

LOU LIT REVIEW

THE LITERARY JOURNAL AT LOUISBURG COLLEGE

HUMANITIES DIVISION

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LOU LIT REVIEW

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LOU LIT REVIEW

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Lou Lit Review is the international literary magazine at Louisburg College in rural Northeastern North Carolina. The focus of *Lou Lit Review* is on place-based works of experience. At the same time, the content featured in *Lou Lit Review* solely reflects the artistry of its contributors and is not representative of the beliefs, opinions or perspectives of Louisburg College, its alumni, partners or affiliated entities.

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EDITORS' NOTE

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *Lou Lit Review*, the annual literary journal of Louisburg College. It seems prescient that *Lou Lit* would appear for the first time in the spring, a brand-new endeavor that we believe represents some of the best work of emerging and well-established writers. What you will find in the following pages includes poetry, flash fiction and book reviews from local, national, and international writers including artists from Benin, Croatia, the Bahamas, the UK, and Northeastern North Carolina, interspersed throughout with the visual artwork of Louisburg College students.

Our editorial team is a collective of Louisburg College students, faculty, and staff and we have chosen 25 writers whose work is distilled from the hundreds of submissions we received over the last year. You will find selections like Grant Price's short story "Stacking the Bales" that illustrates our interdependence across generations and Shane Benjamin's, "I Am Home" that reminds us that though it may be far removed from us, we all hold a map of home in our heart. These selections and the others you will encounter are representative of the quality and variety of work *Lou Lit* hopes to publish for years to come.

Over the past year, we have received support and assistance from several patrons without whom this journal would not exist. We would like to thank Louisburg College for its generous funding, in addition to all of our subscribers who took a leap of faith. Finally, we are particularly grateful to Rob Greene, the founder and editor of *Raleigh Review*, who has graciously guided us through this process and for whose expertise and patience, we are eternally thankful.

Lou Lit is still "becoming" and we are not quite sure what we are as of yet. What we do know is that we will continue to publish writers whose work represents the complexity of the human condition and makes us want to read on.

Tampathia Evans, co-editor
Tommy Jenkins, co-editor
Lou Lit Review

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Visual Art created at Louisburg College

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JESSICA MEHTA

SHANTI

If not for California
stops, we never
would have arrived. Not here,
where they spray pheromones
as we enter and tell us
He's so worth it. His heart
was too big, made an orchestra
of murmurings. It overpowered
everything, una corda to his voice tiny,
his scream silent. Almost,
we almost named him Edvard,
decided that was too cruel. Next,
it was Jagat (universe). He cradled galaxies
in his eyes. Of course

his heart is too big.
Can't you feel it? It bangs
a climax into your palm
pulling him out
of the oversized cage.
An opening drum roll of an act
while Helix Nebula spreads in wonder,
a maestro without a baton.

JESSICA MEHTA

HOW TO TALK TO THE DYING

I looked up *What to say
to the dying* because words
get stuck in my hands. There's no good
answers. You died the same

way our father did, yellow
skin and lion eyes. What do you say

to your sister out

on the reservation? *I love you,*
that's it. Your husband told me

you smiled and poured
your own *Love*
you back into me

all the way down
through the wires. The voice

deep, dark and foreign
like a strangers' always is.

ERICA HOFFMEISTER

THE ONE AND ONLY

is the only bar from Mesquite to Cedar City, hidden off Main Street between twenty-dollar motels and a gas station parking lot. In this Mormon town two hours north of the Vegas strip, we only sell beer; the whisky seeps through red clay cracks and evaporates into Utah blue air before it can make it to Kanab. It's antiquated and desolate. The only town that will feed you California burgers, though, so it's worth the rhinestone souvenir shops and tacky desert themed architecture, everything blending reds. Or at least that's what the locals will tell you. But this isn't a story about locals.

Every few months they come in, fresh glow off of flushed faces from the neon lights of the Palms Motel. Giggling over its nonsensical sign that reads "Swim Pool," leading guests to nothing but a cement crater of rain-slick tools and chain link fence. They make plans for summer, February rot swept under carpets by eleven. This time her hair is short to her scalp and bleached blonde.

His, always the same; unmasked obsession spiraling from his tendrils. His eyes never finding me or anyone else but her. He orders another small pitcher of Pabst Blue Ribbon, and I'll pocket a big tip. By the second or third pitcher, the denim stares of regulars will have softened into smiles. From California to Colorado, they'll meet in the middle. Calm their nerves with a backpack full of tall cans to hike the Dixie with ribcages bursting. That's how she looks tonight: bursting. The corners of her lips are tucked back into her teeth, the pores in her forehead open and willing. She can't escape it: 250 miles of road between her and home and it's all across her chest.

They'll finish their beers over filler words and finger webs, his long legs astride around her waist, her laugh catching in his mouth. There hasn't been a love like this for some time, I think. Not in a desert pickpocketed by cowboys and tourists, drug addicts and religious fanatics. And: two lost lovers, drawn together across dotted borderlines and highway signs, just to meet here.

They say Saint George is the Dixie of Utah, whatever that means. Hot summers. Mild winters. The gateway to heaven. Red cliffs and sage scent in the underbrush has kept me here for years later than I intended. I hear the Mojave in her voice, smell the altitude in the way he draws his breath. In a thousand dead towns I'd search for what he hides in her shoulders. It's the only bar for miles, here—

And you: a voyeur soul lost on the roads of Zion.

SHANE BENJAMIN

I AM HOME

-After George Ella Lyon

I am from balmy breezes and tamarind trees
from conch shells and potcakes howling
to the sound of rake and scrape
I am from the bicameral legislature
under the statues of Columbus and Victoria
a reminder that oppression always is stalking
tasting like gooseberries that sour the palate
but replenishes spit.

I am from the burning bush,
the liturgical bishop whose long robes
I remember holding as a page boy
as if they were my own.

I am from mommy and daddy
from brothers 8 and sisters 3
I'm from the Tract and the public school,
from "the Priory" and "the Monastery."

I'm from Bain Town and Over-the-Hill
cracking a mischievous smile erupting
from troubling inquisitiveness
that wanders from right to center then left
into libraries and detentions and ganja fields...then up...
up skirts and into shady bars...waiting...
and waiting to pass through the hole-in-the-wall
in the middle of the night
when she turns off her room light
which forestalls yet betrays my arrival.

I'm from the Cinema and the Savoy,
the Capitol and the Dundas and the Doubloon
Son-et-Lumiere and Balls Alley, Centreville and
Saunders Beach where the salted air mingles with the
waft of piss from the cases of consumed Becks by
Junkanoo drummers, cowbellers, saw scrapers,
and buglers who massage my ears and jack my spirit.



Diego Poole | Under Pressure | 2016
Created at Louisburg College in the Hodges Fine Art
Complex under the direction of Will Hinton.

