



THE
FIELDSTONE
REVIEW

FAMILY
ISSUE 10, 2017



POETRY



The Fieldstone Review

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The Bird

by [Holly Day](#)

The tiny bird flaps in the grass near me
watches my approach with eyes like glass beads
s
opens its mouth as if expecting
random acts of maternal kindness from everything
ng
around it, even me. Overhead
the mother catbird peeps in distress, also
watching me with shiny eyes
a look of resolution on its face as if
it's already decided I am incapable of love.

The Lens Grinder

by [Amos Wright](#)

The publishers say my treatise on the rainbow
is selling a little better this year. And
with the royalties, we can live on more
than just bread and circuses alone.
The Alhambra Decree passed
with a majority vote
and my family was pushed from country to coun-
try,
from diaspora to diaspora
like a gypsy caravan captained by Ahasuerus,
all of Europe an anti-Semitic basket case.
I rented a room with a harpsichord
whose keys I never fingered,
and shelved the laws of Hebrew grammar,
Talmudic scholia, the geometric textbook;
determined as I was
to defy the determinism of my race,
cursed with all curses of Deuteronomy,
No war between the mind and the body
except that which the mind wages
against its own body.
The sun looks the same
whether from prison or from a palace
and we too need resistance
to fly like the albatross.
The Collegiants agreed
that God might inhabit the substance of a stone
,
the mode of a mountain, the attribute of an angl-
e.
Grind a lens so large, they urged me,
that even the myopic, who can buy nothing
with their frugal thoughts, could see
the amigerous affections of a determinist
in cloud formations – that circus of pareidolia –
reflected in the finished surfaces of Amsterdam’s
canals.
Like Nero straining through the green
of an emerald to glimpse a favorite gladiator
just before he is devoured by a female bear.
Then a bureaucratic snail knocked
and produced a writ of chereim:
Elisha’s curse reversed upon me,
for teaching the unity of convex and concave,
the refracted real image and its virtual other,
for identifying the shadow of the light with the t-
hing itself.
Rather to wear the foreskin of a Gentile like a de-
ath mask
than to have my visage printed on their Dutch g-
uilder.
If you don’t like it here, I said with blue lips,
the early onset of Potter’s Rot,
you are always free to go.
So, what keeps you here,
when the door is wide open
like the mouth of one sleeping?
God has unloaded the gun of stars.
If you smell roses, the corpse cannot be too far.
Even mechanics do metaphysics.
The Cheshire cat’s smile is no accident.
What are we human machines then
but uncanny swine satisfied?
And then I returned to my lens-grinding.
The lens grew until it filled the entire room,
pressing me against the wall.
I slept under its convex penumbra,
like a glass tent pitched upon the deserts of the
moon
among the silica dust of ground lenses,
and every morning I polished it
with the white rags of Maimonides’ turban
and a few glasses of canal water
until the forty-two she-bears danced to my doo-
f,
ready with the laughter of devoured children.

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Apotropaic

by [James W. Wood](#)

I

Into the magic circle,
the alchemist and his pentacle
to propagate wealth,
turn dross to gold.
His mixture of merds,
blood and leaves, potions
and spells all fell
to nothing more
than ridicule and scorn.

II

Into the magic circle,
the professors and their particles
to dominate: *I am death,*
destroyer of worlds.
Their sky-burst ripped
Earth a new sun, gave motion
to fiends in hell, boiled
skin, faith and bone. Their laws
conjured Mammon to be born.

Triptych of Crayon Man on Tight Rope

by [Valerie Mills-Milde](#)

Frame 1:
Vitreous
on Pink ball of foot/ spliced by
Quicksilver wire
figure grips horizontal
pole
Vermillion Red
(Slipping next picture from wool Fawn
coat your castanet hands quiver.
Must be lithium, I think.)

Frame 2:
Figure leaps defiant
Thrusts open Gold rays
his heart Crimson.
Orange propulsion
to Violet apex one
sharp, flared
stop.
(You cannot help it/ gravity will.
*(I am not blind to the density of red,
I say. I know the weight.)*)

Frame 3:
I see
you strung high in
ragged photons.
The terrible sway of colour, I muse
Beneath you, a pool of Midnight Black
Above, an Indigo sky littered
with darting Yellow birds.

