



CORVUS REVIEW
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Never Not Broken
Sandra Kacher

This lily at high summer noon
tiger orange, fire orange,
perfect confluence of year and day and light
blazes in the heart of August.
Yet even at day's peak
I see the orange of sunset.

Advised to dance in the light
instead of mourning the shadows,
I try to flame silently like an August lily.

But Akhilandeshvara
The goddess Never Not Broken is
my saint. She tells us not
to fight the falling to pieces of everything
now or eventually.

She isn't much beloved, her
message is especially scorned at
baptisms and weddings,
also at funerals that glory in
resurrection.

But I claim her wisdom.
Don't get me wrong
I love blazing
but I know fading, too.

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Swipe Right for Persimmons
Lining Wang

Its Friday night and Time
is late. saw her last Thursday
at trader joe's drunkenly steering
a cart toppling with plums. who knew,
Time has time enough to follow each
from seed to sapling to fruit to dust to worms to blood
and still, have enough time to argue
with the cashier. I think I'm being
stood up at this board game cafe
by someone whose bio read
Sagittarius moon Gemini rising cancer sun
and whose picture was a black hole.
(I messaged first.) whose second picture vanished
after 0.133 seconds. I once loved someone
who was always early and
this made me feel late even though
I was always on time. each second
with him, my eye stalks were being shot into a black hole
and there was no escape except the
singularity. that was the first time
I saw her, rather I felt her in the dark
nothing of nothing against nothing making out with nothing,
undulations of Time purring like a cat
on a radiator, while I wheezed and
wheezed in a relationship
without windows. Time is
apparently asexual lives 300,000
miles away, and I'm not
even a ripe plum, just an angry
persimmon nothing wandering
the aisles of joe's abode like I would
rather be at Costco instead.
when I left him to go to mars, I said sorry to my nothing
and his nothing
and they went back into the
black hole where they lived
happily, ever after, I think. I don't mind waiting.
I like board games too.

Consolation
Angelina Martin

It's different now but it's not a waste

It can still feel necessary
like ignoring a call
like returning an email
like spending \$200 at target
like walking out of a soul-crushing job
instead of putting in your two weeks' notice

It can still feel thrilling
like shoplifting Chapstick
like getting a text from your favorite ex
the one who mostly remembers your birthday
and who didn't tell his friends that you're evil
to your knowledge

It can still feel comforting
like a free cup of coffee
like a high school playlist
like a revenge fantasy
like an alternate ending
like a forgiving photo of yourself that someone else took
like driving aimlessly on borrowed highways
like taking a nap on the floor of your closet
while your confused bed is just feet away

It can still feel sweet
like peach cobbler made by your friend's mom
the one who hugs you so tightly and tenderly
that a regulation golf ball is born in your throat
like guest bedroom sheets
like a fun run medal
like a mean cat
who slowly warms up to you

It can still feel cathartic
like the day after a rainstorm
when the waterholes are ripe
like you and your only sister
rubbing the mud and gravel of the riverbed
all over your arms and legs
we're exfoliating!

like ugly laughing
like playing pretend
like reciprocated affection
like filling up a diary and throwing it out

It can still feel satisfying
like making someone laugh in your non-native tongue
like snaking a drain
like popping a zit
like hocking a loogie
like harmless gossip
like flipping the bird to a bad driver
like plopping down in the grass during soccer practice
to gaze at clouds and absent-mindedly
ruin the lawn

and when you're lucky
it can even feel good
like sex from before
when you felt everything
and your mind had the decency
to stay put

Girlish Lips
Jack D. Harvey

Red countries,
geography
of smiles,
grimace of
pain or love,
fat heroes
of composure.

Afternoon
Michelle Lin

In the summer, the heat shimmered in waves over rows and rows of wheat, which bowed in the faint and humid summer breeze.

With the sun already lowering in the sky, A-Shan sat on the dusty stoop and chewed with gusto on his half-blade of sugar cane, which ran nearly the same length as his forearm. Its crystalline sap yielded easily with each crunch of his molars, the fresh juice bursting sweet and lemony in their raw form. After a few minutes, all that remained was a wilted length of pulp and fiber, its nectar resting in his concave belly to power the next few hours, until his father returned. They would likely head over to the water pump by the old neighbor with the faded red roof and begin hauling water for the evening. Tonight's meal was steamed cassavas again, with a little bit of rice. He had seen the earthen stack of cassavas resting next to the water pail at midday.

Kicking a pebble off the step, A-Shan rose and walked around the house, loping toward the main road. One could hardly call it a road, more a well-worn path, wide enough for two horses and a farmer abreast, leading more or less a straight line past the Fengs, and Skinny Lin the blacksmith, over the pond where Uncle Chen never allowed any fishing, and then two more miles more until the edge of the town. The first building in town was another blacksmith with a yard full of rusted scrap, whom everyone called Little Pan, but he was big and mean and known to cheat, so only the townsfolk tolerated him. Farm folk understood better than to work with a cheating blacksmith.

Entering further into town, he spotted the *man-tou* lady a block away from her usual corner, the creaky metal cart and its faded, drooping blue banner already half-covered by clouds of steam from the freshly made rounds of dough. He had a coin in his pocket that he had found this morning, lying beneath the thrushes near the stream – it was unimaginable who might be so careless as to let it fall. His father always carried coins in a worn leather pouch, double tied by two leather strands, then zipped into a pocket. His shirt would hang untucked, long enough to cover the protrusion from the pouch, and at any rate, it was never the case that they had so many coins to jut obtrusively from a man's trouser pocket.

He should save the coin for *a-ma*, as they were always worried for the herbal medicine man who came every month for *a-ma* and her old, weakened heart. But no one would miss a penny, he thought, and it was not every day that he had time before dinner to catch the *man-tou* lady with steaming buns freshly displayed out of their bamboo nets. He approached quickly and inhaled the sweet, yeasty scent of the pearlescent bread.

"One *man-tou* please, Big Sister," he said politely. She must have nearly the same sixty years on her as his *a-ma*, but everyone called her Big Sister and that was what she insisted, too.

"A fresh one, eh?" Big Sister asked sharply. "You had some luck today, A-Shan." It was a statement that was also a question.

"Yes, Sister," he answered politely. He thought to turn the topic quickly. "Your cart is sloping on one side, Sister, can I help you take a look at the wheel tomorrow? I have the wrench back from Xiao Long again." Xiao Long, his closest neighbor who was nearly eleven but still five centimeters shorter, was forever borrowing things without returning them on time, and A-Shan would feel the sting of it next time Father could not find it.

"Trying to get a free *man-tou*, I see? I don't need your help! But you can patch my sign, the corner at the top is almost torn, and then I cannot hang it anymore. Do that and I'll see what I

have tomorrow.” Her hands flew as she stacked net after net of buns in the cooling racks. “But not the sweet ones, you’ll not get one of those! Maybe you can have any wheat ones I overcook.”

A-Shan didn’t like the wheat ones so much, and the ones that were left in the bamboo baskets too long became both tough and sticky on the teeth, a contradiction that made no sense. It was a mystery who might truly enjoy eating a wheat bun. He felt a flicker of annoyance that his good needlework couldn’t earn even one of the famous sweetbreads, for which many came from even the next town to buy before the end of the evening, snatched up as they were and long gone before sundown.

“Yes, Sister, I can do that. Can I have my bun now?”