TRISTAN DURST

YELLOWSTONE

“That thing has thingees on it!” I exclaim looking out the window of the van Uncle Scott has rented to squire us around the park, going so far to throw up my hands, *Amen, hallelujah* style, into the air for emphasis.

The thing in question a moose, the first I’d ever seen outside the pages of a book, almost of the same height as the antiseptic white FBI surveillance transport, ours for the next 11 hours. The thingees were tufts and hunks of winter fur, hanging and wobbling on the beast’s flanks, trying to shed themselves in the heat of mid-May. They looked like monkeys to me, these clumps of pelt, jostling along on the moose’s side. Vagabond monkeys, hitch-hiking to Old Faithful, scrabbling for purchase.

These are the sentiments I want to express to my father’s family. I want to be witty and clever, worth the effort of renting this van and hiring a guide to point out the more interesting rock formations, costs Uncle Scott wouldn’t let my father share.

The year I turned 21, Grandma paid to fly us out, she wanted the whole family to be together. She never said, “Before I die,” but the phrase hung in the air after every meaningful pause.

“I’m so happy to have you all back under my roof.”

I want these people, this family I don't know, to like me. I want them to like my mother, who stole my father away from Utah and his siblings and his religion. I want them to be happy to have us, to see how well we fit in with the related multitudes whose names I cannot keep straight, even now, four days into the trip. I want them to adore us, and to be sorry when we are gone.

And I desperately want that too, almost more than anything else: to be gone from this place. To go back to my home, that is not this dizzying mountainous landscape full of people who say *shucks* and *heck* and drink decaf. I want sweet tea and miles upon miles of flat green land meeting the empty blue sky. I want the claustrophobic crush of a dive bar, not the fair trade organic tea cafés, part-owned by someone who used to be famous but needed something *simpler*. I don't want to go to the farmers' market, again, but to lick the taste of vodka out of strangers' mouths, chase it with fried bar food and another stranger, and never, ever see another goddamn promise ring.

I want my mother to stop trying so hard to please the piously judgmental block of cousins, immovable, together under the umbrella of their faith, watching us flounder in the rain of our simple agnosticism. I want my Aunt Christine, with her denim-on-denim ensembles and her frankly horrifying bangs to stop making my mother try so hard. Just tell her how to load the goddamn dishwasher, and then maybe we can realize that we're not so different from each other, that we're neighboring territories on the same map, or some other cliché bullshit, framed in needlepoint, to the left of the stove of a stranger who shares my name.

But I am able to convey none of this, my words falling flat, subpar and empty. And we, the passengers, remain islands, alone.



IVY JOHNSON | Self Portrait | 2017

Created at Louisburg College in the Hodges Fine Art Complex under the direction of Will Hinton.

BRYCE EMLEY

FUTURE ELEGY WITH RIFLES AND BASEBALL

He's telling me again to take his guns when he dies
because he knows my sisters will sell them.

His eyes are the same color
my mother's were, olives sliced in half.

I don't really give a shit about guns
and also plan to sell them when he's gone.

So I try to talk about baseball, but now his team
is the Mets, the Orioles not ours

anymore. My eyes are green,
buckshot of yellow in the middle.

I don't know where I got it from.
We watched *Field of Dreams* when I was 25

and at the part where Kevin Costner plays catch
with his father's young ghost—

I'll never be sure if we were both crying.

OLJA SAVIČEVIĆ IVANČEVIĆ | Originally in Croatian
English Translation by ANDREA JURJEVIĆ

BICIKL

Neka je slava biciklu! Bicikl i ja smo kentaur.

Između svega što na put kreće, bicikl ima pravu mjeru, pogotovo: u brzini kretanja, u snazi koju daje i uzima, u radosti.

U radosti,

koja nije puka sreća, a nije ni cigansko veselje,

zuji tihi, jednostavni mehanizam.

Radost

je pitomo srce ove mentalne životinje.

Slava biciklu koji me iz moje ulice pronio kroz slavoluke zabranjenih hotelskih gradova i plaža, uvijek malo brži od čuvara.

Slava biciklu na nizbrdici koji nas je, zaslijepljene suncem i prašinom, spasio od seoskih pasa.

Slava biciklu na kojem sam se penjala po ljubav na jedan, a potom spuštala po ljubav na drugi kraj grada, bez bicikla to nikad ne bih uspjela, mlada, brza i puna ljubavi.

OLJA SAVIČEVIĆ IVANČEVIĆ | Originally in Croatian
English Translation by ANDREA JURJEVIĆ

BICYCLE

Praise the bicycle! The bicycle and I are a centaur.

Among all the things that travel, a bicycle has the right measure, especially: the speed of its movement, the strength with which it gives and takes, in happiness.

In happiness,

that isn't pure luck, nor some gypsy festivity,

hums a quiet, simple organism.

Happiness

is the tame heart of this metal animal.

Praise the bicycle that took me from my street through the triumphal arches of forbidden hotels and beaches, always a little faster than the security guard.

Praise the bicycle on the slope that saved us, blinded by the sun and dust, from the village dogs.

Praise the bicycle I climbed up on for love on one end, and then lowered myself for love on the other end of the city, without the bicycle I never would've made it, young, fast and full of love.

OLJA SAVIČEVIĆ IVANČEVIĆ | Originally in Croatian
English Translation by ANDREA JURJEVIĆ

Čast i dika brižnom biciklu sa sjedalicom za bebu, kao i onom bez kočnica, onom za vjetrenje suknje po šumskim stazama, kao i onom koji opstaje na asfaltu.

A svakako, čast i nogari koju si naknadno ugradio na naš bicikl, jer je, čim luda vožnja stane, ta mala podrška neophodna za ravnotežu.

OLJA SAVIČEVIĆ IVANČEVIĆ | Originally in Croatian
English Translation by ANDREA JURJEVIĆ

Glory and praise to the diligent bicycle with the baby seat, and the one without the brakes, to the one for airing skirts on wooded trails, as well as to the one that survives on the pavement.

And especially, glory to the kickstand that you installed on our bicycle afterwards, because, as soon as the crazy ride stops, that little support is necessary for balance.



DUSTIN JENKINS | Taft Escape | 2017

Created at Louisburg College in the Hodges Fine Art Complex under the direction of Will Hinton.

TOM MONTAG

MORNING

Morning. Light
like silence

laid on things.
The green is

what green is
every spring,

a blessing.

JEFFREY ALFIER

LOGGING THE BITTERROOT RANGE

I.

I recall my father, surveying limbs of maples
that broke heavy under the weight of ice.
Weather's passion turned our trees and
woodlands beyond Kalispell to crystal
derangements of silvered light.

II.

I mount these hills with the ardor of a
pilgrimage, inheriting dad's covenant with
trees. My crew of fallers and buckers handoff
logs they fell to grapple skidders that drag them
off mountain roads no one names anymore.

III.

