified for Boston. Now, he was going to do the same.

He downloaded the training app while holding the insulated aluminum cape for Jane outside one of the massage tents. He quizzed Jane about training programs while they ate pasta and drank beer, then he ducked into a bookstore on their walk back to the inn on Beacon Street, and bought a bestselling running book. Jane waited on the bench outside, and when he came back outside, she was sleeping. Such honest exhaustion. He read the running book sitting upright in the center of Jane’s bed, the mid-afternoon sun pooling around him, while Jane took a long hot bath with Epsom salts in the claw foot tub. He called to her every ten minutes, “Hey-o!” and waited for her to respond “Yo-hey” before he continued to read in order to make sure she didn’t fall asleep and drown.

When she came out of the bathroom, flush-faced and damp in the fluffy robe, he walked down the creaky hall to his own room with its gothic arched windows that the sun still shone through and finished reading the book while she napped. Then he watched a few videos of the race online, and decided he would take a bath in his room’s clawfoot tub. He soaked and imagined his own race, the sick anticipation at the start, the burning in his quads as he ran down Heartbreak Hill, the podcast of inspiration
that ran through his mind as he registered the scenery he’d never see by car, the Dixie cups of water he’d choke down and throw on the side of the road for someone else to pick up, the generous empathy he’d feel for the pukers and the injured who wouldn’t be able to finish the race, the way his arms would shake as he raised them across the finish line, the warm admiration of the race volunteer who’d wrap him in his own aluminum sheet to prevent runner’s dehydration, the support of Jane who’d come along to cheer him on. Yes, he’d start running tomorrow morning, before his flight home.

They stayed out late that night, he and Jane, drinking and eating all of the things she’d avoided for six months or longer, and he figured he’d have to start running when he felt inspired, so he went home and told everyone he was going to run a marathon. He showed them the running app on his phone and he casually mentioned how Fridays were rest days. He bought another running book and subscribed to a runner’s magazine. His colleague invited him to the local running club. He demurred. He wanted to run alone, to experience the solitary beauty of nature and the sound of his own lungs pressing the fresh air in and out. He bought the vented shoes, the sweat-wicking Lycra. He had visions of running the trail in the forest preserve, but developed shin splints on the neighborhood's sidewalks before arriving at the trail-head. Jane invited him to Scranton. He said he couldn’t get the time off work, though later, he ended up taking the very same weekend off to go to Eric’s gig at The Shelter in Detroit.

Eric’s band had gotten the venue after that series of free local concerts over the summer. The energy of the audience was contagious. He pumped his fist and sang along to the parts he knew. His mind skipped to the electric bass in his parents’ basement. He’d have to swing by and take it off their hands. He was going to need it for the band he was forming, The Rockers. No, The Egrets. Yes, The Egrets.

Wendy BooydeGraaff
Kentwood, Michigan
Still Life with Cat
Photograph
Gary Wadley
Louisville, Kentucky
Prize Winning Poems from our Third One Sentence Poetry Contest

Though he didn’t intend it for our One Sentence Poetry Contest, 13th Poet Laureate of The United States, Ted Kooser, sent us this poem. It makes a perfect introduction to the contest’s winning entries.

Official Business

On a desk in a government office stood a mug full of ballpoints in costume, dressed up to look like flowers – zinnias, daisies and asters with floppy plastic petals and stems of improbable colors, and when the documents had been explained and were nudged like a layer of cloud across the great map of the nation flat under the glass, pushed by an elaborately lacquered fingernail dusted with glitter, without a single moment’s hesitation, I found myself plucking a zinnia, a pink one, and clicking its center, and then scrawling the full length of my name with the nearly dry end of a stem.

Ted Kooser
Garland, Nebraska
Objects in the Mirror

He left her the peeling paint and soft rear tire of a ’48 Oliver, its front-end loader sound enough for moving knee deep snow, sheep and goat shit, or the leavings of any stray she might bring home, driving away in the bucket seat of their El Camino, whitewalls drumming over highway expansion joints like so much road kill, the bed shedding oats and hay chaff from Tennessee to Georgia when, top down, he smelled the peaches of a roadside stand and a girl waved so sweetly he was certain he could feel the juice drip from his chin all the way into the swampy dank of Everglades, its mildewed towns and tourist traps sliding from windshield to rearview where the farm lies frozen at 10 below and his wife, in canvas cover-alls, is popping the clutch of the tractor as it rolls down the hill, willing it to start.

Jane Wheeler
Lowell, Michigan

Yo-Yo Ma at the International Bridge

The sun is heating up at the border
In the park beneath the International Bridge
And someone thinks to cover Petunia,
The $2.5 million Montagnana cello fashioned
Nearly three centuries ago in Venice,
With a bright silk scarf as she awaits
The arrival of her Chinese-American master
Born in Paris but breaker of all boundaries
Who comes here to sister cities on two sides
Of the Rio Grande, so close they are called
Laredos, the two Laredos, one Nuevo one not,
Where he will be playing the music composed
By the Kapellmeister of Anhalt, Germany
That will need no translation on either side.

Carol Flake Chapman
Austin, Texas

The family tree
Emmitt still hangs from
has been planted
at the state capital
and it does not thirst
for water.

Krystal Nikol
Detroit, Michigan
We Were Down in the Basement

behind the furnace, spreading the *filberts* (as you called them, not *hazelnuts*)
that we had gathered that damp afternoon
from the mast under your friend’s tree,
arraigning them onto old window screens
so that they would dry
and we could crack and eat them
during the wet Oregonian winter looming ahead;
and even though I was only eight years old
and preoccupied with that new tooth coming in,
I remember that you, Dad—
who had baffled me
by hauling home heavy stacks of punch cards
from those now old-fashioned
main frame computers,
marked with mysterious ones and zeros
and riddled with holes,
paper I was meant to play with—
you suddenly asked me
“Have you ever heard of Shakespeare?”
so I shrugged and said, “Sure, the great poet!”
and you corrected me, citing
your lone college literature class, saying
“Great playwright but mediocre poet;”
and since I was just a kid and you
were a grizzly bear of a man,
I believed you
until I was in college myself,
poring with incredulity
over volume after heavy volume
of the Oxford English Dictionary,
that great tree of knowledge,
that enormous honeycomb
of language, witnessing
the thrilling swarm of words—
so much new gold conjured by one will—
understanding suddenly
both bards and blind spots.