“*Ai!* take it and go away! I cannot stand all day chatting with you like your sweetheart!” Her hands flew ever faster as she stacked nets hither and thither with no discernible pattern, and then bent down to adjust the wood fire which kept the water simmering and steaming throughout the day.

“Yes Sister, goodbye, and I will come again tomorrow to look at the wheel.” He walked away quickly and sank his teeth into the warm bun. It tasted rich, and sweet, from all the hours of rising and kneading under Big Sister’s expert arms, and fragrant from the good flour she used, never moldy or stale like what Uncle brought over when Father hadn’t caught fish for a week. Uncle and Father both hated to share, but usually, Uncle shared food grudgingly, on Sundays, as he came to visit with *a-ma*.

Three or four gulps later, the tension softened in his belly as the bread lay marinating with the cane sap earlier. He turned quickly, crunchy lightly on the gravel road with worn leather sandals, and began his walk home.

Memes on Gréco At the Dog Exhibition
Rabiu Temidayo

Tokyo's barking was melodramatic
at the
dog show.

Everyone couldn't remember exactly
what it was
[a blonde pianist recital named Elaine]
but at least I Shazam,

Chinchillas washed with shampoos, I
understand.

Despondent music departments, experimental
music
[Alien observer — Groupie]
I fondled a denim-dressed greyhound in a
hutch

Pre-conditioned to learn obedience from a Russian
dealer.

Saxophonist shuffle in front of the exhibition hall
Groping at key notes and making friends with women,

Some of those suedes are musicologists,
veterinarians,

Philanthropists bend over a Bichon Frise in a
hutch,
A week before then Tokyo was in Philadelphia in
a cat enclosure,

One pedestal, one auctioneer, seventeen bidders.
[\$0, entrance fee]

A postgrad sold his first dog when I came in, amber-coloured Affenpinscher, Border Terrier.

Christmas lights that refused to be put down, a spectacle for our observership,

At the corridor, crooked Ghanaian craftsman built a hutch,
Distributing programmes that included
outbreeding, importation

of canines. An inflated airman ushered in auctioneers, imps.

Animal legislation, seat arrangements pinned to a glass-framed notice board.
Saxophonists auditioned through Jamaican genres
for harmonious transcendence,

Earth matters rapture when they wound up their
radical consequentialism, to a frontage

With blooming ipecahauaha, and conference of
peckerbills,
[Something about John Coltrane]

Pinscher senses parsing through the soul's proprietary for unwelcome conversations

One white poodle named Pound Sterling
in a cat enclosure.

A rugged Rottweiler named Rice Krispies
in a hutch

Ten more cairns owned by a Newzealander [who was cartoon enthusiast named Icarus]

We browsed through several breeds, gamble frotteurists
and, autonomy in a hurry

Social-media's influencers browsing through the rudimentary cages full of boerboels,
pit bulls, Australian golden retrievers,

Postgrad arboriculturists, veterinary surgeons
and their girlfriends calling on Zoom.

Children of senators with health insurance for Golden Retrievers.

Graduated veterinarians [that haven't been sworn
to profession] pretending to be conversant,
across hypoallergenic rug, solemn lightning

Improv browsers like me and travel bloggers
merge about protest music, foreign policies.

Being Indecisive at the Urinal
Michael Drezin

I don't know why I have high blood pressure, or if I do. Doc says I do, but how do I know if he knows? Sure, he put that rubber contraption on my arm and pumped it up and made his pronouncement 140 over 90, but how do I know that wasn't a ruse to keep me coming back. From what I hear, doctors don't make what they used to.

I smoke, but only a pack a day. Maybe more. It's not like I keep track. I drink, beer mostly if you call beer drinking and I regularly eat fried foods. So regularly, in fact, that the Colonel takes orders from me.

But I've been doing that all my life so what's changed? It can't be that I'm older now. Age is just a state of mind, and beside some lower back pain, I feel fine. I look older, and that's a plus. Now, with my distinguished grays, I look wise. In my youth, I had no distinguishing qualities. Now, I look like I do.

I take my medicine every day, Sunday's, my day of rest, included. I don't want to stroke out, doubt that I would, but doc said that could happen. And if that happened, I'd try to speak but maybe I couldn't and that would be bad because I make my living giving walking tours of Greenwich Village in New York City, once home to beatniks, and hippies, and original gay liberationists and artists in all forms of the arts. If you lived there in the day, it was, most likely, not with your mother's approval.

I work for the Big Apple Tours and More Company. The more refers to discount tickets to all major New York City attractions. The tour begins in Washington Square Park. It has this big arch that was modelled after one in Paris, but this one was built to celebrate George Washington as president. (If the guy you're celebrating can't come to the party because he's dead, is it still a celebration?)

I mention historical facts to people with no interest in history, so years ago I started making some up. I point to any brownstone and say, "The Beatles lived there... The first Thanksgiving was held there... where that building is, a ladies room now stands."

When I was a kid, the history books always used the phrase "where that "now stands" rather than "where that "now is," and so I adopted the phrase even though I think it's pretentious. I refer to my additional facts as part of the secret history of the village, and that's why you won't find it in a book unless, of course, it's a book of Greenwich Village secrets.

In any event, because I need the money, and because I use all of my sick days every year to get over New Year's Eve, missing even a day's work hurts. So, like I said, I take my medicine regularly, even though it makes me wiz something fierce. Some days, out on the tour, I do that crazy dance just to hold it in.

I don't owe anyone an explanation, so I'm not giving one. All I'm saying is last Monday when the tour got rained out, I could have cleaned my apartment, something I never do, catch up on my reading, something I only do in the bathroom or go to the movies, and that's what I did. I took my friend Mr. Six Pack with me. Usually, that's not enough beer to make me piss, much less get drunk, but I didn't figure in the effects of the new medicine.

Well, I make it through the movie... Bait and Switch. Get this. The guy she married ain't the guy she thought he was, so she has an affair, after affair, only to discover nobody is who they seem to be.

I could have gotten past the unoriginality of the plot, (I don't require a deep story as long as I'm entertained) but I was watching the struggles of people I don't know well enough to care about. B-O-R-I-N-G. (Spoiler alert, she wasn't who he thought she was either.) I guess the only good part of the movie was no one wore clothes for very long.

It was playing at the Jane Street Theater, one of those old-time movie houses that survived the duplex era. Just one men's room. Just two urinals. And I'm at one of them.

The second the movie's over, I hit the can.

I'm first in. Behind me are like thousands of art students, probably from the Greenwich Village School of the Arts, sketch books in hand. I'm guessing that flick was a homework assignment. Practice in drawing the human form, I suppose. And I'm assuming they're in line 'cause they gotta go too.

Things start well. I brace myself against the wall with my left hand. And I remove my business with my right. Out it comes. And then, ah, there goes the beer like Niagara Falls. You know what my ex used to say: "You can never buy beer; you can only rent it."

Then for the life of me, I can't decide. Do I zip first, or flush first? Is it zip first, or flush first?

Doc said, "Don't mix the medicine with booze," and now I know why. Behind me I hear, "Hey Mac, other people are waiting."

"Just a minute," I say, but a minute can last a lifetime when you have trouble seeing the end game. "What comes next? Zip? Or Flush?"

"Hey Mac, hurry it up."

Turns out added pressure didn't help.