Fog's thin as gossamer today. Splinters of
tunneling light stab the distance above me
where timberline gives way to stone.
Crows wheel through a sky the color of slate
and flooded clay. They finish off shreds of
animals hard-ended by our trucks.

IV.

My wife's been taking afternoon classes while I
work the timber. She tells me for the hundredth
time that *The Odyssey* was the last good reason
for coming home late. On our porch, she'll
bide time for me under starlight that's taken
forever to reach us.



AMBER LOCKETT | Fire | 2016

Created at Louisburg College in the Hodges Fine Art Complex
under the direction of Will Hinton.

TOBI ALFIER

CHECKMATE

Most lips are attracted to other hopeful ones,
where a kiss could change a dissatisfied downturn
into a smile with just a bit of care—
an eye twinkle or wink, a touch,
two people at an airport saying goodbye.
Parent to child, not the swordplay of lovers.

I prefer lips that need to be teased,
that are stubborn. Bite your own as you think
about the consequences and I'm yours.
Bite mine and I'm yours forever.
Chess is won and lost on those thoughts,
the most stoic and intellectual of any game,
love included. Knight takes pawn, a gentle tapping
of finger to lip while three moves ahead.
I want to be lost to you.

GRANT PRICE

STACKING THE BALES

Three dry days in a row. That was what we used to wait for at the beginning of summer. It was our cue to race down to the field just outside the village and watch as the farmer wound up the threshed hay with his tractor and baler that looked like a sidecar with teeth. The baler would compact the hay into brownie-shaped, gift-wrapped lumps that turned the field into a world of miniature settlements. Then, when there was no more hay left to be scooped up from the ground, the farmer would disappear to the next field and our fun could begin.

We'd hop the ditch that separated the narrow trail from the field and race over to the squat blocks. Then we'd flip them over and over, two boys to a bale, hay scratching against our hands and sweat dripping from our brows in the midday sun, until they all sat in a pile. After that the building could begin. The bales were our bricks, freshly baked and perfect for stacking. The farmer didn't mind because it saved him the job of having to go around the field collecting the bales later on. All he had to do was drive his truck up to where we'd been and they'd be waiting for him. He used to pay a couple of the older boys in the village to throw the bales onto the bed. We knew that one day we'd take over from them. That was how it worked.

With the bales we built bases, maze-like arrangements that stayed fresh and clean as long as the weather held. Sometimes we also scrounged a few planks of wood to place flat over the top of the structures. Once we'd carefully broken open one of the bales and stuffed hay into the openings where the cracks of light shone through, it would be pitch black inside. Other times we left the bases open to the sky. When we'd all learned the layout, which could take anything from a few minutes to a whole day, we would dismantle it and start again, creating new dens with dead ends and secret openings that kept us on our toes. One game we played was Chasers versus Runners, where two boys would try to evade a couple of pursuers for as long as possible between the bales. Another was Capture the Flag. We'd put an old jersey in the middle of the base and a few attackers would have to try to breach the walls to retrieve it. By the end of the day our skin would be red from the licks of the hay and our hair would be stiff and our lips salty as the good tiredness made our bones heavy. We only had a week or two every summer in which to enjoy the hay, but we looked forward to it all year round.

One year everything changed. As usual, we had waited for three unbroken days of sunshine before making our way down to the field to watch the farmer create our building materials with his machines. However, when we reached our spot, we saw that something was different. The hay was still standing, and large wooden posts had been hammered into the ground along the field's perimeter. In the corner of the field sat a bale. But it wasn't like one of ours. This one was made of metal and it was jagged and ugly and left us with a cold sensation in our chests even though we didn't exactly understand what was happening. After standing there for a few minutes, the farmer appeared with two of his helpers. They wore thick grey gloves that went all the way up to their elbows. We asked the farmer about the poles and he pointed at the metal bale and told us it was for the barbed wire fence. New rules, he said. He couldn't have boys running onto his property whenever they felt like it, piling up his hay and breaking the bales open and leaving him to

clear up the mess. Besides, he'd be the one held to account by our parents if we ended up hurting ourselves. So this was the end of it. One of the farmer's helpers smirked when he saw the look on our faces.

We watched the three of them roll out the barbed wire and attach it to the posts. It was hard work, but the farmer looked pleased when it was done. He waved to us in a way that suggested a final parting before hopping into the cab of his truck and driving back to his house. In one afternoon, our entire summer had been taken from us. We drifted back in the direction of the village, all wondering what it meant and racking our brains to try to remember whether we'd done something different the previous year to rile the farmer. The confusion on each of our faces was too much to bear. We didn't see much of each other for the next few weeks. Something had changed.

We were adults before we went down to the field together again. We'd all moved away from the village when the first chance came along and only returned for special occasions. This time it was a wedding. On the evening before the ceremony, the old group got together and, armed with hipflasks and heads full of hazy memories, we took a walk. Without discussing the matter, we gradually made our way to the field where we used to kindle the sparks of our imaginations under the sun. The conversation died when we saw it.

The ground was barren except for a few weeds which poked through the cracked earth. The fence was still in place, though the metal was rusty and twisted. One of the posts had fallen over, dragging part of the wire down to the ground with it. As we scrutinised the area, the groom-to-be told us what had happened to the farmer. A few years after he'd fenced off the field, he'd found it difficult to find any older boys willing to collect the bales and throw them onto the truck bed. Eventually he'd resorted to doing it himself. One day he'd been in the field, stooping to heft a block onto the truck, when he'd suffered a heart attack and died. Shortly afterwards, the farmer's family had moved away, and the farm had fallen into ruin.

We took a last look at the field in the twilight and toasted the memory of our summers spent there. Then we walked back along the path that would take us to the village. We didn't think about the farmer again.

SUCCESS AKPOJOTOR

THE HYPOTENUSE

$$c = \sqrt{a^2 + b^2}$$

I leaned against my father's long couch
and watched Obama on that glorious night
as he waved to the world, from the
boob tube, and I wondered and pondered
how he got there, and I said to myself:
"how can I get there, into the hall of history?"

c

It seems like a long distance, and I
am startled. He is up there while I
am down here, that's how far he really
went. Too far. Too far. The angle between
he and me seems the hypotenuse because I am
deep down somewhere, where a day is a decade.

a²

But my mother lays her holy hands on my bonce
and invokes for me. "You will get there in no time,"
she says but I am Didymus cos I take into cog-
nizance the variable of reality—cos hope don't
turn the wheel around. Nothing is guaranteed.

b²

& the end of the matter is this: that my life
is gonna be like a chapter in the holy writ as
my history will rain on unborn nurslings like
in the days of the Prophet Joel, not Job.