Leslie Schultz
Northfield, Minnesota

On the Way to Tataouine

When camels come down
to the thin line of road skirting
the purple shadowed Atlas Mountains,
stoop splay-legged
on faded pavement,
and swing long brown necks
to drink from mirage-like puddles
left by this morning's showering tease,
our driver stops,
rests his hands in robed lap,
watches and waits as if this delay
is one more call to prayer.

Ann Farley
Beaverton, Oregon
Yokogami-yaburi

is Japanese for tearing paper
against the grain —
like that article you want to keep
but don't wait for scissors
and rip into the story so the gist
is lost, or being stuck at 40
in living-the-dream, left holding the bag
of groceries or laundry or dirty diapers,
so you hide your stretch marks in a one-piece,
toss your hair like Farrah, and smile at strangers
on the beach while the kids make sand castles,
or open a bottle at 10 a.m., or shop for things
you'll hide when you get home so when he asks
in two weeks you can say, “Oh, this old thing,”
or spend the afternoon online with men
who suggest a motel tryst — men whose photos
look suspiciously like the guy on page 34 of GQ —
just to see how far you can tear against the grain
before the gist is lost.

Sarah Russell
State College, Pennsylvania

The Preview

I liked you more
before I met you,
when you were just
a shape bent to the bar,
a foot tapping to music,
a hand reaching for beer,
lips on the verge of a smile.

Rebecca Yancey
Lebanon, Tennessee
Tuesday at Peebles Department Store

It’s Senior Discount Day and I am trying on Pilates pants, the kind with sexy mesh netting on each thigh and so what if I have to tug them on, hard, and so what if my flesh bulges a bit, or sags a bit because I am suddenly seventy and I am not supposed to care about such things because, surely, by now, I am supposed to be mature, a model of sanity and wisdom; vanity should be a relic of the past, yet I suspect there are traces that remain, stubborn, like the last globs of peanut butter that cling to the bottom of the Jiff jar.

Irene Fick
Lewes, Delaware

Delicate Erhu

The Erhu sings with its strings as the lotus delicately creates balance through its growing and swaying but when the Erhu’s string breaks and it curls by the shock of the resistance ending, the lotus bends in sadness realizing it was the Erhu’s music creating the balance and the lotus’s pride of creation is an illusion.

Rivaka Marie
Morillton, Arkansas
Cruising Along

Death is a gangster, just cruising down the boulevard in his black Cadillac with the top down, and it’s a hot day, windless, and who knew he’d be the one to stop and try to pick you up, when you never meant to catch yourself out walking uphill in the act of dying, with no time to wonder whether the short sharp breaths are disease or panic, the veins on your legs bulging and spreading like roots stretching upwards, while the stopping of the jogger whose ‘Can I help you?’ becomes words of alarming kindness that pierce like a bullet, as Death steps onto the sidewalk and lights a cigarette, then leans against the car door, watching.

Hope Hart Petrie
Eugene, Oregon

Mirage

After a deluge, flash flooding in the arroyos, a swarm of white moths settles in the desert willows, awash with pink —

a mirage that has us struggling to discern petals from wings, wings from petals, to find tongues for this sudden wonder.

Jerome Gagnon
Hayward, California
A Life Sentence

You’re stuck here
until you ain’t,
trying to make
the best of a situation
that does not end well,
for all you know,
and you’re supposed
to work hard,
help others, contribute
to the community
and world at large
even though
your body is heading
for a dug hole or a fire
and who knows where after
that,
so you begin
to have second thoughts,
doubts and fears,
nightmares and hesitations
that all you do and say,
all you’ve done and said,
is for naught
though you’ve never
in your life used
the word naught
in a sentence
before this sentence
which only goes to show
that you can learn
new things right up
to the very end.

David James
Linden, Michigan
An Oak Felled by a Storm

The rings across the stump
like a pebble dropped
into an ancient pond
ripple across the ages
until finally washing up
on this morning’s
quiet shore.

William Cullen
Brooklyn, New York

Postcard

Mother,
I thought of you today
as I watched an old croc
gliding in the water,
following our boat
down the Zambezi;

I couldn’t always
see his eyes
but knew he must

have some way of watching,
of knowing, precisely,
which moment was right

for lurching out
and clamping all
his sharp teeth down.

Mark Madigan
Springfield, Virginia
Luminosity

She was moon, her mother explained on the eve of her thirteenth birthday:
the wax and wane of twenty eight,
the Blood and Wolf, Hunter and Harvest,
Sugar, yes, but Blue and Worm as well,
mirrored sun at midnight to illuminate half the earth,
but it would be years until, finding herself full and round with the rise of crescent inside her,
she understood the gravitational pull that moves the oceans.

Jane Wheeler
Lowell, Michigan

Afternoon on Lick Creek Road

Why, when looking down from the deck at the dandelion tufts in the yard
the arabesque of the mulberry stealing sun from the fig
and the cats lolling on laundry blown off the line, does it feel it’d be a shame to
do anything about it?

Ashley Memory
Asheboro, North Carolina
Snapshot

I study you
like a tourist
without a camera
traveling
in a foreign country
whose borders
might close
at any
given moment.

Gloria Heffeman
Syracuse, New York

At a Cafe in Montreal

To escape the blast of blowing sleet,
I take the only available seat
by a bank of steamed-over windows
no one can see out of except
through a few small patches where
the heart-shaped leaves of this
potted oxalis, also known
as the purple love plant, have breathed
against the glass, erasing the steam
so that a little of the weak
winter light might leak in today
and feed us all.

James Crews
Shaftbury, Vermont
The Night Tom Petty Died

In a drizzling rain
beneath a cold and starless sky,
some nine thousand of us
drew together,
in spite of our better judgment,
to warm our outstretched hands
over the communal crackle
of an open-air rock concert,
our collective breath
fogging the night
as ribbons of sound lifted
from the stage below
and turned to smoky echoes
that curled up and away from us
into darkness,
imprinting themselves
on eternity.

Michael Hill
Fort Collins, Colorado

Left

These words are for you, left fielder in the tall grass
at the ballpark’s edge where
minivans nap under
Michigan sun in May,
the evening clouds crawling
above you, distracting
your attention as you
fill your mitt with clippings
and daydream of comic
books and banana splits,
as you gnaw on the wad
of Big League Chew and stay
lost in the real freedom
of a third grader’s mind:

your dad, who just arrived
and now tries to summon
you back to Planet Earth,
will never understand
that you’re not way out there
for the geometry
of the game but instead
to listen to trees dance,
the surrendering light
making your shadow grow
bigger, and years on he
will try to tell you of
that fly ball sailing through
cool air to your glove, how
he just knew you’d catch it.