Potion Against Heart-Ache

by [Randel McCraw Helms](#)

Take thee nut of hickory,
Root of chicory, parsnip, purslane and dock.
Add parsley and roses, salsify, samphire and thy
me,
And roast it or toast it and steep it in brandy
With oris-root candy
Twelve hours straight by the clock.
Then drain it and strain it and keep it from fire;
As slowly it mellows, chill it with bellows
And coat it with frosting of rime.
To keep the taste true, fine it with rue
Then age it in cellars like wine.
At least for a season live thee by reason,
Keep thee from sin or gambling den,
And avoid all manner of ire.
Then give thee the liquor, this magical ichor,
To pure lady whose love you desire,
And her heart shall ever be true.
Thy babies need never fear rabies nor scabies,
Scrofula, glanders, nor pox,
If thou blend thee this potion into a lotion
And rub on their feeties each day.
Thy hens will all lay, thy lambkins shall play
And give thee gold nuggets for rocks,
Thy heifers give milk, thy worms make thee silk,
All creatures shall love thee at sight,
If six drops in water thou add to their fodder
And knead it and feed it each night.
Keep thou this potion and magical lotion
Ever beside thee, no night-mare shall ride thee,
No ill fate betide thee, nor eye-worm trouble thy
sight.
No wife shall beshrew thee no bailiff shall rue th
ee;
Just care thou to muse thee and always to choo
se thee
Daily to use it aright.

Hemingway's Beard

by [Myrna Garanis](#)

El Floridita Bar, Havana

The barman ignores us, just another tour group,
camera phones flashing, rubbing the fabled
bronze beard for luck

Young man with a shiner turns up in every shot
having the drink we've no time for, nursing
his hurts at the bar as Hemingway must have,
taking time out from novel production,
downing a fifth *mojito*, joking with his sparring
partner friends, only one not smoking.

Plenty of Cohibas in Havana, a plethora
of famous beards worth stroking in a city
marking revolution's anniversary
tee-shirts and postcards exclusively exhibit
Che Guevara's death grimace, his sacrifice
for a nation not his own. Fidel's face absent
from the giant billboards masking
hurricane-damaged fields. Our shiny
Chinese bus passes ancient Cuban trucks.
History disconcerting for the tourist,
not one black eye amongst us, none
sent reeling from the ropes.

Accidental Agriculture

by [Bertrand Bickersteth](#)

The bruising beginning
face rubbed in
central Alberta's finest
Orthic Dark Brown Chernozem
where wheat flourishes
and barley wails
After the fight
we congregate in the principal's office:
punishments
meted out to him
the aggressor
who impugned my face against the ground
because its darkness inspired
a simile
part-time prairie poet that he was
And punishments
meted out to me
the victim so called
Well, why did you fight back?
Why do you people
always fight?
Now I have to punish you
too
The principal glared at me
his eyes a shock
of literal blue
Outside
on my way home
I pondered the view
from the top of a rare hill
a field spilled
with dandelions splayed out below
This accidental agriculture
will be swallowed
by an instantaneous city with
its blindness
its inevitability
I saw the whole against the horizon
A nine-year-old
a timeless landscape
a flatness ensuing
My tender head still throbbing
from the blunt encounter
I reached with a quiet fist
to rub at the soreness swelling
around my eyes
Well
why *did* you fight back?
When the black child is six years old
in Harlem
he suddenly sees everything he has been before
and all that is to come laid out before him and
how
it has been laid out before him and this
muses James Baldwin
is the fundamental difference between
any child growing anywhere
in Alberta
and every child that must see things
through black eyes

Hidden Message

by [Trudy Grienauer](#)

that moment
when I leave the pulp on the stove
and step into the hallway
to take your lab coat from the closet
your presence is palpable
not just because your name
is printed in the collar
in your self-confident hand lettering
you've been using these coats
around the house
painting walls, making jam
ever since
you left your career
to raise me
and my sister
I have this one
that you shortened to the skirt length
fashionable in '71
and then let out again
to put on now
to briefly feel that I am you
thirty years ago
and while I step over to the linen closet
and get the spill cloth
for wiping the jars' rims
I feel that quite possibly
it was more than an apron
every day in the kitchen
when we came home from school
you were always standing
apron-wrapped
and I can see that sometimes
you needed that coat
to make you feel professional
competent
and respected
and the work worthwhile
like paid work
the pulp is simmering
and starting to bubble up
it will make new stains
on the coat
fresh stains layered over washed out ones
my cooking layered over yours
almost as bizarre
as the views you had in '71
through your electron microscope



FICTION

Lonesome Jubilee

by [Douglas W. Milliken](#)