ANDREA JURJEVIĆ

DOMINION

tonight the sea is inky and fragrant
and still thousands of miles away

it's a pair of blue lips gathered beneath
the dominion of the watchful sky

your clothes are soaked in beer
and now it's interesting to watch

my knickers stretched over your rump
the front fabric stretched in a big yawn

one of us is always first to get naked
the other wears desire like the dusting

of confectioner's sugar brushed off
the chest into the dark inlet of the mouth

SEAN BUCKLEY

ACA

I've been cursed with sticky skin. My physician calls it acquired cutaneous adherence, which is a term he lets tumble out of his mouth as the stethoscope he'd pressed against my chest moments earlier holds on to me like Velcro. It started as a party gag; I could stick ten spoons to my face without any trouble. For a while that's all it was, fun.

On a foggy night in late August I found myself sitting in my favored wicker chair as an eastern wind howled just outside the sand-washed windows of my house. When I stood to refill the glass of rectified spirit that I had been so contemplatively nursing throughout the night, I found my legs a highway of disfiguring marks. They ran up and down the backs of my thighs, yellow-white like infected blisters, and my first reaction was to drop my glass in shock. But upon closer inspection, they were merely strands of the chair which I had taken with me. Peeling them individually from my skin was agony, and the strength of my adhesion has only grown worse.

I imagine myself akin to a pond, the kind that ferments and stagnates in the backwoods swamps of the town where I grew up. It is the kind of place that takes – a model plane lost in the reeds, an engagement ring thrown in a fit of passion, a man who'd given up on the world and thrown himself head-first into

the mud – and never gives back. My hair loses its auburn touches and melts into a bubbling, pulsing mass of muck and sludge, with a crown of lily pads and windmill-like rose pogonias adorning it. Memories refuse to leave me, drilled into the corners behind my eyes and played on broken projectors. They roll one after the other, endless and unstoppable, stuck in my pores and refusing to relent regardless of my favor or hatred toward them. They are a part of me, breathed in through my frog skin.

There are days where I stare into the mirror and examine all that I've accumulated. I wonder if I was truly born with the freckles that frame my Roman nose or if they're wandering flecks of dust which have stained my skin and never since left. Long ago I used to wear makeup, to varnish my face an array of pastel blues and pinks, to paint myself in lights. Now the colors have all blended into a deep black that haunts my lips and my eyelids, the lines beneath my cheekbones and the heavy clots on my lashes. Beneath the loose, flowing sundresses I'm often forced to wear (the less contact, the better) are scraps of cloth that stick to me as though sewn to my skin, from shirts and sweats worn weeks earlier. Barely noticeable pieces of white and pink elastic hug my square hips where panties once rested. The spaces between my toes have become a home for the shredded, fraying remains of sandal straps; I can't get them off.

I used to think the only things I can't seem to hold on to are people. Truth is, they stick worse than the rest. Old ex-boyfriends whose scents I've just managed to clean my house of call me with a frightening frequency that hints at conspiracy. My mother, a vicious woman who met her end when a drunken night met a hairpin turn, still visits me in my dreams to remind me of her displeasure. My father, still burrowed in our childhood home tucked away in the Adirondacks, never fails to return from his wanderings through the mountains. He was the only one who never got over the death of my mother and punishes himself among the pines. He disappears for months on

end but calls me without delay as soon as he makes it back. I'm sure he will outlive me somehow.

Whenever I venture a trip home, with the last digit of a single fingertip guiding the steering wheel of my sturdy Volkswagen Rabbit, there is always someone from my past who I thought I'd left behind, come for a surprise visit. The last one was no exception. My sister, who I had thought was still at university, sat at the kitchen table, her nails digging into the wood. She's the exact opposite of me. Her skin runs like oily water, shrugging off even the most ardent clingers whether she wants it to or not. She took one look at me, then at the empty house around her. I see the contempt for my skin, for the scraps and shreds and fragments that hide under my sundress. Her skin is spotless. She's never been more impeccably clean. That night, after a fight whose origins I've long since forgotten, she spat at me, "Get the hell out of my life."

I wish I could, but I'd never tell her that.

AMANDA RODRIGUEZ

HEAVENLY BODIES

Constellations map her body.
A web of star systems
Linked with permanent ink on her skin.
I turn off the light in our bedroom;
She is bio-luminescent.
She is galaxies contained.

Look, I say, there's the Milky Way,
Tracing a finger lightly over her secret places.
And over here is Andromeda,
Watching nebulae and stardust
Disappear into the soft pelt of her underarm.

Her chest is a glowing, unstoppable supernova.
Tomorrow or someday, this radiance will go dark.
Though I know standing so close to this
Primordial, cosmic force will destroy me,
I will stay.

I will stay just until
The tips of my fingers burn and my hair crimps and curls.
Just a while longer.
Just a little while longer.

TRAVIS TRUAX

HOME BASE

—outside Martin, South Dakota

Sleeping in tents
in the farmhouse yard
we awake in South Dakota—
down a couple
gravel roads
south of the Badlands.

“Home base,” she calls it.

Her friend Tim grows wheat here.

Two cats, Blackie and Smoke
eat breakfast
from retired frying pans
beside the potted flowers.

Morning
glares off the grain bins.

All the distance
in the world
lives here, simple and quiet.

Over coffee, she says
we’ll go see the cranes today.

We’ll walk. We’ll watch
the afternoon slow, sweating,
while all around us
sunflowers bend long necks
in the breeze.

RANDALL SMITH

DADDIO

I regret that you were often forgotten by me
And mostly forgotten by the world
But now
As a finality
I find your worth.

And as I placed a poet's disorder
On my own volume,
You wrote your text in plain language
With familiar subjects and unadorned predicates
Because a poet's ambition lived in you
Fueled by slow magic.

It lived in the young street fighter eyes
Scanning the horizon
From your perch
On the fender of an old Chevy.
It lived in a once brash trumpeter
Daring the unforgiving silence.
And it found a purchase
In the grasping ambition of a newborn lover.

But your reward
For all that uncouth yearning
Was left behind for others to pilfer
And build on
Like a fortune seeded with stolen bank loot--
Your desires snuffed finally,
With some lingering smoke,
Like a candle at St. Joseph's Church.

And as you took your place
in a parade of forgotten men
You wrote your poem in humbler ways
Refusing to let the music go silent
Content to offer lines
Framed by obligation.

I never honored the courage in your life
Often called you a coward
But the poem you wrote
And the courage you offered
Was the gift
Read in unremarkable clauses
Of invisible fearlessness
Finally made real
In your fearless sons and daughters.

BETH WILLIAMS

DRINK IN THE MORNING

Oars sip river water
hull swallows hard
 sip swallow, sip swallow

No breaks on a wooden scull
it glides smoothly by before breakfast
 sip swallow, sip swallow

Sun rolls out of bed in the southeast
morning spreads her wake up call
ducks, geese sing louder
drown out the fading
 sip swallow, sip swallow.

RICHARD DOKEY

THE GIFT

When Wilbur Candelson died, Jess Harker next door gave Jason and Eloise Candelson a letter-size envelope which contained a three-by-five card with a sentence written in the old man's scrawl: "After you remove the body, remake the bed." They did and found five hundred thousand dollars in one hundred-dollar bills, lined in even rows under the old man's mattress.