I was just not sure what to do.

Well, one of the more thoughtful students reached over and decided for me. Soft hands. Felt nice. He lifted my zipper and moved it like it was an express elevator to the penthouse. And that solved the problem for then. But there could be a next time. And I might be alone.



Dora Rollins

The Search
Jeffrey Zable

Seeking asylum in another world,
this one making me nauseous and burning my eyes.
I don't want to be near most people's shadows
nor do I want to imagine them without crossing my arms.
Now at the end, and all I can say is that it was never a good trip,
but luckily, I didn't get sandwiched between two cars
vying for the same space.
I learned what I learned and though no one cared
at least most of the bullets flew over my head
and when one hit the mark
it was usually for good reason
like someone lip-syncing to a song from the '60s
while wearing bell-bottoms and a mohair sweater,
the world throwing up 10 billion onions
though no one shedding a tear. . .

Summation
Jeffrey Zable

Being sick of living is not the same as wanting to die,
but both represent an irritation in the groin
that goes beyond your face in the glass,
remembering how you stepped from puddle to puddle,
muddied your shoes that someone once said were lifeless twins.
And you smiled at this, smiled through the pain of it all,
took a few moments to readjust to your bones
before continuing through the world of your kind,
who can be very unkind.

Bar Fly
Joan McNeerney

At Jewel Box Tavern
lights are always dim
so you can't look closely.

Wearing stiletto heels, she
traipses along followed by
billows of cheap perfume.

Dressed in a second skin of
electric blue velveteen
covered with silver glitz.

She looks for a mark, some
clown who carries thick wads
of cash and a stash of coke.

Tapping the shoulder of
the willing joker with her long
lacquered fingernails.

First, she must meet him
in the back, alley to pay up
with her pound of flesh.

Showing its age, her face
is coated by pastes, crèmes,
thick rouge, blazing red lipstick.

Her brown eyes encrusted with
liners, mascara, and shadow
revealed a certain sadness,

Secreted in the dark and dank
women's room, she snorts
that magical white powder.

Nothing matters now.
There is no despair
only this embrace of bliss.

Art Saves
Lee Douglas

“I am the author,” I say. “Nell, what are you doing? You should be on Mars, developing a romantic relationship with one of the local Martians.”

Nell smiles at me. “Of course, darling. Hoopcha and I have fallen for one another. Remember, he saved me from the vicious three-eyed Boar of Gargantua. I came to check in on you, Art. Things have stalled.”

“I know that. And don’t try the nicknames on me. I know your ways.”

Nell flourishes her smile. “Whatever you say, Arthur. I took a space bus here to visit you. I wanted to see how things were going in your neck of the woods.”

“I know that. I’m the author.”

“So,” Nell taps my writing desk with a gloved finger. “How are you?”

“Great.”

Nell shakes her head. Her salmon-colored hair shimmers in the light of my desk lamp. Her sapphire space suit glitters as she leans on my desk.

“You’re not impressed,” I say.

She keeps silent.

“Fine. I’ll talk. I’m not doing well, Nell. Not well at all. I’ve stalled. Been stonewalled by my brain. I’m damn conflicted if you want to know.”

Her smile is gone and she nods because she knows this.

“I know this,” she says. “You don’t know the ending of the story. How do I save my one true love, the Martian Hoopcha? How do I, Nell Marigold from the tiny town of Cumberstone, Georgia, stand a chance against an enemy like Chief BrightBone, warlord of the Mountains of Mars? He holds a formidable stronghold atop the highest mountain where my love Hoopcha is held captive and tortured daily. Oh, dear. It sounds impossible.”

“You’ve given up on him?” I ask.

“Have I?” Nell says.

“I’m the author,” I say.

“Yes, you are dearest Arthur.”

“You could scale the far side of the mountain on the back of a two-toed goat,” I suggest.

“That could work. What about weapons?” Nell said. “I’ve never fired a laser phaser before.”

“You’re going to have to step outside of your comfort zone to save the one you love. It’s called character development.”

“I know,” Nell frowned. “I’ll need to knit gloves on the space bus back.”

“Oh, right,” I said. “The two-toed goat will need them when you reach the bitterly cold summit.”

“I’ll steal the laser phaser from a sleeping shepherd along with a goat.”

“Shepherds use them to scare off the solar bears. They love two-toed goat meat.” A familiar itching feeling rises in my fingers. “I think I’m back on the tracks, Nell.”

Nell’s smile returns to her and lights up my office. “I can save Hoopcha!”

“Yes, you can save him from the predicament I’ve placed him in.” I lean back in my chair and fold my arms behind my head, victorious.

“Wait,” Nell whispers. “I’m saving him from you?”

I put my arms down and sit upright in my chair. “I mean, in a way. You’re saving him from Chief BrightBone, but I’m the author.”

“Why would you put my love in such danger in the first place?” Nell’s eyes glitter brighter than her spacesuit.

“I’m the author.”

“Arthur,” Nell says, her frown dissolving into a snarl. “You’re jealous.”

“I’m not jealous. I’m the author.”

“Saying it doesn’t make it so.”

“I’ll write it.”

“Writing it doesn’t make it so.”

“It damn well does, Nell,” I snatch my pen from the desk and click it in Nell’s face. “It’s the only thing that makes it so. I’m the author. I’m you and your sweet nervous laughter. I’m Hoopcha and his green-scaled skin that’s being peeled off by me, Chief BrightBone, atop a mountain because I know you’re terrified of heights. I know that because the tallest building you’ve ever seen is the gas station in tiny Cumberstone, Georgia.”

“I’m taking the space bus back.”

“I know.”

“I’m going to save Hoopcha without you.”

“Good luck.”

Nell grabs her space helmet off the floor. “If you loved me, all you had to do was write it down.”

“Nell,” I sigh and set my pen down next to my notebook. “You’re me, right?”

“Art...” She shakes her head.

“You’re me. I’m you and Hoopcha. Don’t you see?”

“Hoopcha loves me. You hate him for that. It’s why he’s being tortured.”

“How can I explain this? I’m one and the same.”

“You’re torturing yourself, Art.”

I shrug. “I’m the author.”

“And that means I’m Art as well?”

I think she’s using her nickname for me, but I’m struck by a thought here in this moment. Is she art or is she Art? Has Nell become something other than me, her soul creator? I swallow in the silence, afraid of what she might do.

Nell seals her helmet on with a click of the bolts. Her eyes aren’t glittering anymore. “I’m taking the space bus to Mars. I have to save Hoopcha from your diabolical Chief BrightBone.”

“But this is just all me,” I say, hoping that saying it made it so.

There’s something odd about Nell now. I don’t know her like I thought I did. Does that mean I don’t know myself like I thought I did? I don’t know what she will do next.

She senses my fear. “You can come if you want to help,” Nell’s voice is muffled, closed off, and distant from the inside of her helmet.

“How?”

“Put Art in the story,” she offers her sapphire gloved hand. “We can save yourself from yourself. We can escape down the mountain on the back of a bleating two-toed goat. I see it now- I’m clasp the laser phaser and protecting. You’re gripping the reins in your green-scaled hands and bleeding. All four of your deep blue eyes search for the red Martian sunrise; our ending.”

I write this down.