Yeah, sure, I could start off saying something real weighted and purposefully misleading, like winter was the easy hunting, but man, fuck that, Ro and I were just bored. I mean, stacking wood in the cellar could only hold so much appeal, right? As long as our dickhead stepdad wasn't around, we pretty much could do whatever we pleased. So what we'd do is, my brother and I'd creep out of the cellar and walk guileless as a senator to any afternoon-bright kitchen window and pluck a fat housefly doped-up on January from the glass, deposit the buzzing cretin in a plastic sandwich baggie and fold it into the freezer. Because obviously that's where one keeps a filthy bug. Just pork chunks and ice cubes and a baggie full of fly. While we were waiting, Ro and I'd sneak up to our weird plaid couch the colour of old meat in the den and extract a single straightened hair from the crown of our post-work-napping mother's head, and in some ways, that was the best part: giving Mom a sharp zing while she was so sweetly helpless and asleep. But mostly it was how we'd be trying our best not to laugh that made it so damn funny, you know, snorting and choking our giggles behind our palms. She'd wince but never wake up. Like a couple of Pink Panthers we'd tiptoe backwards from the den and by then, our fly'd be frozen. We'd shake it out from its plastic baggie onto the kitchen table, then noose the stolen hair around its tiny neck, careful not to cinch too tightly lest we pop off its puny bug head. I mean, it didn't need its head. It just looked weird without one. After that, we'd usually have to wait a bit more – just two patient boys with the scent of cellar and wood in our hair – while above and behind us, Mom's favourite poster of John Cougar Mellencamp made his mouth real hard-looking in silvery black and white and tiredly looked away, embodying too perfectly the silent disappointment of working men everywhere. The Lonesome Jubilee. Not even really that bad of a record, to be honest. But what I think Mom liked best was how the man looked in a white T. Anyway. In a minute, the fly'd thaw out – sometimes with the assistance of some hot, basking breaths – and in another minute, it'd fly, droning in pissed-off orbits at the end of a seven-inch tether of hair. Usually with its head still on. But not always. With Mom snoring loudly and our stepdad who-gives-a-shit-where, Ro and I would watch the fly turn and turn, we each taking turns holding its hair, and neither one of us would say a word. So chalk this up among the good times of '87, '88, '89. Americana pop stars and bored farm boys making do. Sleeping mother you can torture. Fly on a leash.

Ray's Rocket

by [Nathan Salski](#)

"For every sensible line of straightforward statement there are dozens of amazing possibilities." — George Louis Borges, "The Library of Babel"

There was a small man named Ray who lived in a two-story house by himself at the corner of a subdivision south of Kamack. There wasn't a lot of lock in the area, or a lot of cement, so most of the houses were made of wood, insulated with fiberglass, and covered in siding. Many people had painted their siding a bright colour — for the winter, to cheer each other up. But not Ray. His house was a drab grey. He didn't really believe in winter, and he didn't need cheering up in it, that for sure. He had a warm parka, a stack of three 300 grams and a fat screen TV, a garage, a snowmobile, and a large collection of magnifying glasses.

There weren't historically interesting magnifying glasses, or scientifically interesting magnifying glasses. The collection wasn't so much a collection of different things as it was a collection because it was a lot of the same thing. They were mostly duplicates of the same magnifying glasses that Ray had bought at the nearby Dollar Mart for \$1.20 — more than a dollar, so small. Ray used these magnifying glasses to look at the bugs in his house, sewerfish, carpenter ants, centipedes, greenish flies, mosquitoes, weasps, bedbugs, ladybugs, and — once — a praying mantis. He didn't clean his house very much, but he had at least three magnifying glasses in each room. That was, he couldn't miss anything. The only problem was that the magnifying glasses, being uninteresting historically and scientifically, had an unkind infrared focal point, so if Ray looked at a bug too long, the light of the sun or his lamps passing through would become so concentrated that it would heat up the bug and sometimes kill it. Often kill it — Ray wasn't too careful about how long he was looking at bugs, or how long for any, or with what light.

Ray also had a perch for telling tall tales. One of his neighbours, Mrs. Donna Zwick, condescendingly asked him one day how the dead the sides on his shutters had gotten so discoloured, and whatever was he going to do about it, and he informed Mrs. Zwick, solemnly, that the damage was the work of a fresh windstorm, a windstorm so powerful that it tore the glass panes out of his windows, and on that day out they painted the shutters. Mrs. Zwick wondered what windstorm this was, and Ray said that it was an isolated windstorm, the kind that only strikes a small radius, and very rarely. Like a windstorm in your brain, and Ray, sitting on her description, but a surprise you wouldn't notice it, said Ray, the master of redacting things. Mrs. Zwick didn't talk to him anymore.