"Christ!" Jason said. He sat upon the bed and put his head in his hands.

Eloise looked out the bedroom window, where the sycamore had lost its leaves. A thick, mannish woman, she did not enjoy standing. She went to the one chair in the room, the brown mohair their father had saved after the old house was sold. Across the back of the chair was the crocheted spread their mother Margaret had begun in their childhood. Some of the circles were torn open. The white weave had turned the color of pale tea. Eloise remembered her mother's hands working, hour after hour, to bring all the circles together.

"Can you beat it!" Eloise declared.

Jason looked up. He was older than his sister by seventeen months, which had caused difficulty over the years. He was always first, first to have a bike, first to go to school, first to stay up later, to drive the car, to go to the community college, first, even, to marry and first to divorce. She had watched, wondering what might be learned and if it could be learned right.

Jason shook his head. "Well, then, I'll just be damned."

He recalled the time twenty years before when he had over extended himself. There had been trouble about the mortgage and the new Pontiac. He had gone to his father for relief.

"Just a few thousand, Pop, to get me through all this until I straighten it out?"

"I can't help you there, Son," his father had replied.

Jason could not say, "You mean, you don't have the money?" Margaret had died of cancer five years earlier, and his father sold the house. His father went nowhere. He did nothing. He sat in the living room of this bungalow in the low rent part of town watching television, mostly the History Channel, with World War II documentaries, or the channel that showed black and white movies without commercials and on Sunday evenings, silent films his father had never seen because he was born in 1933.

"Not even a thousand, Pop? A few hundred? Anything would help."

His father looked at him with that soft-faced expression neither he nor Eloise had ever understood. The eyes were brown with a pale luster of green that made them seem both vulnerable and unfathomable. It was impossible to tell what his father was thinking. One time Eloise said, "You can see something going on, something deep and to itself, and it's about you, but then more than you, as though being either of us was smaller than what he was thinking, something more than you could ever know, more than what makes the tide go out and come back in again."

“You’ll just have to take care of it,” the old man had told him.

And he had.

It was hard not to feel anger, however, or at least resentment. Sometimes, with Marty Jamison, his best friend, at the Junction Bar after work, he thought maybe it could even be hatred. That was the booze, of course. It frightened him that he might hate his own father, but he had gone down on his knees before the old man, and the old man had done nothing. If you can’t turn to your father for help, where can you go? It gave him pleasure to think that even if he had gotten the money but did not repay it, the old man would not ever abandon him. Pop was Pop.

So he had swallowed the gall, took the second job part-time and scraped along to freedom.

“I can’t believe this,” Eloise said.

Jason looked up slowly. He blinked.

“Believe what?”

“How can this be?”

Jason looked at his sister. Her face had that firmness whenever she tried to pull a thought from the back of her brain into the center of her forehead. Eloise had always tried to seem smarter than she was. It was a quality about her that had annoyed him all his life.

He sighed.

“I mean, you’re sitting on five hundred thousand dollars, Jason. Do you know how long it takes to save five hundred thousand dollars? He must have always been at it.”

“He got some for the house. We know that.”

“Even so, what with taxes and whatever else, he still had to save the rest. And on a pension from the power company and a few odd jobs here and there? He had to save it, bit by bit, over all the years, dollar by dollar, Jas.”

“Little by little. That’s what Mom always said.”

“Little by little he stuffed five hundred grand under that mattress and not a penny to either of us if we needed it.” Her lip trembled.

“What do you mean?” he asked, straightening.

“I mean, suppose one of us had a problem, say, and we needed a little help to get out of it. Suppose that, for instance.”

Jason’s eyes were round. “Did Pop ever say anything to you?”

“About what? You know Pop. Pop never said anything about anything.”

Jason frowned, remembering bits and pieces.

“All right, then,” he said.

Eloise became smaller. Her shoulders grew round. Her head lowered into her square torso. Her hair dropped. The dingy halos of their mother’s crochet drew further back. Eloise was a toad squatted upon a mohair stump. He actually felt sorry for Eloise.

Eloise looked up. Her eyes wandered about the room. She shook her head and took a breath.

“Well, I went to Pop once,” she said quietly.

Jason leaned forward.

“I lost my job,” she said. “I was out of money. I was scared. And I was leaving Frank.”

“Job? What job?”

“The one with Engdahl and Company. You remember that one.”

“Sure,” he said. “It was your first big job, wasn’t it? I thought you quit that job.”

“I was fired,” she said.

“Fired? But, why?”

“‘You’re just not right for Engdahl and Company.’ That’s what they told me.”

“You were there two, three years, weren’t you?”

“Four years.”

“They just up and fired you?”

She nodded. “I wasn’t right. That’s what they said.”

“After four years? It took four years to discover that?”

His face reddened.

“Why didn’t you protest or go to somebody or something? It was wrong. It probably was even illegal.”

“If somebody doesn’t want Eloise, then Eloise isn’t sticking around.”

“It’s still not right.”

“Right? Wrong? Who knows? Who cares? I was so humiliated, so damned humiliated. So I quit.”

“The bastards,” Jason said, looking at his hands.

“It caught me unawares, is all. It takes time to get another job, a decent one anyway. I went to Pop. I asked him for a little help, just enough, you know, to hold me over until I got past it all and found something else. He said he couldn’t do it, Jason. Wouldn’t, seems more like it.” She jabbed a finger at the mattress. “He sat right there and told me he couldn’t do a thing. What do you think about that, now, big brother? And that pile of help right there underneath.”

Jason watched the hair on the back of his hand. The silence was lifeless. They did not want to touch it, but it was their silence.

“I didn’t know,” he said gently. “Why didn’t you tell me? Maybe I could have done something—” He did not look up. He was glad that she had said nothing.

“Why didn’t I tell you a lot of things, big brother?” Eloise said.

“What do you mean by that?” he said, staring.

“You know what I mean.”

She began to whimper. Jason felt odd, tinselled shivers travel up his arms and neck.

“Look at me when I’m talking to you!”

“Take it easy,” he said.

“Do you think if Pop turned his back on me I was going to go to you? Who are you? I may have lost something, but I didn’t lose everything.”

“That’s rough,” he said.

“Well, anyway,” she said, lowering her voice, “water under the bridge. I pulled up my socks, dropped fifty pounds, scrimped and saved—”

“Little by little?” he said.

She tried not to smile. “Little by little, until I found a good job with Baker and Company. Now Eloise is doing just fine, thank you. She wasn’t pounded to dust. Eloise can take care of Eloise.”

He looked at her. Eloise was Eloise, but she actually did seem thinner.

“I suppose we both could have come over a bit more, then. Spent more time with Pop, I mean.”

“You think—”

“I’m not saying anything, Sis. But you can’t really believe Pop would turn his back on you. He’s Pop.”