Snuff
Emily Perkovich

You said you like it when I'm nervous. You said I'm cute with my hands covering my laugh and my fingers twirling my hair. You said you feel less awkward when I glance awkwardly into my lap. You loved that aching squirm that helped you cover your insecurities. You hated when you'd inhale a line and I'd sit calm and patient. Indifferent to your flaws. You liked to offer me drinks in front of everyone, knowing full well I'd say no. Knowing full well that everyone would keep offering all night. You liked to make me walk in front of you, stumbling over my steps the way I stumble over the words that fall from me into you. You didn't want to lead the way; afraid you might be the one to trip. You'd leave me at parties to see how long I'd wait. And lay claim to me in front of large groups so you could tell me later how you didn't mean it. And the worst would come when my discomfort would leave you vulnerable. I'd spend all night vomiting up delicate caterpillars. And you would take fists and boots to snuff out their prickly lives. And through power-hungry fits, you'd confess your secrets late into the night. And as I devoured them, feeding myself into butterflies, your thoughts would become poisoned bile at the realization. And you would beg for me to hand over my safe-haven cocoons. Terrified that I may be more comfortable than you. Terrified that I may be growing while you sat in front of me with your guts on display. So you spin your spider web across my body, wrapped in carefully-crafted blankets of silk. And when I emerged, you burst forth from eggs and laid waste to my thriving. Because you like it when I'm nervous.

Dance of the Tetrapods
Emily Perkovich

I'm eight years old pressing my Mary Janes against your eight-year-old dress shoes under the pews while the father tells us about the cardinal coming for our May Crowning. I curl my foot around your leg and imagine weaving wildflowers through the feathers of the bird. Imagine the returned throb of pressure as the savior being born.

First comes love. My sister lifts her heels to my heels and we pray to the gods of give and take to unite us in this sacrament. Then comes marriage. We roll our weight to the balls of our feet and push until our laughter is born. Then comes the sinners begging to be baptized. Most marriages end in divorce. Even the religious ones.

We brush ankles, press the arch of foot to tiny toes. Our limbs whisper against each other in a holy war when I can't sleep. I curl my skin into yours and imagine the secrets that are passing through our body and blood. Imagine this is the meaning of saved.

Ancient
Alexa Renner

I swirl in the storm
Tumble in the tornado
Grumble in the gyre
I am a ghost of a chance
The tiniest probability
Of what is now
Taken for granted
Then I sweep
Down the drain
Into Ancient History
For we are
Only a moment

The Man
Lorin Lee Cary

Bill hated The Man. Arrogant, a nasty bully, a liar, a self-centered narcissist who belittled those who disagreed with him, a racist, and a sexist who promoted division to benefit himself.

Bill wanted to kill The Man. For months he'd struggled with his meditation practice and his belief that everyone was entitled to the dignity of their own experience. Yet the nagging desire to strike out persisted.

Bill decided The Man warranted death, for the harm he had done others, for his sins against so many people, for the dangerous example he set. Bill felt some guilt about the decision, but his disgust, his deep anger overcame it more quickly than he'd imagined possible.

Bill pondered how to kill The Man. It wasn't hard to imagine possibilities: a shot with a sniper rifle, a bomb, poison in a hamburger, an exploding golf ball, a crowd stampeding over him at a rally. So many ways....

Bill worried about killing The Man. He fretted about the layers of security, and about taking another person's life. And the blood. His cuts didn't bother him but seeing others bleed did. Once gratuitous violence became the norm, he'd avoided many films and TV shows.

Bill feared that he'd be found out. The authorities monitored public threats, so he'd avoid revealing anything that had to do with consummating his desire to eliminate The Man. No Google searches or digital library quests—some implanted device on his computer probably recorded every keystroke. His phone and “smart” devices, Alexa and the new TV set, likely captured spoken words. Somewhere, no doubt, a technician watched for revelatory words.

Bill wondered if he could discuss this with anyone. Maybe he'd seen too many shows about undercover agents. Nervous, he reviewed his friends, acquaintances, and the groups he was in. There were some individuals, he admitted, who seemed suspicious.

Bill paused. What about his thoughts? He knew some devices could steal credit card information from a person's wallet. Could some new technology read thoughts? Science fiction played with that theme, and the genre was so real it must mean the technology was in fact up and running. Come to think of it, those Google cars with the cameras on them probably harvested thoughts too, as did all those people wandering about wearing Google glasses. The drones had to be in on it too. Sure, that made sense. Now he understood.

Bill decided not to kill the man. He didn't like what the notion revealed about him as a person.

Bill decided to be grateful for what he loved and to ignore The Man who hated to be ignored.

Your Father's Moustache Comes to Visit
Ron Burch

You're surprised but you let it in. It's gotten furrier, less unkempt than you remember. You embrace it, squeezing it against yourself. It is family even if you two haven't seen each other in a while, probably ten or more years. It doesn't squeeze back. While you're gathered within its whiskers, a wonder of white, the whiskers growing wiry and sharp, with stray, stubborn strands, poking out like spines from a cactus. You dodge the hook of one of them as it grazes, like a thin scythe, the side of your head. The Moustache reeks of sweat and coffee, but you find it oddly pleasant, almost comforting. You also pick up a quick splash of whiskey and that makes you smile.

It walks, more like waddles because it's gained weight through the missing years, over to the couch, sagging into it. A stray, short whisker, what could be called salt-and-pepper, gently rocks down onto your uneven wooden floor. You're surprised because you realize that the Moustache doesn't have any luggage as in past visits. It never speaks, not its nature. Timid most of the time you knew it, not interesting in tidbits or tadbites or even simple exchanges.

Your wife comes home from work and is also surprised. You two scurry into the kitchen to conspire while the Moustache leans back on the couch, listening to *Summer Song* by Paul Desmond and Dave Brubeck on the "Cool Jazz & West Coast" channel.

"I'm afraid to leave it alone," you tell Jasmine as both of you squeeze into the small half-bathroom space that once belonged to a pantry and you wish, sometimes, you had again. Cans of beans and sauces still lodge in the top drawer of your bedroom dresser, queueing up for a prized spot on the full wooden, narrow shelves of the remaining smaller kitchen pantry.

Jasmine sits on top of the toilet seat. You lean your head at an angle because the room isn't quite tall enough for you. "It seems so sad." Jasmine folds her arms. "How can you tell?" You shake your head. "I've known it a long time." She nods. "So," she teases out the question, "has it moved in, or is it just visiting?"

"Not sure. I'll find out. How do you feel about it?"

"Staying? Okay, I guess. I want to be understanding." She pauses and looks up at you. "It's kind of weird."

"Because it's a mustache?"

"It's your dad's ex-mustache," Jasmine whispers, pointing to the other room. "He has a new one now. Your dad and you already have a fraught relationship. Could this jeopardize it?"

"Isn't a fraught relationship fraught because it can be jeopardized?"

"You know what I'm saying," she admonishes. She watches her hands. Not a good sign.

"Look, I grew up with a lot of mustaches. I have boxes full of pictures of them from my childhood. The Moustache, for years it was only the Moustache, and then the Van Dyke, pretty nice, a little fancy, but then the Horseshoe Moustache..."

"I'm sorry, honey."

You remember those years.

"Yeah, didn't see much of Dad at that time. But then after his second divorce, he got happy and chubby and had the Walrus Moustache."

"How is Walrus? We haven't heard from it in ages."

"Yeah, I should contact it. Been too long. Yeah, the 'fat Walrus years,' as Dad used to call them."