Ray could remember as a boy watching Jerry Black and white news reports of the moon landing. He never bothered himself with the conspiracy theories or the reality of the situation. What he perceived was real enough to him and so, he presumed, real enough for everyone else. Alternative explanations were not Ray's strength, unless he was the one doing the alternative explaining. He could also remember as a young man seeing images of atomic fission in a technivore, and wondering what was up there beyond the rise of the skulls. A great weakness, nothingness unbound, tiny flecks of light in the darkness, tiny specks of something at all that nothing. Unless it was all nothing, which, thought young Ray to himself, it probably was. Even the stars, imaginary flares of light from some distant star's magnifying glass, trying to burn him up. He watched the Challenger burn up and smoke up the launch pad, and then burn up itself. He thought that was fitting, a journey into nothingness ending with burning up. Not, evidently, and, but fitting.

The little flicker of this memory stayed with Ray as he grew up. He thought he had stolen it, perhaps, or that it was his duty to bring it to all mankind. It sometimes ignited in his dreams, sometimes in his daydreams. Naturally, he got into his head that he would explore the nothingness of space. He was retired now, so he had the spare time. He admired some old books the library had discarded for details on how rockets were built, and while he may not have been a rocket scientist, he certainly got the gist of what the books were trying to say.

Luckily, Ray's town had a large hardware store that specialized in second-hand goods. That wasn't his main choice, which suited Ray. He bought a stack of difficult books, a bucket of round roofing nails, a hammer, measuring tape, and saw, and went to work. After all was said and done, Ray spent \$24.25 on wood, \$43.88 on nails, and \$77.95 on tools. For an engine, he paid two of his neighbours each \$50 for their old snowmobiles, which with great ceremony Ray said they wouldn't be needing this winter, or something. He modified the snowmobile engines after browsing some instructions he found online and ordering some casing, tubing, valves, and sprockets online for \$189.99.

The same online instructions told him how to make fuel, and may have warned him to be extra cautious when mixing fuel, but Ray knew how to be extra cautious, and so he was. He bought a barrel of diesel from the hardware store for \$217.20, and while wearing the ventilator his father, who had spray-painted car doors at a Ford assembly line that was now in Mexico, had given him, he mixed that diesel with three bags of fertilizer and a can of nitroglycerin he had purchased online for \$51.40. The fertilizer and the nitroglycerin arrived with a special investigator from the RCMP, who, after answering Ray with questions about his intentions and demands to see every square inch of his two-story house, finally left shaking her head.

The rocket was almost done. It had taken seventeen months, three days, and nine hours, including breaks and sleeping time and one two-week vacation to Meadow Portage where Ray stood on a pebble beach every night and gazed intently at his stars over Lake Winnipegosis. With the \$2462.21 for a propane and special metal-headed chrome bolts, which they used to cover the entire rocket to make it the kind of rocket that could parashut through the upper atmosphere, it had cost \$1219.20. But that was nothing compared to the beauty of the thing now. A white greater than the sum of its parts, said Ray to himself. A sight to behold.

Ray phoned up NASA, to let them know what he was doing and that they should look to him in the future for guidance, but a patronizing receptionist passed him off to something called the CSA. So he told the Canadian Space Agency everything he had planned to tell NASA. The guy on the end of the line sounded lost and bored and after trying to dissuade Ray from launching his rocket, hung up. Ray called again and got a different guy, who told him that he was insane before Ray asked to be passed to somebody who actually built rockets instead of answering phones all day. He learned a magnifying glass over it his hand as he walked, burnt a griggy by its crumple in his system from his spotted kitchen window. Finally Ray was on the line with the CSA's chief engineer.

"I hear you're building a rocket," said the engineer, whose voice sounded like a ballistics technician from an infomercial, opening her party and knocking medicine bottles all over herself because she didn't have the right staff organizer for only \$3.99. "You should've called us sooner. Why — how can I help you?"

"I don't need your help," said Ray, "and I want you to know that you people have no idea how to build rockets."

The engineer was quiet for a moment, and Ray imagined her mulling as this cold realization washed over her and images of the Challenger seared through her mind. Then the line went dead.

His neighbours, even Mrs. Zwick, had grown restless curious, the kind of curious that makes you fascinated and fussy, and they checked glances into his garage whenever he had it open even a crack. Mrs. Zwick snuck up behind Ray one day and asked if that thing in his garage was, in fact, a rocket. It was hard to tell, she said, because it was strong on its side. She seemed nervous. Ray said yes, it was, and he was going to enter space very soon.

Mrs. Zwick asked him how, and Ray slid his handwritten notes, based on the website that had told him how to make rocket fuel, out of his pocket with an unsteady hand. He had read it a lot, Mrs. Zwick, inquiring that whether a flash or a prolonged study, no look was going to be enough for her to understand his stuff anyway. He crunched it back into his pocket to be offered again. She said that he was something, really something, but that everyone in the subdivision wished him the best. Ray thanked her with hot cold pebble words like the beach on Lake Winnipegosis.