“Jason, you haven’t said that to me in ages.”

“Said what?”

“Sis. You never call me sis.”

He tried to consider something, but it didn’t seem important. “So, you’re my sister, aren’t you?”

She came over and sat beside him.

“What I mean is,” he went on, “there’s something I can tell you too, and I will, I promise I will, but I don’t want to tell you right this minute.”

“All right, Jason,” she said.

The shadows had left the sycamore. They were in broken squares upon the floor. A smear was against the far wall.

“I mean, do you really think that Pop hoarded some chance away from us, Eloise, I mean, really, just for spite?”

She was quiet. Her eyes were full.

“He didn’t go anywhere,” Jason said. “He didn’t do anything. He saved. He could do whatever he wanted. He just saved.”

“Little by little.”

“Yeah. Little by little.”

“You and I,” she said flatly.

He shrugged. “I suppose so,” he said. “What else? There it is. Each of us has two hundred and fifty thousand.”

“I feel awful,” she said softly.

In the dark that came, Jason put his arm around Eloise.

ORMON DAY

THE MEMORY OF BARS

*“Behind bars, a man never reforms. He will never forget.
He never will get completely over the memory of the bars.”*

—Malcolm X

In the bedlam of the New Orleans jail, sobered by stench
and my dire circumstance, I slouch against a wall
in the angry atmosphere of the holding tank,
wondering what kind of welcome I’ll get at the federal pen
if a judge in L.A. sentences me to a couple years
inside the low-security prison in Safford or Lompoc.

This tank’s aw whirl with drunk guys, stoned guys, crazy guys,
guys vomiting in corners, guys bleeding from head wounds
opened by police batons, penniless hippies drawn to the city
by the hallucinogenic Mardi Gras scene in “Easy Rider,”
a guy who threw his underpants into the room’s sole toilet
because he soiled them when he was clubbed by cops,
guys who had to be held back to keep from brawling,
a guy who playfully patted an officer’s horse and was busted
for cruelty to animals, guys who had no choice but to piss
in an alleyway and were arrested for exposing themselves,
guys who scream and bang their heads and want to burst past
the beet-faced guard when he opens the door to call a name
or push in a bewildered prisoner, who may or may not know
why he was plucked from the lawless Bourbon Street throng
and placed behind bars when he could be catching beads,
guzzling cheap wine from a jug, begging a tipsy college girl
on a balcony to unbutton her blouse and pull up her bra.

I drop a nickel in the slot of the pay phone, dial
the local president of the professional journalism society
I joined in college. Shouting above the din of desperate men,

I describe our dilemma: without the bucks to make bail, my singing partner and I are gonna stay jailed until our trial unless an elected official gets us free on our own recognizance. He'll see what he can do, but makes no promises.

A year ago, Rich toiled as a medic in a surgical unit in Nam, comforting dying soldiers, changing bandages, passing scalpels. He came home divorced and disillusioned, grew a beard and longer hair, strummed his guitar to "California Dreamin,'" "Bridge over Troubled Waters" while I shook my tambourine: homemade, a hundred bottle caps nailed to a length of wood. He wanted freedom after leaving the Army, I want freedom before I'm drafted, refuse induction, stand before a judge. Two months ago, with duffel bags and guitar case at our feet, we stuck out our thumbs at a West Covina on-ramp heading east with only a lucky penny in our pockets, determined to sing for our hamburgers and French fries, or starve to death trying.

Thousands of meandering miles later, we're entertaining a crowd on Canal Street when cops order us to break it up. When a cop confiscates my tambourine as a "dangerous weapon," he's jeered by our long-haired listeners. When we're striding across the street, my Scorpio buddy yells an obscenity over his shoulder. Cops grab our collars, push us into a patrol car. Flashing lights. Wailing siren. Reviling an officer. We're ushered into the mayhem of the tank, relieved not to be strip searched by rough hands.

The jail misplaces some paperwork, so Rich is called from the tank, but I'm left behind for hours, drowsy, afraid I won't hear my name if I nap. A guy complains to a guard he should've been called earlier. He's sprayed with tear gas that leaves him weeping, gasping, rubbing his eyes.

I'm led to a cell where prisoners are snoring, farting, grunting in askew positions on bunk beds. No pillow. No blanket. I lie down on unyielding metal, study the cell.

A single toilet without partition. A guy's resting his head
on our roll of toilet paper. Early morning. Too tired to sleep.
An epiphany: books and movies have turned me into a fool.
When the others awaken, I won't be receiving writerly advice
from Defoe, Jack London, O. Henry, Oscar Wilde, Dostoevsky.
Malcolm X won't roll out a prayer rug facing Mecca.
Martin Luther King, Jr. won't start writing a pensive letter.
Thoreau won't discourse on civil disobedience.
Thomas Malory won't elegize King Arthur and Guinevere.
The Birdman of Alcatraz won't feed the stale crust
of our bologna sandwiches to injured sparrows and pigeons.
Instead I'll be surrounded by guys who cursed, threatened
and cracked their knuckles in the cauldron of the tank.

If I'm forced to shed my usual modesty to sit on the toilet,
am I going to have to fight for three squares of single ply?
Will the guy in the upper bunk test me to see if I
can be bullied by deliberately stepping down on my head?
I may or may not be sentenced to the pen because I seek
a peaceful solution to an unjust war, but if I'm imprisoned,
I won't be able to deflect a shank or fist by quoting Gandhi.
If a predator leers at my naked body in the shower,
tries to maneuver behind me, I'll have to swipe at his throat
with a sharpened toothbrush, show him I'm nobody's punk.

And then before my cellmates stir, a guard calls my name,
clanks open the door. Released on my own recognizance.
Free of jail, but forever burdened by the memory of bars.

SANDRA PHILLIPS

EMERGENCE

THE NILE

Coming as a trickle from dry dust,
A certain damp spot,
No one knows for certain; where
It emerges as a blessed spring
From down below.
The blue, slowly, silently wanders
Over stone, grit and sand,
Building gradually when teardrops fall,
Heaven sent from a grey-day sky,
Forming a river, set for the sea
On, on carrying clods sticks, bits,
Satisfying the animals thirsty cry
And the buckets filled for the villagers,
Thunderstorms join in and gather momentum
Until the approach of Egypt's borders.
People wait, patiently praying
To earth born gods of the flood
To overspill its banks, leaving black and
Red silt to cover the land to make it fertile.
The priests keep watch
over the Nile meter
Hoping it will rise enough, if
not, famine comes.
O praise be to Osiris for
answering our devotions.
Filled to the brim like fine purple wine, appreciated,
It runs dividing, entwining through the reeds and
Delta, 'till it merges with the salty sea.

KAREN WOLF

TRACTION

Elusive, making me slip slide through life.
My perfect job out of control
like a throw rug on a newly waxed floor.
A soul mate needed for growth
beyond my reach on an ice glazed pond.
Social acceptance one uncensored comment
away from a backward slide
to the basement pile of broken toys.