Kevin Griffin
Plymouth, Michigan
Hearing Distance

Politely clearing
its throat, late day

the summer storm
announces
its approach
to give us time
to go inside
and close the windows,
a courtesy we
would not so fully
appreciate
had we not
ignored it
in the past.

James Toupin
Washington, D.C.

Afternoon Affair

Truly it was a fabulous spoon—
vaulted her right over the moon,

but he was a diddle
not worth a cat’s fiddle—

that mangy cur
laughed, blew her a kiss,
then walked out the door
and ran off with a dish.

Sarah Colby
Windcrest, Texas
Hearken

I sing a psalm of the benevolence of the gods
in the ancient days when the earth was raw,
when rough humans looked up at the darkened skies
and felt the electric fear of a coming storm,
having no shelter but a cave carved by time
into the base of a rocky mountain,
its walls painted with red-black bison
and stamped with prints of human hands,
a cave where the wild animals took shelter, too,
waiting out the rage of the savage storm
until its fury finally calmed,
its stinging rain softened,
its hail quit pelting the soaked ground –
after the painted cave protected
both predators and prey
from the terror of the tempest
and the danger from each other
while they trembled together
in awe of the wrath of the storm –
and the raging storm’s sudden surcease
created a temporary peace,
a peace that granted mercy
to the creatures of the world,
with the wild animals scattering wide
while the rough humans stayed in their shelter,
still,
silent,
mirroring at the miracle
of the clemency of the gods.

Cynthia Pitman
Orlando, Florida
Photograph
J. Ray Paradiso
Chicago, Illinois
Mary Oliver 1935-2019
—in response to Mary Oliver’s I’m Not the River

Now, I am the river
that roiling presence.
I’m the black oak tree—
patience personified.
I am redbird
a brief life heartily enjoyed.
Now I’m mud and rock and sand
holding everything together.
Now, I am all of these things, yes always.

Ahrend Torrey
Covington, Louisiana

End of the Trail Café

Driving through woods, after waterfalls and birds,
we see the sign. Wouldn’t it be nice, you say,
if every trail had a café at the end? Yes, I nod.

A place where all good hikers go eventually. A quiet
establishment with wide windows that look out
on the last waterfall where White-eyed Vireos and

Black-backed Orioles—rarities who never made
our life lists—dart among the long-gone giants,
the towering hemlocks, and the red and willow

oaks and mountain ash. Maybe a barista in white,
pouring coffee for an old man in green slacks, his
hound dog drowsing beneath the table. The famous,
old poet, taking in the view, like she always did, jotting in a notebook the poem to follow her final verse. I think of the backpacker concluding her trek.

The runaway who took that last, treacherous step. The neighbor who ambled off, into the forest, never to be seen again. Our mutual smile turns to a sober glance between us. I keep driving, and silently we agree. This is not the place for us—not yet. Something in the movement of the cool air beneath the trees today, something in sound, the rush and drip of water on and over stone, the taste of rock and pine and mist upon our tongues has closed our mouths to savor it a while. Just before dusk there were two small birds flitting from one side of the stream to the other, too quickly for us to identify in the glen’s dappled shadow, until one landed and signaled with his tail, called to the other who sang out her own name in reply.

David Bauman
Plains, Pennsylvania

White Crane

White crane stands on his right foot. His right wing extends forward, feathers stretching outward beyond his beak. Legs slightly bent, he leans downward. His body slowly rotates left, and his wings follow. He rises erect and raises his left
wing upward to parallel the other. As he rotates to the right, he feels the air press against his relaxed muscles. He pulls the earth’s energy through his feet, into his core, coiling and uncoiling. Then, he spreads his wings.

Kelly Talbot
Indianapolis, Indiana

Someone Left The Ocean Running
And Now The Planet Is Flooded

One day we’ll remember to dim the light we left on near the Pacific.

Beneath the tsunami line, we pretend we’re higher than we need to be

— and happier, holding night instead of a blanket, sand-covered

and misunderstood, we see the Milky Way and hope to find a raft.

Ask me what I think, and I will say art and poetry is what we need

along with flood insurance. Someone is yelling into the waves
as if the waves can hear them.
It doesn’t matter if we’re the endangered

seabird or a common gull, the waves
will be here long after we depart

and the brilliant miles of a generous sea,
the grandmother who smothers us in her arms

—the ocean just wants to embrace us, believing
we’ve been landlocked for far too long.

Kelli Russell Agodon
Poet Ludlow, Washington

Passover Cleaning

Papa never used a candle
Like our forebears in the shtetl
Nor a wooden spoon and feather
Though he did discard the chametz

Sold the liquor at a dollar
To a kindly Catholic neighbor
For repurchase eight days later
(Kosher deals in God’s accounting)

While the rest went to the curb side:
Winter’s stash of chips and crackers
Martyred tins of virgin cookies
Sweets enough to feed a kingdom

Sacrificed like Egypt’s children
All except the bread and muffins
Those we carted to the duck pond
(Under Grandma’s supervision)
Pitched the geese a daylight *seder*
( Named each of those baby fowlets
Matzo balls of tiny goslings)
Let the swans and mallards squabble

Over crusts of Pechter’s rye loaves
Gulping our sins down their gullets
( So I thought at six and seven
Muddling leaven with *Kappores*)

‘Til the town installed a break wall
With a filter for green algae
So we found that *Pesach* morning
No birds—only lifeless ripples

Shocked I stood beside the shoreline
Pockets full of fusty croutons
Swallowing divine betrayal
Faith drowning in shallow water

**Jacob Appel**  
New York, New York

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**Soap: Snow**

Soap: a fresh bar squeezed inside a washcloth becomes thick suds gliding over my belly’s stitches, down between folds of a vulva’s forgotten infancy, down to wrinkly toes that curl tight on a shower mat, trying to prevent the disaster that could leave me stuck in the shower’s warm spray—  
*O Kyrie*— *Lord have mercy* on this body that has carried me this far into today’s unexpected: snow.

**M. J. Iuppa**  
Hamlin, New York
Working Order

Today, I worked the lower pasture,
grubbing out thistle and wild rose.
I’ve had enough of thorns.
Over the last few weeks,
I’ve been splitting and stacking
cordwood, mulching the spruces
with hay gone bad, those bales
put up not dry enough.
I’ve been cleaning the shop,
sharpening teeth on the chainsaw,
sharpening chisels and wood planes.
I’ve put a new handle in the shovel,
a new handle in the axe.