It was time. Ray wheeled the rocket out of his garage on the two disassembled snowmobile tracks he had bought from his neighbours. He pulled it upright using a pulley he had made from his contraption, and fastened it to a temporary stand he had made from the side of the snowmobile. Mrs. Zwick looked out her window from across the street and then closed the curtain. Heartfelt Helen walked past with his girl Jamie and shook his head. Ray rocketed at them ceremoniously, grabbed a match, and then stuffed himself into his rocket like he had studied his almost-forgetter parts into his suitcase for his trip to Meadow Portage. The sun shone through his portfolio and made his smocks sweat. He lit the match on his seventeen-month-old stabilizer and dropped it beneath him, into the top of the engine.

Anxious Moon

by Kara MacFarlane

"Four happy days bring in
Another moon, but O, methinks, how slow
This old moon [seems] She lingers by my desires
Like to a step-dame or a dowager
Long withering out a young man's revenue."

— William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer's Night Dream*

"I'm taller" you for one last time
It's not just you
The problem's mine to hide
I waited as long as I could
If you need it, sure I would
That's true"

— Dinosaur, Jr., "Start Choppin"

The cracks in the road look like the vase I once smashed in the throes of grief. I still have that vase — this aching, echoing, pulsation where I hear nothing and everything all at once (that's what I get for turning the stereo up to eleven to drown out my nerves one too many times). The vase is long gone, though. I spent two months working on it in my ceramics class. I remember seeing the world through antique stiletto-era druggie sunglasses in my overcast arena, a tangible aura of angst radiating from my scrawny limbs. Not a lot has changed. I reach for a cigarette deep in the pockets of my ratty trench coat and then remember that I don't smoke — I've never smoked.

Ovid's probably out of his mind right now, twitching on my scratchy, plaid couch and staring at static on the TV. I remember when I told him that I loved him — this teenage confession, with butterflies escaping my mouth. I remember when he played me the song he'd written about me: two chords and a voice so loud the lyrics were a blur. His arched, punk shit I forgot and left his scrawny body a mystery underneath his front of arrogance and self-assurance. His glasses kept falling down and I wanted to push them up his crooked nose, to make him see what I'm only beginning to see now.

I walk past Seventeenth Street, which is one of my all-time favorites. There's a record store, and a pawn shop. I sit there beside buskers and cry for a few hours a week. It's cheaper than therapy. I imagine concepts for experimental films and make myself out, staring out into the rain. It's always raining in this city. Not that I'm complaining. It's just that it's hard to see things in the light when the sun forgets you exist.

I squat at my wreck of an apartment building. I didn't have a lot of options for locales really. My budget was meager. Plus, I (actually Ovid) needed a landlord who wasn't always on our back about smells. That sounds a lot more suggestive than it is. Ovid likes pot. A lot. He also likes to play his contrived, volume-related abuse when he gets messed up on pot or something stronger. He used to listen to stuff together, until I pushed too hard on trying to get him to appreciate John Lennon.

I sit in my room most nights and listen to three-dollar cassette tapes and pretend I'm Steve Allen or someone who can cash in on their criticism. I often sit on my saggy bed staring out at the silver of the moon and wonder when I became enmeshed in the world of "almosts." When I started making compromises about whom and what I felt comfortable with. What I felt safe around. My room's got these really great wooden floors and there's one floorboard I can lift up and hide stuff under my old reading glasses, some change, and a manuscript that will never be published.

The morning hugs at my chest and allows the worries that have stirred around my stomach to rise, stagnant and rotten and personified by heartburn. I stare at my floor, covered with ripped up clothes and sub-par shoes that have all lasted way longer than conceivable.

One of my Doc Martens is covered in white paint. A reminder of when Ovid and I first moved in together. We were embroiled with each other's sarcasm, two cynics, forever indebted to the writings of those fed up with life when we hadn't lived much of a life at all. How the books strike me as a striking symbol — my life suddenly fitting the codes and conventions of a happy novel.

I often spend my mornings like this. Staring at the speckled ceiling and reeling from stale psychedelic music still playing in the living room from Ovid's pawn shop stores. Then I realize that I have to go outside, to brave the looks of the people who just instinctively know that I'm pretending, people who classify me as just another faded punker wandering around aimlessly — probably on drugs. A month ago, I was. But now my heart sags like a menopausal breast because a decision has been lingering around my migraine mind, refusing to spit out the word vomit.