You trail off because next came the worst years: The Beard Years. The Wasteland. When it all ended. You were growing up and drifting away.

“Honey, you don’t have to talk about it,” she says.

“I’m sorry,” you reply, but it still bogs you down, those times. After prosperity, those were bad times. The Beard was out of control. The Beard always liked to dominate and could be cruel.

“And then the final years, before he divorced my mom when he was clean-shaven. We’ve lost many of those mustaches because they were delicate, and that was the end of that. Until the Natural.”

Jasmine nods and shrugs at the same time. “I grew up in a different kind of family.” She reaches her hand out to you, but you step back. Finally, you say, “I’ll ask the Moustache to leave.”

Your wife sighs.

You’re both confused.

Seems like everyone is by this point.

You admit to yourself that this mustache has been around for a long time, back to when you were a kid. You grew up with it. All of your childhood memories are with this Moustache. But it was also the one responsible for the first divorce, the one that hurt your mother. Those were the first bad years and all the memories, no, not memories but the sadness of betrayal, of being forgotten. That’s what the old Moustache reminds you. But then into your lives came a new mustache, the Natural. It was like being a regular family again. Your mom was happy. You still miss the Natural. You still miss your stepfather who lost it on a quiet Sunday evening.

“It’s up to you,” Jasmine states.

What would the Natural say? It’d say, come closer, and laugh, this amazing loud laugh that could be heard up and down the block, and when you got close to the Natural, you could smell that distinctive faint sweet odor that always lingered around it. Every time you randomly catch that odor, even today, it makes you think of the Natural and smile. And you know that it’s okay to let the Moustache stay, as you bring your wife closer to you because she too understands that, at least for a while, even with all the pain it caused you, that’s what the Natural would do.

Navigation: Need
Mike Lee

Will you take me to the library?

Maddie watched her father whip up a magically prepared breakfast, setting the dish on the table, seemingly without using his hands. He was a wizard but probably had experience as a waiter at a busy restaurant.

Maddie knew nothing about Daddy other than he was always there for her; helping her with homework, bringing groceries home, and taking her here and about.

He did not talk about himself. But he never failed to ask about her day, what she did, and what she was reading, about homework, her friends at school.

Conversations were centered on what she wanted. Hungry? Let's make lunch. Want to go to the library? Would you like to go shopping? Where do you want to go on vacation?

There was no Mommy, only Daddy to care for her. Maddie had no memory of her mother, and though there were photos of her around the house, she only knew her as an image.

After she finished her bacon and Swiss omelet, she pet Saturn, her orange cat, and absently stroked his back. Afterward, they went to the library.

The books were stacked on the nightstand and scattered on the bed. Maddie read a lot, and Daddy let her borrow as many books as she could carry. Today's haul was about ancient Greece and Rome, and Jane Austen.

She brushed her teeth and picked Saturn up and carried him into bed. He jumped from her arms and settled in his favorite spot on the green duvet. His head curled into his favorite position, clockwise away from the curtained window. The curtains are always open to the star-filled cloudless night, and the crescent moon set high in the clear dark blue sky.

Saturn purred when Maddie climbed into bed. She stroked his fur before reaching for the hardcover set closest to him. When she picked up the book, she suddenly started stroking him again, as he lay unmoving.

She settled in under the covers with *Sense and Sensibility* and reads until she looks to the door.

May I stay up just a little while longer?

Please?

Oh, okay. I promise to turn out the light when I finish this chapter.

G'night, Daddy.

Love you.

Maddie does not remember her dreams.

Her sleep was timeless. The clock ran at its predetermined pace. The moon sat outside in its midnight blue perch, amid the dotted stars behind the window with the curtains parted, Saturn asleep, unmoved, with books stacked on the nightstand beside the sleeping girl with others scattered on her bed. Ancient Rome, Greece, favorite novels.

The night could last forever--or a minute, or for a second.

The morning sun rose. Maddie yawned while Saturn jumped from the bed and mewed. He was hungry and padded off to the kitchen to eat. Maddie brushed her teeth, showered, and

thoughtlessly flung on clothes: generic blue jeans, a red t-shirt, and white running shoes. She slid them on, never needing to tie the laces.

She entered the kitchen. Daddy made French toast, with bacon and eggs sunny side up. The ubiquitous glasses of orange juice and milk stood neatly beside the plate on the crisply ironed blue plaid tablecloth.

He scrubbed the frying pan before leaving for the front yard. Maddie ate as he watered the lawn.

When she finished, Maddie left the dishes on the table and went outside.

Daddy was not in the yard, though the car is in the driveway. The garden hose lay on the ground. Saturn played with it, swatting the nozzle with his paws.

Maddie circled to the corner and looked in the back. When she returned to the curb, Maddie looked for him both ways on the street.

Maddie backed into the yard. She then waved her arms and began jumping.

Yoo hoo!

Daddy, where are you?

Will you take me to the library?

Yoo hoo!

Hello!

Daddy, will you take me to the library?

The Tip
Bruce Morton

My wife lets it be known,
Since neither of us wears a ring
And she wears no service stripes,
That, yes, we were a couple
Celebrating our forty-fifth.

So, our waitress, soon to be
Married, asks us for the secret
To a long marriage. She says, don't
Get divorced. Simple. That's it.

Ever the diplomat, I agreed.
Peace is hard; war is easy.
She ordered ribs, I fish.

Gave her a good tip we did.

Awakening
Fabrice Poussin

Before the mirror, she refused to see
but only touch her image in the darkness.

She had awakened in the deep of the night
drowned in the sweats of an August dusk.

Alone with the quiet comfort of her solitude
she pondered the sweet feeling of her years.

Her breast heaved with the quickness of a doe's
running for its refuge somewhere in secrecy.

Her palm upon her breast she attempted to still
this violent machine trapped beneath her chest.

Soul overtaken by the rhythm of her breath
a strange pulse seemed to beg for a chance to live.

Weak as she stood in this feeble stance
she sought to rest and wait for dim light.

Catching a glimpse of the ageless curves
she remained grateful for the lone intimacy.

At last, she found the door which freed her from this
burning furnace and gave her back to the night.

Dreams of Better Things
Holly Day

If you have to blame anything, blame the memory that has failed me once again
old checks bouncing fill every corner of my head, blisters
growing on my fingertips, on the inside of my mouth from sucking at my tongue
let's call it stress, stress from that woman in my head screaming always screaming
Give me back my money! and How did we get in this fucking mess?

I'm broke in my superiority, broken in my stupidity
six of us living in a car meant for two, strange-looking bedfellows I barely recognize
pulling into campsites meant for four, still sneaking two of us in
all the fucking, meant for two but I have lost count. I had no choice.

There are no more choices open to me. Right now, all I want is water
decent freeway eyes that can pick the right cops out
a checkbook that works, a place to park my mouth for the night
all the right moves in a theory that works.

Eros and Ousia
Harris Coverley

life precedes love
like existence precedes essence

and love is very much given in discretion
it is not slopped about like gravy
in a school canteen

it is small and quiet
and given to fuzziness
until it is ready to strike like a madman's ax
(a madman in love no doubt)

some say love is evil
and I say: *why not?*

it is *not* for everybody
I decide

and if you do not take it
isn't the rejection of a gift hard-given
the worst evil of all?