If I can put the wrenches
in proper order, hang the tools neatly,
if I pull the weeds and clean the barn,
spread fresh cedar shavings
in the stalls, maybe I can start
this world spinning again on its axis.
Days ago, I felt it grind slowly
to a stop and the sun has been smoking
in the same place on the horizon
for a couple of days now.
The river keeps rising and rising.
The cattle across the lane bellow.
The mare paces the fence line,
searching for a place to bolt through.

On the porch, I sip a tumbler
of whiskey and dream
of drill bits arranged by size.
I dream that any surface
can be made level and plumb
if I am diligent, meticulous enough.
And when I’m done here,
I’ll go to town with the level,
with the plumb line. I will
right what is tipping,
make plumb all that leans
too far to the right
or to the left.

Chris Dempsey
Middleton, Idaho

Silver Spoon

Your mother, divesting herself of history,
gave each of you a silver spoon with a story
tied round its neck: sterling heirlooms buried
beneath ancestral plantation on the eve
of Mississippi’s Battle of Iuka.

I frame yours atop a fading photo
of the house: two-story columned cliché
of antebellum South. But once it hangs,
you worry that spoon into a Confederate flag,
family relic now a beacon of shining blame.

Shall we melt down silver and remake the past,
mold it into a badge of whitewashed hearts?
No, let us choose to keep it — if not on the wall,
then at least in plain sight — a heaping spoon
of gritted ash, reflecting tarnished light.

Janice Northems
Liberal, Kansas
What’s Left

Nine muses, no prisoners
One silver feather, not the bird it flew in on
A bronze pinecone, no gold medal
One pale green ceramic grasshopper, no mercy
A bottle from France, no tomorrow
A solitary earth-sphere of lapis lazuli, no elf to drink it
One little yellow teapot, no promises
An ancient Chinese fisherman, no time
One teal oroborus, no moon
No gilt, no filigree, ten photographs
of ones you love, no exceptions

Lin Benedek
Marina del Rey, California

Enough

One who wouldn’t go that dark night refused to leave the hollow belly as others scrambled down ladders muscles coiled tight eager for battle, lusting for blood god-like Odysseus in the lead man of twists and turns accused him of being lily-livered but he didn’t believe in killing he didn’t know what lily-livered meant & he didn’t care who won tired of ten years of thin gruel pretending to be stew tired of shivering blankets, a mere boy desperate to sail back to Sparta skipping Sirens & Scylla bypassing Cyclopes & Circe wanting to tend his forty sheep
watch clouds skim the skies &
marry the farmer’s daughter
with broad hips & an easy smile

Claire Scott
Oakland, California

When You Try to Apologize Cento

An iamb in my chest
stretches out of the bed
like a dream drenched in frost
moving out of darkness into patches of light
then back into darkness.

A bluebird in my heart wants to
clutch onto legs, attach to wild birds
as if bones surround thunder’s crack,
swirl blue or red or green
like I’m the only woman on earth.

A sprig of magnolia expands like a secret,
the moon slung away from the earth.
Moth wings marry the air.
A word is but a breath of passing air,
your apology small enough to swallow.

Laurie Kolp
Beaumont, Texas

Cento Credits: L1- Traci Brimhall, Dear Eros; L2- Aleida Rodríguez, The Invisible Body; L3- John Unterecker, Midwinter; L4&5- John Unterecker, Hospital; L6- Charles Bukowski, Bluebird; L7- Lucy Chau Lai-Tuen, China is Not a Good Place to Be a Bird; L8- Steven Sanchez, Califia; L9- Mary Hickman, Still Life with Rayfish; L10- Kim Addonizio, What Do Women Want?; L11- Ocean Vuong, Aubade with Burning City; L12- Kim Addonizio, Wine Tasting; L13- Naomi Shihab Nye, Burning the Old Year; L14- Letitia Elizabeth Landon, The Power of Words; L15- Natalie Crick, Blue Water
Floodplain Forest

The wind in the cottonwoods sounds like rain before the rain, as if from growing beside the river they have learned its language, translating the sound of water into leaves and air. The roots push into silt, the branches reach to the silt-colored sky. The river, when it widens and slows, becomes a mirror, a transcription of cottonwoods and clouds. At the top of a cottonwood, herons rise in waves from raft-like nests on wings the color of silt and sky. Wind squalls through the leaves. The woods are drenched in sound.

Robert Hardy
Nothfield, Minnesota

On Being Third

In the beginning, creation was divided into twos:

Adam & Eve, the birds & the bees,

God & humanity, good & evil.

The twos cancelled each other out, creating the need for a third.
The third was despised,  
& denied the right to exist.

Born late, the third became  
a progenitor of all misfits  
rebels, dissidents,  
an entire alien class  
who neither marry  
nor procreate  
who reject monogamy’s  
duality, who oppose  
the doubleness of  
every social order.

This third clashed with  
every monotheism.

Its existence was adjourned  
until another dispensation emerged.

Thirdness became a crime.  
Then God surrendered & permitted the third  
to subsist under constant  
surveillance, so long as it  
would be hidden since the foundation  
of the world  
& no one would suspect  
its existence.

Rebecca Gould  
Ashland, Oregon
Transit
Photograph
Gary Wadley
Louisville, Kentucky
Featured Poet: Jennifer A. McGowan
Didcot, United Kingdom

Having obtained her MA and PhD from the University of Wales, Jennifer A. McGowan has published poetry and prose prolifically on both sides of the Atlantic, including in *The Rialto* and *Pank* (and many places online), despite being certified as disabled at age 16. She has won the Geoff Stevens Memorial Prize and been highly commended in many other competitions. Jennifer’s chapbooks are available from Finishing Line Press; her latest collection, *With Paper for Feet*, is from Arachne Press (UK) https://bit.ly/2Tuw2bd.

Introduction:
Revisionism is a passion of mine. Revision sees a tale again, but differently. Often this means bringing liminal viewpoints and characters to the fore—and in my work, this often means giving otherwise silent women a voice. My latest book, *With Paper for Feet* (link above), retells and re-sees a number of stories, myths, and characters. “For Aodh, a sequence” follows these precedents, drawing its characters from Greco-Roman myth.