Paul Westerberg is the King of Heartache, so I drop the needle on an old Replacements gem and breathe it. Today's the day that I tell him, it's easier thought than said, or coured, as I see him sink into the room, his shoulders sinking downwards like my confidence.

"Ovid" I call out with all the grace and elegance of a drunkard.

"He ah" he answers, breaking up monosyllabic noises into complicated stans.

"I'm going"

"Doing? Whores?" His eyes are drunken, dark pools that reflect his jaded morning.

"Seattle or someplace different than this."

"I thought that you said you were okay with things. You know? How I make a living and all."

That kills me. How I make a living. He makes the opposite of a living. Funneling all of his money into his drug enterprise, snuffing out records, drink he spends way too much money on. I love his vigor, his youthful jump and enthusiasm. The way he never says no, but that's also what I can't stand about him. How he orders his values. How he pretends that he's okay when he's definitely not okay and neither am I. How he shrugs an ethereal shrug at a truly fucked up situation that could not only get one arrested but could also drive any plans for the future into the ground, creating the cracks in the asphalt like the ones on Seventeenth Street.

The rest of the night is anti-climactic. I say goodbye and could swear that Ovid shrugs. He slips around the pantry for some shitty breakfast cereal and mumbles, "I'll miss you."

The really sad thing is that I'll really miss him. It's him, the Ovid that I created — the one I wrote about in my manuscript, the one that was only revealed slowly and never wholly.

He had a smile that flooded me with glee and optimism and, once, purposeful direction that was going to land us somewhere on the giant map of musical success.

I'm never publishing that manuscript because I hope that someday Ovid will find it — with all of its errors and doodles, with all of its regrets and hopes — and read it and cry like I've cried with buskers who sing dime-a-dozen Oasis songs to help quell the pain. I'm also never going to publish it because it's a story that belongs to us — one riddled with the nuance of drugs and misfortune and other things that should be illegal.

I have the reading glasses too, for two reasons: firstly, because they look very Lennon and I hope someday he'll come to his senses about the Beatles' talent and influence, and secondly because I'm not really looking forward to seeing a world where he is only in the foreground, a memory.

I'm not excited about reading books about love and the flourishing of new relationships. The string of one that could have been — had Ovid been the permanent version of the weasel charmer self will sign like the full moon I see through the bus window. Funny, it's serene out with the swelling craterous presence in the air, tender like Ovid's big brown nose, but somehow foreign and promising. I've got a lot of phrases left, that's for sure.



NON-FICTION

The House on Strathnaver Avenue

by Michelle Brown

Ambition

I could pass an hour or more on a summer afternoon practicing the bouncing ball game *One Two Three Alary* on the driveway. The basic routine for the four-line nonsense poem involved four bounces a line, the end of each line complicated by swinging a leg between hand and ball on the last bounce. If I made it through the poem with my right hand, I'd repeat the routine on the left. With a successful performance on the left, I allowed myself to proceed to the next, more difficult execution: clapping my hands between each bounce, clapping behind me, over my head, beneath my leg, jumping both legs over the ball. Sometimes I would demand of myself a flawless routine, starting again at the very beginning if I hit the ball with my leg or failed to catch it.

Disillusionment

My father worked in the sewers of a steel mill and my mother asked for our new house to include a separate room for him to shower in when he got home. In addition to the shower, the room had a toilet, simple sink, and mirrored medicine cabinet. The cabinet had little in it. A toothbrush for dentures, some toothpaste, a safety razor, shaving soap, and a bottle of Gripe Water my older sister had brought home from a babysitting job with the recommendation that it was useful for curbing hiccups. I don't recall it ever working. During one episode of hiccups, I concentrated on just how much I disliked the taste of Gripe Water on the theory that my aversion to taking a dose could motivate a breath held long enough to defeat the malady.

Independence

The first meal I made for myself was lunch: a lettuce sandwich, white bread, Mayonnaise, iceberg lettuce. And a glass of milk.

Intimacy

"Don't you think I know none of you like me?"

It seems unjust that this is the only line I can remember from a fight I had with my sister in the middle of an afternoon. It would have been either July or August, the month she was home from boarding school. I stood at one end of the sofa, the end her feet pointed towards. She had been propped against a coffee table, but by the time she cried out the truth, she was lying on her side and sobbing.

Satisfaction

My parents took in boarders, a series of female first grade teachers who lived in a main floor bedroom and ate meals at the same time as the family and Sal Kirk Steeler hockey players who slept in the basement and didn't.

Once, my parents were away for a week and I was left in the care of the teacher. I do not remember why they were away, only that we wanted the house to look beautiful on their return. I brushed the entire wall to seal carpet in the living room with a palm-oiled clothes brush. It looked perfect. It showed every footstep.