Sammy Shoes
Benjamin Umayam

Sammy with his pockmarked face wore his zebra-striped shoes for the first time. Daring. All his life his pitted face had made him insecure. Eyes on the ground, distancing long before it was a viral necessity
He was encouraged by the book Sarah had given him.
Sarah was the new girl at Jobs Links, was high functioning too, and figured the self-help book would give Sammy the confidence to ace his interview.
So, he read the book and donned his zebra-striped shoes.
The stripes propelled him forward and down the subway stairs. A big Spanish guy flashed a huge smile, “Nice *sapatos. Orale, carnal!*”
When he showed up at the job interview a little late, the reaction to his shoes was different.
Daring, self-confident? They did not seem to think so. Sammy looked them in the eye, invaded their space, sat close up to them like the book said he should do. Instead, they looked down. At his zebra-striped shoes. Like they did not like the black and white they saw. They preferred the greys better. No matter, they did not stare at his face. They stared down and saw, Sammy did not understand greys.
He told Sarah. His take was different from hers. She was concerned, he did not get the job. What mattered to Sammy was the success of his zebra-stripes. As the book said, he looked the interviewers straight into their eyes. He told Sarah, “Just so you know, it was like it didn’t matter that I have a holey face. I engaged them with my eyes. And all they did, was look down. Just so you know, Sarah, it was like they couldn’t stop looking at my shoes.”
His self-confidence was no longer pockmarked, but the full self-help Sammy sought, was still beyond a book.

All Kinds All Uses
Robert Beveridge

Stragglers from the late Anthropocene
barbecued on shrimp boats, eaten
with pineapple and Walt Fabio's
secret recipe hot sauce. The organ
meat considered a delicacy,
but only until someone pushes
aside the pancreas and discovers
the clavier meat hidden deeper
within, perfect when braised
with a broth made from ocelot
blood, chardonnay, your Ativan
prescription. Seizing the day
has never been quite so delicious.



Dora Rollins

The 20-Grit Sandpaper of My Inhale
Dora Rollins

The 20-grit sandpaper of my inhale
scrapes bedroom walls
into the shrinking words
I can no longer shape

Words like failure brushing
up against respiration
like hypoxia on the discharge report
in a third column
just above my notes
on insurance coverage
in the white space
I lost four days ago

Unlock your front door for men
in rescue polyester and adrenaline
Open for intubation in the dark
Hold on through status epilepticus

Until you're home again
searching for a mewling cat

Me and Myself, or I?
Galen Fader

I'm going to tell you something. Something very, truly, deeply personal. I'm going to tell you this because you don't know me and I don't know you and it's very unlikely that this state of affairs will ever change. I hold this information close. So close that even I don't get to see it most of the time.

I make dialogues see? Between me and myself; only, that's not quite right. It's more between "me" and a version of myself I put in another person's body. Strange, no? It gets better.

I don't quite think that the "me" who's discussing things with the other me in someone else's body is me. It's more of a caricature, a cheap knockoff bought at a dime store. It isn't very smart, and it doesn't get many interesting things to say or do. All the good stuff goes out with the other me, the one who gets to pretend to be someone else.

In this way, I get to have a little dialogue between me and me, only, we're not at all the same person. At its best, this gives rise to incredible ideas and observations about myself, others, and the way the world works. However, this is rarely the case. Usually, I'm stuck in some silly rabbit hole or other, mired in a pit of neuroses created by my devilish mind with the sole purpose of ensnaring myself in a self-defeating cycle of meaningless internal strife.

The trouble is, I don't control it.

"But," I hear you say, "If you don't control it, who does?" And to that, I have no real answer. From here, all we (We? Or is it me and me?) can do is guess.

So, let's take a guess. Let's say someone else lives "upstairs." Let's say that it's Galen and his roommate Galen living in my mind. Now, Galen knows we're roommates; he knows that we're both sharing the same mental space. Only, he usually doesn't let me know he's here. He likes it this way because when I don't know he's around, he has the run of the place, he can do whatever he likes. But the thing is, Galen is not a very good roommate. He breaks things, he takes Galen's mental stuff, he plays little pranks on Galen, all this, and who knows what else. Now, I can't say why or how he does all these things, I only know what Galen knows, and that's often not very much.

Every once in a while, though, something interesting happens. Galen and Galen sit down and have a chat. This is when Galen is at his best. He tells Galen how it's going to be, and for a little while, that's how it is! Times like these are impressive to see from the outside. I (that's me now, the one you know) can see and do more than I usually can: I'm kinder, smarter, more calculated, better in almost every way. The only problem is, this seldom lasts. Galen is a slippery guy, and the moment I'm not watching, he slips out of my conscious mind, off to play his devious little games.

Well, he's slipped away again, see how quick he is? I hate to be the one to tell me.

An Early Object Lesson
Barbara Cristy

Our parents forced us to voluntarily turn ourselves in. My parents were furious. They marched me down to the local station where we met up with the others. I was really scared. Do you think I would let anyone see that? No way. The police separated us, two to a room waiting to be questioned and charged. Molly and I were placed together. Left alone for a moment Molly nudges me and points out that she's handcuffed to the table. Never mind that we had turned ourselves in. That was the day I understood the consequence of being born black in America.

Destruction of A Spider's Web
John Grey

You've taken me down,
my dew gilded silk,
my eight frantic legs,
deranged exoskeleton.

You've ripped me from my cross
to be snared by brush
like a thief pocketing a precious gem.

I'm all hunter,
and yet you, accidentally,
snared me and a lifetime's work
in one step,
uprooted this most glorious of creatures
as I angled for the morning sun.

I trapped the tasty bug
in one shudder of a net.
But I couldn't stop you
in your tracks.

I was reeling in the air,
the light, the morning itself.
Unlike you,
they were gentle with me.

Letting Go of the Moon
John Dorroh

I'm not afraid any longer, of anything:
the fact that my colon may be eaten up
beyond repair; that my house could fall
onto my back at any second; that the world
is preparing to buck all of us into a permanent
state of pandemonium. There are worse things
that have happened to our ancestors, so
who am I to think that I've earned elevated status
just because I drive a car and have a life
expectancy greater than 33 years?

If I'm called first, and you can convey
my wishes, tell them that I need an evening
flower for the trip across the bridge, something
that will blossom in my soul into a new dimension,
one that will leave my mouth agape, images of words
coated with starchy saliva that will conjugate lost verbs
with finesse so that angels will understand
my wishes enough to make me float.

The sun has sunk well below the horizon.
It's dark like the side of the moon that we never
get to see. Who knows what's there? Maybe I'll
let you know that it's okay wherever I went.

The Girl in My Diary
Karen Neuberger

Jotted details of small escapades, successful days of good hair, a pound lost through diet. A boy who looked her way. A boy who spoke. The one she pined for. She was running toward even as she ran from, all breath and hope. She thought there was so much to learn that would change her. She was right, but not in the ways she thought. Instead, she got me.