I am also involved with medieval re-enactment—the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) among other groups. I hold the view, somewhat contentious, that just as creative anachronism means you can, if you so wish, use a machine for seaming cloth and not use hand snips for cutting steel, formal poetry need not conform exactly to the form it took in, say, the 15th century to be valid. Sonnets in particular are a living, evolving form, as the shape-shifting, Forward Prize-winning collection *Sonnets* by Don Paterson demonstrates (one of his sonnets is fourteen words, one per line). My friend Aodh is a brilliant sonneteer, but prefers tradition. My sonnet sequence thus starts with a perfectly traditional Petrarchan sonnet, then through the sequence, modifies form, vocabulary, rhyme, and theme, to see exactly how much violence I can enact upon them and still have them be recognisable. (He cried, then cursed and hugged me. I win.)

As for the other two, my poetry group in Oxford has a motto: *Never let the truth get in the way of a good poem*. I do sleep with the windows open, and my parents have welcomed me to their house, in which I have never lived, but the rest is invention, which, on its own, can be a form of truth.

Best wishes,
Jennifer
The Boy Who Went Back to Singapore

I was reborn to the taste of your skin
that June when we collided,
as if by accident, at university,
after some meeting or other
we’d both slept through, waking
with imprints of the other on our faces.

Summer was a long, thin bedroom
with open windows and those
damn pigeons trying to get in.
You changed the sheets once a week
thinking, you said, of your mother

whom you took me to see
in December. We talked through days;
our slow, lazy breaths wrapped
around us, burned my skin
a colour closer to the sun.

In the anaemic north
my father died, anchored me
to a lifetime of paperwork
and anger management. I growled
at you, snarled
I was a bloody adult now.

Last year your Facebook message
made me cry. You sent all your love,
sent pictures of your daughter.

I print your emails, turn them
into poetry. I think of you
every time I light up
in this pale gray town. I sleep
naked by open windows in December,
and I sweat.
The House You Never Lived In

Your bed always was the guest bed.  
Here in the house you never lived in,  
you are the guest. You lie awake  
in the same bed and stare at the view  
you never had; play with the electric blanket;  
lie in wait at the feeder to see hummers at dawn.

Everything is not quite. The bed faces  
the wrong direction. The switch is on  
the wrong side of the door. Old, strange things are  
here, evoking you—yearbooks, old letters,  
cheques for accounts that have nothing in them.  
At five in the morning you read them all avidly,  
till a push on your phone reminds you of flight  
and you get in the car, forgetting your coat, which  
only fits the person you used to be, after all.

1. Daphne

She runs ahead; she’s in his sights again,  
the much-desired quarry of his dreams.  
So long ago—so long ago, it seems,  
the last light hand bent to his need like rain.  
What is this one’s name? He swears he knew it,  
but memory’s now subsumed into the chase.  
Blood pounds. All of him rises to the race;  
it matters more to him than he’ll admit.

Another day, another god, she finds,  
and sighs. Which god doesn’t matter any more.  
She runs to be still, feet fleet off the mark—  
she has no obligation to his kind.  
A breath ahead, she pauses, summons lore,  
and smiles a leafy smile. His mouth meets bark.
2. Callisto

I dream of a vast man with a bear’s head.
Egyptian, possibly. Also, there are
the poems on the walls, and a map of stars,
as on a nursery ceiling. I read
them but they make no sense. Nor do the lines,
like Nasca woven through the heart of them
all, in ununified mazes. Me, them,
him, circles. Sometimes I ignore the signs
and try to jump up into his man’s arms
to be carried far from here. I’d ignore
the fur caught in my teeth, the bloody sky
of kisses strewn behind. All love is harm.

Tell me when I’m awake that there is more
than this. How high he will lift me. How high.

3. Echo

I pour myself into the thought of you
having lived my every day in thought of me,
like any narcissist. (One day I asked the sea,
with thoughts of self alone, what I should do
should I (I did) wish it to consider
me when I was home again. “Who are you,”
asked the sea, “that you think I think of you
at all?” As it spoke, a dim white feather
drifted to my feet. (That’s not important now.
Nor is, I think you’ve guessed, what is “pure” or “true”
or any abstract thing, excepting you,
the single thing I need.) I shall allow
only thoughts of carnal beauty. As it stands,
you complete me when you’re bare in my bare hands.
4. Sulis

She says, “We are the water, you and I, meeting and parting, breaths combined as one in moaning crescendo. No need to atone for past lovers or loves. Leave them behind and let us live and love. We’ll dive in deep, through all my secret caverns—those I show and those I don’t. Taste me. Begin to know all the important things. Passion. Sex. Keep pursuing each of my forms and faces. All we are and all that we will surely be will rush, and teem, and eddy. Drink me. More isn’t off limits. Gulp me like air. Fall.”

She hooks me. What I only want, I see, in want replete; in wanting, wanting more.

5. Danaë

I’m hiding, curled up and horizontal, in the slow summer heat. Taking only prescriptions by mouth. However gaily food is presented, I’m always fearful it hides him in some form or another. Sometimes he visits me while I’m asleep; fighting against him is stumbling up steep hills of knives. It’s not just that he is Other, but that I am mine, alone. I wish no hand I do not desire to caress my skin. I have yet to meet one. So I endure my isolation. Echoes of his hand always haunt me, and his laugh. Here within I rock myself to nothing on the floor.
Burial (Tenerife)

Photograph

SEIGAR

Puerto de la Cruz, Spain
Cadre

On Fridays, I drive
a ginger-haired friend to work
another restaurant gig we landed
years before his first DUI,
and for ten minutes, we trade
tales of our aging parents,
their homes and bodies failing,
forgetting how they once told us
we could be anything, our promise,
rusted as my red pickup that rumbles
into this back-lot where air reeks
of grilled meat and dried sweat,
where busboys on break light
one stale smoke off another
and a cook rubs his last dime
over a stack of instant-wins.
Tonight, what we’ve come to bear
beneath chandeliers built of driftwood
will be those bad dreams
of endless loads and slick floors
suffered until we wake,
bone-tired and thirsty.
Come mid-winter, my weariness
a mouthful of *motherfucker*

spit when my truck gets trapped
in the driveway’s icy grooves,

and like a child in tantrum,
all I can do

is rock my body
and spin the wheels into a cry.

Fred Shaw
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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**Hell Yes**

The two of us were collecting bit coins,
arranging them in electronic piles, like

coins you’d see on the money-counting table,
First National Bank, c. 1959.