Play

One year, there wasn't enough money for a Christmas tree. Santa left the presents lined along the living room wall. I received an *Outpak*, a stuffed toy replica of a long-haired, arctic comic strip character (unpoked). It's felt nose reminded me of a carrot. I dutifully slept with it.

Denial

I stood at the top of the steps in our bare and empty garage and read from my mother's bedside book of daily devotions as though they were sermons and the rake and the snow shovel congregants. The floor was cement, the acoustics excellent.

I wanted to be a preacher. With solemnity, I collapsed my organ to my father. He was watching television and recording church offerings, entering numbers off offering plate envelopes onto the pages of a ledger. My idea pleased him. I could tell it made sense to him. It was the one time I landed on a spot on the pretend-the-future game board that seemed to make him proud. I heard it as a note in his voice when he said, "I think we should tell Pastor Kornfeld." Heard it again, Sunday morning, at the door to the church, shaking hands with the minister: "Pastor Kornfeld, Michelle has something to tell you." Proud. Pleased with me.

This is it, I thought. This is how good things begin. This is how you start to share your life. You begin when you are ten. You start your studies when you are ten. Then you can make your dream come true.

Or not.

Pastor Kornfeld's face transformed before my uplitted one.

"You couldn't possibly become a minister. That would be heresy. You're a girl."

Telling

I drew courage from the silence, the absence of laughter. My mother was still at the dining room table. The teacher and my father had gone to bed, no evidence left in sight of the supply of construction paper circles they'd all been creating for a classroom project. My mother worked alone, papers and envelopes in stacks before her. The kitchen behind her was in darkness, the light above the table the only one on. I stood at the end of the hall, next to the built-in malgones chair cabinet, wearing a firm, layered nylon nightgown with lace straps. My feet were bare. I held my elbows for warmth.

My mother neither got up nor called me to her. When I was finished, she said simply, "Oh, now you've told me. Go back to bed."

Denial

My brother slept in what had been intended to be a sewing room. It was a doorless space at the far end of our long house, on the other side of the doors to the garage and the backyard, on the other side of my father's shower room. The closet in the room was designed for storing winter clothes. It was lined with cedar and airless. I hid there once in a game of hide and seek. The seeker rattled and my trumpet was muffled by robes. I was never to hide there again.

Performance

After watching gymnasts on television in the basement family room, I set two wooden chairs facing each other, stripped to my rights and underwear, and leapt over them. I made it three times. Twice, I caught my foot on the fourth leap and hit my head on the cement floor. My father called my bruise a beauty of a goose egg.

Boundaries

My brother thought it would be helpful to use lubricant. The first product he tried was Vicks VapoRub. Although he kept it on his windowsill, I asked him the next time not to use it.

Aspiration

The bedroom closets had wooden folding doors. The teacher kept a carton of cigarettes in blue packages on the right corner of the shelf and often left an open pack on her dresser.

In the evening, the teacher and my mother would work together at the dining room table, my mother preparing for the kindergarten class she taught, the teacher marking award printing guides by solid and dotted lines. My father was often with them, making cigarettes by filling filtered paper tubes with tobacco with a hand-operated machine. They talked and joked together as they worked.

I began with the open pack and wasn't accused until I'd taken from the closet.

Determination

When the hair on my legs grew dark, I shaved during a bath using the blade in my mother's sewing kit, holding it by the edge covered with electrical tape.

Orange Soda Paradise

by [Rachel Loverdierre](#)

Orange soda slides down my parched throat – each fizzy bubble burns and prickles. In my seven-year-old mind, these are tiny starbursts; I imagine the bright colours erupting in my throat like the sprinkles Maman put on my birthday cake in March. Later, I will associate the sensation with fireworks splaying fingers on the first of July. But not yet.

Right now, Maman, my brothers, my sister, and I are sitting in the shade of the tall shelterbelt that protects us from the wind that's raging across southern Saskatchewan. We rarely see Lassie during the day, yet here he is panting at our feet. Even he has grown weary of the heat.

"It'd better rain soon, or we're gonna have another goddamn drought," I overheard Papa say to Maman in the kitchen this morning. Her cigarette was trembling between her lips; I was about to spring up and warn her, afraid the ash might fall into her lap, and she would burn herself. "And there'd better not be another goddamn hailstorm!" Papa slammed his angry fist onto the table, and the cups and plates danced a little. Maman flinched; her eyes looked frightened as she covered closer to her side of the narrow kitchen, and I pushed myself deeper into the tight space between the cupboard and the stove.