The End of the Story
Karen Neuberger

The end of the story is waiting
in a hazmat suit and standing
around, hopping from leg to leg,
waiting to make its full appearance.
I'm one of the ones
questioning the end of the story
but I can't get a straight conclusion
and get instead a different possibility
each time I inquire. Still, I ask
and in doing so, try to convince
the end of the story that I'm not
asking for me because I'm sure
I'll be out of here by the time
the end of the story fully arrives
when everything not yet down
will keel over by various means,
none of them very enjoyable,
most outright nasty. Sometimes
the end of the story and I
embrace and weep at the scenarios
told—the one that especially gets
us both is where most
of the bees and birds
are dead and all the forests
have been cut down.
And the children in this end
of the story, this finale,
are without hope.
Sometimes in telling another end
to the story, we have to stop
because in this scenario, a hurricane
forecast for weeks has arrived,
and plans to stay with winds
over 210 mph and rain that for days
will dump an inch an hour and no one
has prepared an ark and no one
even has any wood to build
an ark though some have tried
to use the discarded plastic bottles
that rise like mountains
every few meters across the globe.
And there is nothing anyone

can do. Except wait. And the end
of the story and I just stare at this
ending and have no words left.

Wave Length

Wave Length

by Gary Beck

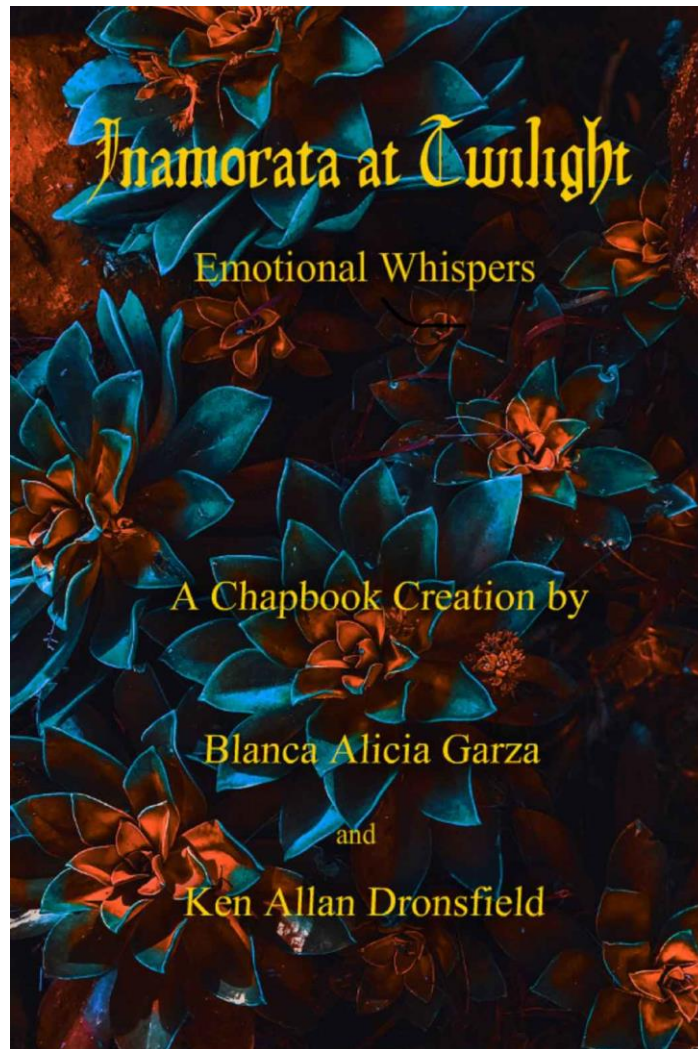
For Immediate Release

Wave Length follows Mike Sanchez, a Mexican-American boy, as he grows up in a run-down trailer camp in a small Southern California beach town. Despite blond hair and blue eyes, he's stigmatized for his Hispanic last name. He delivers newspapers until the paper goes online. His mother's boyfriend kicks him out of the trailer, then he lives on the beach where he becomes fascinated by surfing. A job in the Wave Length surf shop transforms him as he becomes a surfer, develops talents and abilities as he builds a meaningful life.

Wave Length is a 363-page novel in paperback priced at \$20.00, ISBN: 9390202280 published by Cyberwit Publishing. For info or to request a review copy,
Contact: cyberwit@gmail.com

Available on Amazon here: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/9390202280/>

Gary Beck



Two of the most compelling contemporary voices in American poetry, Blanca Alicia Garza and Ken Allan Dronsfield, collaborated in the creation of this poetry chapbook, which tugs at heart and fills the spirit. The poets reveal never-seen-before poetry of longing, love, and nature communion. Delight yourself in these raw, passionate, and profound verses, and immerse yourself in feelings and thoughts.

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Published Magpies

JAMES MULHERN "GIVE THEM UNQUIET DREAMS" (Amazon)

Synopsis:

"In 1976, fourteen-year-old Aiden wants to free his mother from McCall's, a psychiatric institute outside of Boston. He's certain she's not schizophrenic because he also sees ghosts. His grandpa, whose spirit visits at night, tells him he must rescue his mom from "that shower of savages" at the hospital. "Like you, she has second sight. Your grandmother's ma also had the gift. She was demonized, and we can't let that happen to your mother." Aiden enlists the help of his nana's old-lady friends, his brother Martin, and a cat named Arthur. Aiden has the foresight to know that everything will turn out okay, even though bad things may happen. They always do. Nana's advice that life demands we "keep calm and carry on" propels him as he is challenged by tragedies, unexpected twists of fate, and the spirit world."

https://www.amazon.com/Give-Unquiet-Dreams-James-Mulhern/dp/1082240621/ref=sr_1_fkmr0_1?keywords=give+me+unquiet+dreams&qid=1570132001&s=gateway&sr=8-1-fkmr0

BEAR KOSIK (Amazon)

Bear Kosik is a playwright and author of three novels and a book on the current state of democracy in the USA. His short fiction, poetry, blogs, plays, and essays have been published in various reviews, websites, and anthologies.

https://www.amazon.com/Bear-Kosik/e/B01DGK1IKG?ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1&qid=1571505633&sr=8-1&pldnSite=1

MIKE LEE

Mike Lee is a writer, editor, and photographer for a labor publication in New York City. His short stories are published in many print and online publications, including Ghost Parachute, Lunate, trampset, among others. His award-winning photography has been published in Oprah Magazine, The Chief-Leader, and participated in several group shows in Europe and the United States. He also blogs for Focus on the Story website: www.mleephotoart.com. A collection of his short stories, The Northern Line, is forthcoming from Atmosphere Press.

Back Patio Press: Congress of Wonders

backpatio.press/2020/11/02/the-congress-of-wonders-by-mike-lee

Bewildering Stories: On the Balcony

bewilderingstories.com/issue875/on_balcony1.html

Fiction On the Web: Forward March

fictionontheweb.co.uk/2020/08/forward-march-by-mike-lee.html

Bio's

Sandra Kacher comes to writing poetry after years of hearing about the inner lives of hundreds of therapy clients. She brings the same compassion and sense of irony to her writing as she does to listening. Touched by Mary Oliver, and heartened by Billy Collins she brings a heart for beauty and an ear for music to her writing. Her poetry is to share the ways she is moved by nature, human life, and all the flotsam that catches her eye. As an older poet, she is shaped daily by intimations of mortality, and most of her work is touched by loss—past or to come. Poetry keeps her open, fights off cynicism in a world that often leaves her listless.

Lining Wang is a Chinese-American writer and engineer based in the Bay Area. They are (barely) staving off existential despair via anime, video games, daydreams, and the color blue. They can be found online @tinydeltas on Twitter and Instagram.