We had a lot of capital there and then
unexpectedly Frank’s hard-drive crashed—

his stash went with it, as he wasn’t doing
the cloud thing—he liked the metaphoric

jingling of coins in a pocket you could
only get when it was stored in text
files or whatever, on your desktop. Anyway, he was half expecting it, I think,

and welcomed it even, like a sentence finally handed down—you know you’ve got your fifteen years or whatever. Me, I’m still in the money, sweet spot burning a hole in the cloud.

Every morning I get up and realize it’s a new day, like an airplane passing overhead.

Hell yes I say out loud, and I hope your hear it, a jiggle in your wireless router,
a frayed cable somewhere making amends.

Mark Simpson
Clinton, Washington

Postcard from San Diego

Today I wanted to learn the language of water and air, how to understand the whisper in saltwater sprayed from the crest of a wave, the drops briefly flashing in the wind like the dying blaze of a single star.
It sounded like the promises we tell each other, the ‘always’ and the ‘nevers’ that don’t live to see the light. I wanted to answer back, say I know how it feels to live in that space on the horizon that turns a soft white-gray before the sun rises and burns it all away. I know how it feels to live only in the twilight.

Laura Thorp
Lexington, South Carolina

Building the Boat

I could always tell when another board had broken. My father would storm from the shed swearing profusely, sawdust powdering his hair, smudged safety glasses askew.

I would sneak in through the open door of his wood shop in his absence, tucking myself in a corner amid mahogany shavings and old paintbrushes hardened with epoxy.

I beheld the birth of the boat in stolen glimpses: first a skeleton, hollow and ribbed like a whale; next the steamed planks curved into a shell covered in dust and pencil markings;

lastly the gleaming hull cured with resin so shiny I could see my wide eyes staring back at me.

After five years, the final weeks were filled
When A Friend Talks About Pants

he gave to Goodwill,
I recollect a photo
of Daddy in olive green,

field cap down
over his recon haircut,
under the hood

with the motor’s sputtering and my father’s mumblings
about the trailer, rudder, propeller, and launch
on Coventry Lake. The night before,

he woke me from sleep and brought me to the shed,
blinking in the brightness from a bare light bulb.
He put his hands under my arms and lifted me up

onto the emerald leather seats, then swung himself
over the gunwale next to me. Among the dust eddies,
he guided my hands to the cold steel of the steering wheel,
cupped his callused hands over his mouth,
and cawed like a seagull until I was bent over giggling.
In the shadows cast in the corners of the shed,

he pointed out a lighthouse, a ferry,
a dock in the distance that seemed so close
I could feel my toes curl over its edge.

C. M. Donahue
Ellington, Connecticut
Hummingbird

She once loved watching the ruby-throated glow through glass, though someone else fills feeders now, and she can no longer see whirling wings, the jeweled miracles humming along an invisible string. You and your sisters flutter about, whispering. A mother grown old, living alone: it’s a problem.

Sight gone, memory fading, she still regales us with tales of mixing martinis and gossip at parties, or family camping in the ‘62 wagon with its tailgate tent. The past glows: nine decades
of nested gold. It’s today’s timetable she’s lost
her grasp on, memory’s wings flapping faster
and faster to land amid tangled branches.

And in these late days, she hums. No tuneful
bird song, but an automated drone, subconscious
om driving all she does. You try teasing her
out of it, and she laughs but can’t seem to stop.
The hum goes on, like a bat’s echolocation guiding
her twilight flight — or the heart’s audible protest —
each breath an exhaled fury counting down time.

Janice Northems
Liberal, Kansas

Little Stories

An old man now
I have given up
Careers I never had –
Family metaphysician
Venture socialist
Ping pong pro

I have discarded
Awards and honors
I never received –
Black belt, gold medal, blue ribbon
World champ
Rookie of the year
Best in show

But I have kept
My #2 Ticonderoga pencils
And my Silver Star Five Subject
Learning to be Still

After Miss Kayla snips the last stray hairs from my son's forehead, sprays him with watermelon mist, dusts him with glitter, as if she were his fairy godmother, I think of haircuts my dad used to give in the kitchen on Union Street, how he draped an old sheet across my shoulders, told me to *sit still* because I wouldn't stop twitching my nose or kicking my legs, how my bangs were always uneven for school pictures. I remember

Student Notebook
Close at hand
And ready for action
So that I can write down the little stories
Happening all around me
All the time,
For example
That blizzard of intoxicated robins
Swirling about the neighbor’s large pyracantha bush just now
Madly stuffing themselves
With fermenting berries
And raising a right old ruckus,
Happy drunks reminding us
That it is not such a bad idea
To cut loose from time to time
And rejoice for all we’re worth

Buff Whitman-Bradley
Fairfax, California
the time he drew blood when he nicked my neck with the clippers, the scuff of his knuckles trembling against my cheek as he cleaned up behind my ear, how he tenderly dabbed the red with a cool rag, saying he was sorry, which froze me stiff. Then Miss Kayla says she is done, swivels him on the chair so he giggles. She shows him his new look in the mirror and brings her face down close to his, making him squirm even more. So what do you think? she asks, and I don't have the heart to tell her that it's wrong, all wrong.

Robert Fillman
Macungie, Pennslyvainia

A Matter of Timing

“Everybody go to the bathroom,” my father would command when we were getting ready to end a visit with the grandparents – one whole hour from home. “But Dad, I don’t hafta,” was not an acceptable response.

I remember this today, standing in front of the toilet trying to coax my bladder into action prior to heading out for the drug store, barely twenty minutes there and back. Though none of us kids ever peed
in our pants on the ride home –
even when we faked going
by flushing a pristine bowl of water –
I know now that Dad’s caution was wise …
if six decades early.

Rick Blum
Bedford, Massachusetts

Recipe for Hope

turn off the computer
and cell phone
close your eyes
and picture the smile
of your very first love

eat seven cookies
and one piece of fruit
along with a bowl
of your favorite cereal
sprinkled with either
cinnamon
or chocolate chips

walk one mile
in any direction
then walk back

draw this picture
a large tree with cars and fish
as leave
and a sun above wrapped
as a present
in the sky
and then sit in any room
for 59 minutes
imagining what your
life would be like
if every wish
you ever had
came true

David James
Linden, Michigan

Jeremiad

You took me to tide pools where sun sneaks in and we crushed shells into dust. I never wanted to hurt you. But you left me there, swept me away like dust.

The desert: scorched ground cracked like the mirror in my room. You took pictures of yellow wildflowers, but the storm came and smothered them, left our teeth black with dust.