Where are the stabilizing cleats
to plant my feet firmly on the ground?
The rubber soles of money, popularity,
and beauty anchor briefly, then loosen
in self-esteem destroying winds,
my toes searching for nonexistent stability.

A duck waddles down a slippery incline
with perfect traction and eases into a pond.
She is void of all but what she is.

REVIEWS



DONYA CAMPBELL | Tantalus Platter | 2016

Created at Louisburg College in the Hodges Fine Art Complex under the direction of Will Hinton.

EMILY BEST

LIKE A MOCKINGBIRD:
VOICES OF NORTH CAROLINA

NCSU Linguistics Department. The Language and Life Project. *Voices of North Carolina*. North Carolina State University, 2005. \$20, Documentary, Narrated by Bill Friday.

The diversity in the songs of the Mockingbird is amazing: they can copy chainsaws, weed eaters, cats, dogs, and babies, among other things. No two birds have the same sounds in their songs, but similarity can be found through them based on the region the bird is located. People are just the same: everyone speaks in a slightly different way, but similarities are bountiful when comparing people's voices to those in the same region or area. For some reason though, we all want to sound the same, slowly erasing the sound differences because we are condemned to do so. But I think we need to be more accepting of language diversity in America; because that diversity gives us a sense of uniqueness, it helps us preserve and pass down our traditions and cultures, as well as gives us a sense of pride in where we came from.

In the same way in which no two birds sound alike, so do no two people sound alike. Each person is exposed to different circumstances, shaping that person into the individual they are. This reflects in their speech because every voice that a person hears influences them to speak in a certain way with a unique dialect. Cutting this dialect out of a person may seem like a terrible thing to do, but this goes on every day without any complaints from most American citizens. In NCSU's documentary *Voices of North Carolina*, from Ocracoke Island to the Appalachian Mountains—many people were told that they should put aside their dialects, because none of them could be understood. This is understandable though, since some of the

native dialects are too hard for those who did not grow up with it to understand, or because their dialect made them sound too “unprofessional.” Though both reasons are true, shouldn’t we allow people with dialects to talk the way they’d like without such heavy condemnation?

Erasing our dialects not only erases our oral diversity, but it can cause us to unintentionally erase our culture and traditional traits as well. Muslims pray five times a day in Arabic, Mexicans celebrate quinceaneras with Mexican music, and Grecians dance and sing while shouting “Opa!” But in school we teach them that they can’t even speak with a ‘foreign accent,’ and after all these years it has caused many people to cast away their traditions. This has devastated the Native American culture the most, because today most Native Americans can’t speak or even recognize their native language, while others have lost their tribe’s culture entirely (*Voices of North Carolina*, NCSU 2005). Cutting out our dialects takes away part of each person’s history, eventually losing who they are entirely due to the pressures of society.

Being different doesn’t just create a sense of uniqueness and individuality but having a dialect can give us pride in where we came from too. America is supposed to be the “land of the free, and the home of the brave,” and many people did have to be brave to face the trials they faced in order to get here, for example, the Jewish refugees from World War II. In consideration to this, shouldn’t they have the freedom to sound just a little unusual to us without discrimination? True the American life requires us to be able to speak English, but we should be proud when we have the ability to fluently speak and/or interpret another language or unique dialect. Some people have learned to accept the dialects of others, saying that language is how we recognize who we are, and I completely agree with them.

My father says that if you come to America to work, or live in America, that you need to be able to fit into American society, by speaking proper English and by living appropriately to American standards. Now I agree with him, but what does

that mean? Who dictates what American standards and proper English is? If one person dictates this standard, then I assure you that most bred, born and raised Americans would not fit into that standard. I completely understand that being easier to understand makes it much easier to get a job, but I also believe that preserving our origins is important as well.

So if we learn to embrace our different voices, and accept that no one will have a “perfect dialect,” then hopefully we can learn to enjoy listening to all the different sounds and rhythms of others’ dialects—just like we enjoy the different tunes of the Mockingbird. Living by someone else’s standards kills a person but having the necessary skills to flourish in the U.S. is important, too. Accepting the minor differences between us will confirm our belief in individual uniqueness, preserve part of our traditions, and help give us back our pride in being different. We may live in a nation with the freedom of a Bald Eagle, but I believe that we also have the voices of the Mockingbirds, and that is what I feel makes America so special.

KRIS B. HOFFLER

I HAVE MEMORIES, YOU KNOW:

DREAM OF THE GONE-FROM CITY

Barbara Edelman. *Dream of the Gone-From City*. Pittsburgh, PA. Carnegie Mellon University Press, 2017. \$15.95, paper.

In Barbara Edelman's collection *Dream of the Gone-From City*, there is a question inherent in the title: will the overarching theme be dominated by loss, i.e. gone? Many of the poems contain speakers who are looking back, or trying to, to places and times in their lives that are no more. There are even two speakers with virtually no memory left of what was once their lives, yet they attempt to create some reference point based on what is in front of them.

To address these two extreme versions of loss, the poems "Maple Grove" and "Assisted Living" find the subjects in retirement homes. Both of them live with only brief, fragmented recollections of their previous lives. At the end of "Maple Grove," we find what must be one of the children visiting the vacant father. The visitor makes note of the briefest of moments when the father catches a fleeting glimpse of the past.

Jerry O'Malley visited daily. "Milton Edelman!" He said it on arrival and departure. "Jerry O'Malley!" said my father to his friend, learning that to name the whole person is to hold him, fast, throughout the arc of his translation; to reconstitute him daily at the heart's table.

"Assisted Living" is much more tragic. The elderly subject can remember nothing, even her identity. She lives in an eternal *now* where even the simplest of things are new mazes to wander.

... Each week she
writes new algorithms to survive, from toothbrush

to spoon. Her softball glove, her Raleigh 3 speed
are not even memory. Her new sports are dress,
food, hygiene. A slalom course to every doorknob.

However, all the poems are not this bleak. The poem from which the title is derived explores the dream side of memory. The unknown speaker is walking through a post-apocalyptic dream derived from snippets of memory. In a moment of lucidity, the speaker questions her own mind:

... How could you choose this again
and again? Why take the risk? To step into this vicious little
detour-

The theme is continued through numerous speakers recalling apparitional places that were once real but now only exist in dreams or memories. Some memories are clear and seem to be accurate in the speaker's mind; others are undoubtedly embellished into emotional landscapes.

These poems explore the idea of the word *memory* having an unspoken subtext of *loss* within it. On the other hand, it also has an opposing subtext of *gain* in that it brings something once lost back into a ghostly existence, no matter how altered from its original state. These poems are intelligent and brave in that they explore facts of our consciousness, and this is sometimes difficult to face. This is a vivid journey of the past through the lens of the human experience:

I have memories, you know.
I'm not a person with a helium
balloon for a head.