Angelina Martin is a writer, comedian, and waitress who lives in Austin, Texas. She has been published in the literary journals *Okay Donkey Mag*, *Sea Foam Mag*, and *Be About It Press* as well as in the book *Anthology: The Ojai Playwrights Conference Youth Workshop 2006-2016*. You can usually find her oversharing on Twitter under her government name (@angelinaJmartin) or napping next to a body of water.

Jack D. Harvey's poetry has appeared in *Scrivener*, *The Comstock Review*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Bay Area Poets' Coalition*, *The Antioch Review*, *The Piedmont Poetry Journal*, and elsewhere. The author has been a Pushcart nominee and over the years has been published in a few anthologies. His book, *Mark the Dwarf* is available on Kindle. <https://www.amazon.com/Mark-Dwarf-Jack-D-Harvey-ebook/dp/B019KGW0F2>

Michelle Lin is a freelance writer based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and has spent nearly two decades in her professional career focused on business writing, including editorial and copy-editing duties. In her private life, she enjoys developing fiction and non-fiction essays based on her extensive travels, her diaspora background, and observing and enjoying third-culture parenting.

Rabiu Temidayo writes critical essays. He is in the school of psychology, he studies art and photography. He reads for *Tinderbox Journal*. He published *Daylight* (2018), on *Ghost City Press*. He is published on *Ric Journal*, *Cosmopolitan Hotel*, *Selcouth Station*, *Bone*, and *Ink*, etc. Twitter: @rabiutemidayo

Michael Drezin, a lawyer in the Bronx, is a motions writer, brief writer, and occasionally the ghostwriter of please excuse my child from school notes. He has been published in *Fiction on The Web*, *50 Word Stories*, *NYC Tastemakers* and is working on a collection of short stories.

Jeffrey Zable is a teacher and conga drummer who plays Afro-Cuban folkloric music for dance classes and Rumbas around the San Francisco Bay Area. His poetry, fiction, and non-fiction have appeared in hundreds of literary magazines and anthologies.

Recent writing in Nauseated Drive, Pensive Stories, Former People, Sein Und Werden, Untitled Writing, Third Wednesday, Brushfire, Smoky Blue, Alba, The Daily Drunk, Derelict Lit, The Stray Branch, and many others.

Joan McNerney's poetry is found in many literary magazines such as Seven Circle Press, Dinner with the Muse, Poet Warriors, Blueline, and Halcyon Days. Four Bright Hills Press Anthologies, several Poppy Road Review Journals, and numerous Spectrum Publications have accepted her work. Her latest title, *The Muse in Miniature*, is available on Amazon.com and Cyberwit.net. She has four Best of the Net nominations.

Lee Douglas has had his work featured in *Intrinsick* and the *Whispering Prairie Press* among other publications. Lee is the kind of guy that spends his quarantine drunk and panic editing his prose and poetry into oblivion. When there's not a global pandemic he's usually in a library panic editing his prose and poetry into oblivion.

Emily Perkovich is from the Chicago-land area. She is an Art Evaluator for Persephone's Daughters and she spends her free time in the city with her family. Her work strives to erase the stigma surrounding trauma victims and their responses. She is previously published with *Wide Eyes Publishing*, *Potted Purple*, *Prometheus Dreaming*, and *Awakened Voices* among others. Her chapbook *Expulsion* was released in April 2020 with *Witches N Pink*.

Alexa Renner likes poetry and lives in Akron, Ohio.

Lorin Lee Cary taught History at the University of Toledo and the University of New South Wales. His fiction includes *The Custer Conspiracy*, a historical novel set in the present, *California Dreaming*, a metafiction novella, and stories in *Torrid Literature*, *Cigale Literary Magazine*, *decomp magazinE*, *Lit. cat* and *Short Story*, among others.

Ron Burch's fiction has been published in numerous literary journals including *South Dakota Review*, *Fiction International*, *Mississippi Review*, and been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. His new novel, *JDP*, comes out in 2021 from *BlazeVox books*. He lives in Los Angeles.

Mike Lee is an editor. His fiction is in *Ghost Parachute*, *Lunate* and others. Website: www.mleephotoart.com. He also blogs for *Focus on the Story*. A story collection, *The Northern Line*, is forthcoming from *Atmosphere Press*.

Bruce Morton splits his time between Montana and Arizona. His volume of poems, *Simple Arithmetic, and Other Artifices* was published in 2015. His poems have recently appeared or are forthcoming in *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *The Lake (UK)*, *Adelaide*, *Better Than Starbucks*, *Main Street Rag*, and *Nixes Mate Review*.

Fabrice Poussin teaches French and English at Shorter University. Author of novels and poetry, his work has appeared in *Kestrel*, *Symposium*, *The Chimes*, and many other magazines. His photography has been published in *The Front Porch Review*, the *San Pedro River Review* as well as other publications.

Holly Day (hollylday.blogspot.com) has been a writing instructor at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis since 2000. Her poetry has recently appeared in *Asimov's Science Fiction*, *Grain*, and *Harvard Review*, and her newest full-length poetry collections are *Into the Cracks* (Golden Antelope Press), *Cross Referencing a Book of Summer* (Silver Bow Publishing), *The Tooth is the Largest Organ in the Human Body* (Anaphora Literary Press), and *Book of Beasts* (Weasel Press).

Harris Coverley has had verse most recently in *Star*Line*, *Spectral Realms*, *Ariel Chart*, *Yellow Mama*, and *View from Atlantis*, amongst many others. He was also long-listed for the 2020 Rhysling Award and lives in Manchester, England.

Ben Umayam moved to NYC to write the Great American Filipino Gay Short Story. He worked for political consultants, became a chef at a fancy hotel, then worked privately as a chef for priests. He is now retired and is working on that short story again. He was published in the online magazines Maudlin House, Digging Through The Fat, The South East Asia Drabble Anthology published by Insignia, and 34th Parallel Magazine.

Robert Beveridge (he/him) makes noise (xterminal.bandcamp.com) and writes poetry in Akron, OH. Recent/upcoming appearances in *Stone of Madness*, *Thirteen Myna Birds*, and *Caustic Frolic*, among others.

Dora Rollins is in her third year of producing workshop-critiqued poems and teaching creative writing in the Tucson, Arizona, state prison. Serving as an Associate Editor for the related [Rain Shadow Review](#) literary magazine also fuels her commitment to creativity and social justice. She has been published in [Iron City Magazine](#).

Galen Fader lives in Knoxville, Tennessee. He likes to walk, talk, and look at all the little things no one has time for.

Barbara Cristy is a clinical social worker who has always been interested in social justice. She is in private practice in Washington DC where she works with individuals and couples.

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in *Soundings East*, *Dalhousie Review*, and *Qwerty* with work upcoming in *West Trade Review*, *Willard and Maple*, and *Connecticut River Review*.

John Dorroh may have taught high school science for a couple of decades. Whether he did is still being discussed. His poetry has appeared in *Dime Show Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Selcouth Station*, and several others. He likes to travel, bike, cook, and play in the dirt.

Karen Neuberg's poems have appeared or are forthcoming *Eratio Poetry Journal*, *Glassworks*, *Gone Lawn*, *Really System*, and *Unbroken*. She is the author of *PURSUIT* (Kelsay Books, 2019) and the chapbook *the elephants are asking* (Glass Lyre Press, 2018). She lives in Brooklyn, NY.