You grew up with hate bursting from your ribcage like weeds — abandoned. It’s okay to want to tear out their throats, grind them under your shoe. Make them taste the dust.

Graveyard wet from a summer storm. I was drenched, glistening grass clinging to bare feet squelching in mud. I visit you, change out rotted flowers, but you are still dust.

It rings but I cannot answer. When will it stop? Answer the phone, Maddy, it’s not that hard. But my hands reaching for the singing bomb crumble into dust.

Madison Garey
Washington, D. C.
Fontanka Icebreak, St. Petersburg, Russia

Photograph

Diane M`artin
Bangor, Maine
Church Fire

I spotted the smoke from a half mile away, fat pillar of soot rising over the husks of strip malls and the bones of machine shops like an upraised fist. From the parking lot, I watched the flames take the chapel, bricks going black, the steeple toppling onto the front steps like a villain in a movie who has just earned a bullet in the gut, that drunken stagger before pitching forward. To live is to burn, one way or another. Danger announces its arrival in frantic huffs: the air it needs is never enough. From within the swirling cocoon of fire, the building released the deathly groan of a creature at peace with its imminent passing, and I, with ash-laden tongue and skin heat-stung, stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the local parishioners, their faces as blank as the sky after a tantrum of rain, as if realizing that not even god is safe from what He has made, that anything can evaporate, even the self. Now here came the singed rafters, crashing down, a bouquet of embers that scurried through the brackish air the way you’d imagine a crowd might scatter from calamity: in all directions, limbs flailing as they hunt for cover.

Jeremy Griffin
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
Leaf Blowing at Eight in the Morning

Can you imagine Glenn Gould letting them come roaring across his neighbor’s lawn before he’s neatly folded his striped pajamas, laid them flat in his fine maple bureau? Of course you can’t. Only if the motorcycle sounding engines pause from lifting each leaf three feet into the air, only then can you hear the soft welcome of the bells of St. Peter’s calling to mass those who do not need to be at work, who joyfully hang by a Pope’s thread. Then the finale—the tectonic plate shift of your ear wax as the madness of the mulching machine sucks the pile into the black hole of the truck, the last hope of a quiet opening to the day now droned into this lack of any variation. Time and again it’s this dissonant dawn that draws you into the moment when your eyelids, rising mute, hold their last squint against the realization that you who will take, eat the English muffin, sip from this cup of dark roasted coffee, will again today get to walk your dog.

Jack Ridl
Douglas, Michigan
Apologies To The Dead

butterfly from our bones
unexpectedly. We hang like a spider
swaying in a breeze,
moved, still
tethered to a past web. There is
always something more
in the closet of death,
overlooked in the corner like last
year’s spectator pumps,
always some missed conversation,
some shawl of words
we could have placed upon you
before you went
out into the world,
out into snow declaring itself king
or rain, slant, snarling.
Crazy precipitation always waited.
Wolf-like.
What waits outside,
waits inside. The same hunger
tracks us through each empty,
emptying
room, as we deconstruct,
pack tables & chairs,
bibles & bookcases,
re-arrange dust to dust,
surging in the urge to be
collected, shiny once again &
just when we think we’re clean,
a smear of sadness streaks the windows
when the plain truth of a white butterfly flutters by.

Rose Maria Woodson
Oak Park, Illinois
A Good Number

The next morning I discovered among the scrabble of ash branches and pine limbs in the yard an odd-looking bit of equipment the size of carry-on luggage. At first I thought it was a piece of Samsonite or Travelers Club, that maybe the storm had reached up and ripped open the cargo bay of an Airbus, launching like bombs someone’s load of unlaundered undies, maybe some guy’s boxers printed with goofy Valentine hearts or cupids that his girlfriend—or wife, these days—had sent to him when he was stationed overseas in order to remind him of all that was waiting back home. Maybe a National Guardsman.

But when I looked closer, there was nothing at all suitcase-like about the thing, other than it being the approximate size and shape of a carry-on, one of those wheeled jobs you’d be asked to check at the jet ramp on commuter flights. It had no latches or straps and seemed to be made of some metallic composite or titanium. No handles. Only an old-fashioned crank-like thing projecting from one side—the kind you’d see in movies about early film-making, like those silent meta-cinematic jobs where you see the director stamping and waving and the dialogue card shows “Cut! Cut!” but the camera guy just keeps cranking away and the tempo of the ragtimey music picks up . . .

That kind of crank.

I nudged it with my rake, and then my boot, and then two-handed the thing (with my gloves on, of course!) so as to flip it over, thinking that maybe it was upside down and I’d have a better idea of what it was if I could see the other side. But the box was either unmercifully weighted or else embedded in the yard to such an extent that I was worrying only the tip of the iceberg, so to speak. It wouldn’t budge.

So I tried the crank. Clockwise, it resisted. Counterclockwise, however, the wooden dowel-like grip on the cast-iron handle gave a bit, and then seemed to catch a gear or something and began rotating, though with obvious friction. It made a whirring sound. I felt awkward, cranking counterly, what with this right-thinking world’s tendency for everything to be directed rightwise—clock faces and power tools and jar lids and the like—and for a moment I questioned the logic of it, whether or not it had anything to do with the direction the
earth spun. Whether gravity—or something—compelled us human beings to think right. But then the whirring sound coming from the box sought my attention, not to mention that the handle seemed to be getting warm from the resistance to my cranking. I could feel it through my glove.

So I stopped. And then tried clockwise again, figuring that maybe the fall had caused a malfunction—if the box had in fact dropped from the sky, like a piece of aeronautic machinery, or some factory gadget or farm implement redistributed by the storm—the minor kind of malfunction that a little backwards cranking would ameliorate. But it resisted my pressure.

So I cranked the crank counterwise again, faster this time, fast enough (I thought) to generate electrical impulses of the sort you see in those classic movies when the stranded heroine finds her way to a farmhouse with an antique phone on the kitchen wall and she cranks it to ring the switchboard. There was more whirring, but nothing else.

Finally, I decided it would be best to simply report it to the authorities, so I left it in the yard and went in the house to dial 9-1-1. The operator dispatched me to the sheriff’s office. The sheriff gave me a phone number for TSA.

“Good,” said a man’s voice, when I finally got through the options. “We’d wondered what happened to it when it wasn’t where we’d thought it would be after the storm. You say it’s in your yard?”

I answered in the affirmative and gave him the address.