ROB GREENE

NO MORE SUNLIGHT, NO MORE MOONLIGHT:
SMALL CRIMES

Andrea Jurjević. *Small Crimes*. Tallahassee, Florida:
Anhinga Press, 2017. \$20, paper.

Andrea Jurjević's collection, *Small Crimes*, follows a young Croatian woman from a homeland entrenched in war to a safer America. Flash forward from the Balkans of the 1990s to present day Aleppo and we find our fellow humans once again in peril. When I read Jurjević's collection, I wonder about the future prize-winning collections that we may see from the survivors of the current day's genocides. Jurjević's collection won the 2015 Philip Levine Prize and will be available from Anhinga Press in February 2017. *Small Crimes* has every element of the beautiful duende that Federico García Lorca first described nearly a century ago. In Jurjević's poem, "Cinéma Vérité: A Love Story" the drama appears to include an antagonist Jurjević refers to as the "rogue," who pawns her mother's gold for joints. The poem could be self-reflective. Meanwhile the repeating appearance of black and blue clothing seems to connect the images of the war in the Balkans at that time with black and blue being two of the primary colors of the war.

I think I'll eventually forget you, cross your
number, throw keys in the meadow by the
roads you walked, dressed in black and blue.

I'll not think of two bumpkins who hitched to
the cities, left their coastline to erode. I'm sure
I'll forget you, all about you—

every drunken detail, like when you blew up, s
old my records to scrape by. Also, the roads you
walked off, dressed in black and blue.

Like immigrant scum stood in welfare queues,
pawned my mom's gold for daily joints. You
rogue, I'm sure I'll forget you, all about you—
["Cinéma Vérité: A Love Story" first four
stanzas]

"Cinéma Vérité: A Love Story." opens the section titled
WHILE THE BACKWOODS BURNED and comes prior to her
section with an American setting. "Cinéma Vérité" [truthful
cinema] is a media form that entered the mainstream via
France, so perhaps the poem takes place in transit from the
Balkans to America during some limbo in France. This collection
is very serious, and the word choice is accessible even though
Small Crimes includes a Croatian-English glossary near the back.
The metaphors are advanced, and are full of hard shell vehicles
on the outside with extensive and layered tenors within the
surface of each poem. The collection has some light and a lot of
dark. At the same time, in Jurjević's prose poem, "When At
Moonlight You Knock On My Door," we are met with a man
holding a Kalashnikov who says in Serbo-Croat-Bosnian there is
no more sunlight, no more moonlight as he takes the speaker
deeper into a cave on the night bombs lit up the sky like
massive white chrysanthemums:

“... Nema više sunca, there is no more sunlight, nema više meseca, no more moonlight.” The phrase “no more sunlight, no more moonlight” is a lyric from the Goran Bregović song “Mesečina” which translates as “Moonlight.” Even at this tense and violent time of war, empathy shines through as this lyric finds a new path in Andrea Jurjević’s poem, “When At Moonlight You Knock On My Door.”

Small Crimes is a wonderfully rich collection, and I can certainly understand why the Philip Levine Prize committee and the 2015 judge C.G. Hanzlicek selected it. The collection is beautifully dark a lot of the time though it is fresh, complex, intellectually stimulating, accessible, intelligent, features real, historical subjects. Just as I trust Philip Levine’s poetry completely, I trust Andrea Jurjević without question. She lacks pretense, and I so admire her voice, her image making ability, her precision, her grit, and her strength within these poems. There are no filler attempts here, all works in this collection are indeed global poems of genuine humanness full of desire, destruction, resilience, loyalty, betrayal, loss, vitality, and maturity. Andrea Jurjević’s collection, *Small Crimes*, is full of honest poems of experience.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jeffrey Alfier's recent books include *Fugue for a Desert Mountain* and *Anthem for Pacific Avenue: California Poems*. Publication credits include *Copper Nickel*, *Midwest Quarterly*, and *Poetry Ireland Review*. He is co-editor of Blue Horse Press and *San Pedro River Review*.

Tobi Alfier (Cogswell) is a multiple Pushcart nominee and a multiple Best of the Net nominee. Her current chapbooks include "Down Anstruther Way" (Scotland poems) from FutureCycle Press, and her full-length collection *Somewhere, Anywhere, Doesn't Matter Where* is forthcoming from Kelsay Books. She is co-editor of *San Pedro River Review*.

Success Akpojotor, born in Benin City, writes poetry, prose, and theatre. A graduate of the University of Benin's Department of History and an Ambassador appointed by the Fundación César Egidio Serrano, Madrid, his work has been published widely online and in print, news print and magazines including *Nigerian Observer*, *Poets Reading The News*, *Heavy Feather Review*, *Tuck Magazine*, and *Wax Poetry and Art*, and has been anthologized in *Snapdragon: A Journal of Art & Healing*, *Best New African Poets 2017 Anthology*, and *Mounting The Moon: Queer Nigerian Poems*.

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Sean Buckley has written two novels, and several flash fiction pieces which are due to be featured in the *Mad Scientist Journal* and the *Spry Literary Journal*.

Richard Dokey's new collection of stories *The Loneliness Cafe* was released by Adelaide Books, New York, in August to good reviews. *Pale Morning Dun*, an earlier collection, published by University of Missouri Press, was nominated for the American Book Award. He has novels and other story collections to his credit.

Possessed by wanderlust, **Orman Day** is assembling his published memoirs into a book chronicling his on-the-cheap world travels during the past five decades. Among his adventures: thumbing and freight-hopping throughout the United States, witnessing a sky burial (two corpses, hundreds of vultures) in Tibet, bungee jumping off a New Zealand bridge, visiting with cocaine-smoking gringo inmates in their Bolivian prison cell, and canoeing down the Mississippi for two months from St. Paul to New Orleans.

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Born and raised in Southern California, **Erica Hoffmeister** earned her MA in English and MFA in Creative Writing from Chapman University's dual degree program in 2015. She has work published or forthcoming in *So To Speak*, *Split Lip Magazine*, *Rat's Ass Review*, *Shark Reef*, and *Literary Mama*, among others. She was also a runner-up for the Janet B. McCabe Poetry Prize in 2016, and received an honorable mention for the Lorian Hemingway Award for Short Fiction in 2014. She currently lives in Denver with her husband and daughter, Scout Séverine, where she writes, teaches, and perpetually misses home—wherever that feels like at the time.

Andrea Jurjević is a poet and translator from Rijeka, Croatia. Her work has appeared in *EPOCH*, *TriQuarterly*, *Best New Poets*, and many other literary journals. Her first poetry collection, *Small Crimes*, won the 2015 Philip Levine Prize, and her translation of *Mamasafari*, a collection of prose poems in Croatian by **Olja Savičević Ivančević**, is forthcoming from Lavender Ink/Diálogos. She works as a Lecturer in English at Georgia State University.

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