“Okay,” he said. “We’ll get a crew out there as soon as we can. But it may take a while. The storm kind of maxed us out.”

“I understand,” I said.

“In the meantime,” said the voice, “whatever you do, don’t touch the mechanism.”

“The mechanism?” I asked. My fingers gripped the phone more tightly.

“The thing that looks like a crank,” he said. “Don’t touch it at all.”

“The crank?” I said.

“The crank,” repeated the man. “You know what I’m talking about.”

“Uh,” I said, my voice practicing ignorance, “and what happens if—?”

“You didn’t, did you?” asked the man.

“But what if—?”

“You did.” It was not a question this time.
“Sort of.”
“Counterclockwise?” said the man. Clearly, he knew more than what he was telling me.
“Yeah.”
I could hear other voices in the background, as if they were talking on other phones, like a call center. “And what happened?” asked the man, after a pause.
“Oh, something happened,” said the man. “Just not to you.”
“What?” I said.
“—Unless it was damaged by the storm,” he continued. “For everyone’s sake, I hope that’s what we’re talking about here.”
“Better you didn’t know,” said the man. He seemed to be rustling papers. “I’ll get back to you. Is this a good number?”

It’s been weeks now, and he hasn’t returned my call. Nobody’s come. And while I’d like to dismiss the lapse as bureaucratic oversight or government negligence, when I tried the TSA number a second time, the connection rang and rang and never even went to messaging. Which is what the sheriff said happened to him as well. So I’ve cleaned up the yard around the thing, and if a crew doesn’t show up soon, I’ll plant some flowers or shrubs to hide it.

I spin the handle every so often. The whirring sound is the same, yet there’s no evidence that anything else happens, beyond the friction of my conscience when I question what I might be doing when I crank the crank—especially after I was warned not to. Still, nothing seems to change, that I’m aware, and what possible harm could I be causing if I have no knowledge of it?

I plan to ask, of course, if someone ever comes. And if it turns out that I have done something terrible, something unimaginable, I’ll just claim that I didn’t know. From what I understand, ignorance is 90% of the law in these cases. Grounds, even, for acquittal.

Phillip Sterling
Lowell, Michigan
Tortoise
Photograph
Diane Martin
Bangor, Maine
INSIDE/OUT LITERARY ARTS PROJECT FEATURE

By immersing students in the joy and power of poetry and literary self-expression, InsideOut inspires them to think broadly, create bravely and share their voices with the wider world. Guided by professional writers and celebrated by publications and performances, youth learn that their stories and ideas matter and that their pens can launch off the page into extraordinary lives.

You can help give Detroit’s children the joys of reading, writing and bringing their creative spirit into the world by supporting InsideOut, a 501(c)(3) corporation.

Visit InsideOut online at: www.insideoutdetroit.org

The Project is supported by gifts of corporations and people who hope to light the creative spark in our youth. Readers of Third Wednesday who see the fire burning in these young poets can help with donations sent to:

    InsideOut Literary Arts Project
    5143 Cass Ave., Room #225
    WSU — State Hall
    Detroit, MI  48202

InsideOut places professional writers and poets in Detroit schools to help children give voice to their often turbulent lives through poetry and writing. Since 1995, the organization has served tens of thousands of Detroit students grades K-12 in over 100 different schools. This year they are serving 27 different schools.

InsideOut works with a variety of schools, partner organizations, and artists to help inner-city schoolchildren find their inner voices with which to express themselves and share their stories, which they then do at performances and events presented by InsideOut.
If the World Is Without

In a world without flowers.
In a world without red pandas.
In a world without turtles.
In a world without owls.
In a world without salamanders.
In a world without songbirds.
In a world without weasels.
In a world without moles.
The world would be like
we don't have a spine or bones.
The world would be like a movie
that doesn't show pictures.
The world would be like a king
that doesn't have a chair.
Think about a world
that does not have clean water.
Think about a world
that does not have a king and queen.
What's a bee without flowers?
What's a person without food and
something to drink?

Amariana Diaz

You

You are a cloud that
falls and goes into school
and turns into a book
that everybody likes
to read forever and ever.

Calen Hickman

The Lovedrops

The lovedrops
make
kids
fall in
love when the
sky
falls. Love kids
that shall
not be known.

Calen Hickman

You Will Get Burnt

I shine like
a star
that's in space
in the
sky at night.
I am
green and I am
hot and
fiery. If you
touch me
you will get burnt
and cry.

Calen Hickman
Every Word Was Once an Animal

The word "sweet" was once a flamingo drinking water from the ocean.

The word "salty" was once a white bunny eating a juicy carrot.

The word "black" was once a bat flying in the night sky with his mom.

The word "white" was once a horse running through a canyon at night.

Danna Carbajal-Martinez

What If

What if we lived in a city full of slime or glitter?

What if everyone was made of gold coins?

Instead we live in a plain and basic city.

Instead we're made of skin and blood.

Camila Murillo

I Didn't Feed My Fish

I didn't feed my fish because
the Easter bunny put me in an Easter egg.
I got stuck in a giant flower.
I turned into a raging dinosaur.
I lost my wonderful hands.
I shrunk down to the size of an ant.
I froze in Antarctica and stayed there until a giant microwave warmed me up.

Danna Carbajal-Martinez
In the Zoo of My Imagination

I see a red panda doing gymnastics.
I see a zebra having a party with his friends.
I see a rhino dancing to "Turn Down for What."
I see a blue bird twerking.
I hear a gorilla pounding on his chest.
I hear a butterfly singing.
I hear a monkey jumping from tree to tree.
I hear a dolphin saying "Come swim with me."
I went ice skating with a penguin.
I spun on the ice with a zebra.
In the zoo of my imagination
I can pet a lion when he is sleeping
so he won't bite my hand.
I will swim with the penguins and they will love me.
I will draw all the animals.
I will feed the birds some lovely food.
I will bounce on a gorilla's belly.
I will go write a poem

Amariana Diaz

On the First Day of the New World

On the first day of the new world
I would want to plant a poem.
I would want to walk on water.
On the first day of the new world
I would want to sleep on the moon.
I would want to swim with the sharks.
On the first day of the new world
I would want to be a worm to make tunnels
to make the rain go down to the plants' roots.
Or maybe I would want to water a poem
or maybe I would want to be a bee
to make honey for the people.

Christopher Gonzalez
The Weekend Balls Party
Photograph
SEIGAR
Puerto de la Cruz, Spain
3rd

Wednesday