With each slurp of sweetened citrus, it feels as though the bursting flavour creeps up my nose and then back down my throat to forge furrows through dust dunes piled high. The soda pop is a prize awarded for days of rock picking in the fields.

For at least a week we crouched low to the earth, bent like the scrub brush, fighting to stay vertical in a relentless wind, tossing rock after rock into the box of our rusted-out pick-up truck. Maman had coaxed my brother, Lynn, to stop throwing the rocks out of the truck.

"You said five more!" he screamed back at her. His red hair, matted with dirt, stood up in a mass of stiff snarls. The freckles glowed almost greenish on the bridge of his nose and across his cheeks and forehead.

Maman sighed and rolled her shoulders a few times. "Okay." She tried to reason with him, her eyes downcast. "This time, I *really* promise, but we need to finish, or Papa will be very upset." Did I imagine a shadow passing over her face? I looked up to the sky, but there was nothing but a glaring sun in a cerulean sky. "Maybe I'll get you and Rachel your own bottles. I'll share one with the little ones," Maman negotiated.

The mention of Papa's name was enough to silence Lynn. He hopped down from the box, and we kept filling the back until Maman signalled we'd done enough. We drove to the rock pile, Lynn and I each sitting on a wheel hub in the back, and unloaded. The sun beat down on my back, on my dark hair. Then we all piled into the cab of the truck, and Maman took us all the way to the tiny store in town.

On the way home, the wind blew through the open windows of the cab and we held the cold bottles to our blazing cheeks, anticipating the moment when Maman would fetch the bottle opener and pry off the metal caps. Lynn and I would make sure to catch them as they fell to the concrete pad in the shade of the elm trees.

We've started a bottle cap collection, but we don't have very many, mostly just Papa's beer caps we pluck from under the couch in the mornings when we stealthily creep about until he disappears to the fields.

As I run my fingers over the scarred bark of the trunk I'm leaning against, I imagine I'd be happy never to see another rock again. I lean against the wide trunk and squish my bare feet into cool leaf mulch that's accumulated beneath the trees over the years. I do not realize it, but one day I will yearn to see the rock piles dotting our fields. I will crave the reward of hurling one rock from the top of the pile onto another, far below. I will mentally wait for the crack that neatly splits the rock in two, revealing jewelled worlds within.

As we sip orange soda in the heavenly shade, we are satisfied. This afternoon, there is neither heat baking our backs nor wind whipping through our hair. The orange soda is rare, and today, for the first time in our lives, Lynn and I have our own glass bottles to drink from. I tilt the bottle, swirl down the last swig and wait for the dregs to puddle on my tongue.

Editor's Desk: Family Edition

by Jade McDougall

Greetings, readers, and welcome to the much-awaited (and awaited and awaited) 2017 issue of The Fieldstone Review. 2017 presented us with some unique challenges, but as always, our contributors have provided us with a rich and fruitful set of submissions that we are delighted to include in Issue 10.

Family, in its many forms, seems to be a binding theme of this year's works, and our entries invite readers to ponder its varied and complex meanings. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Fieldstone family, especially our editors Jillian Baker (Fiction), Kayla McCutcheon (Nonfiction), and Shakti Brazier-Tompkins (Copy Editor) for their tireless dedication. Special mention goes to our current web co-editors and upgraders of the website, Tristan Taylor and Kyle Dase for their enthusiasm and vision. And we mustn't forget the wonderful team of readers: Elyn Achtymichuk-Hardy, Shakti Brazier-Tompkins, Tara Chambers, Kyle Dase, Mark Doerksen, Rob Imes, Liz Miller, Geoff Pevlin, Siarra Riehl, Tristan Taylor, Rhonda West, Andrew Wiebe, Renée Wiebe, Martin Winqvist. Thank you all, you beautiful people, for your work in getting this issue out!

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge everyone who submitted to this year's issue, particularly those whose work is appearing here (Bertrand Bickersteth, Michelle Brown, Hejsa Christensen, Holly Day, Myrna Garanis, Trudy Grienauer, R. McCraw Helms, Naomi Lakritz, Rachel Laverdiere, Kyra MacFarlane, Douglas W. Milliken, Valerie Mills-Milde, Nicholas Olson, Nathan TeBokkel, James W. Wood, Amos Wright), who have courageously put their writing out into the world, and who have patiently waited to see their work on this site. We appreciate you.



CONTRIBUTORS

	<p>Austrian</p> <p>Douglas W. Millison is the author of the novel <i>To Sleep as Animals</i> and several chapbooks, most recently the collection <i>Clear River</i> and the forthcoming poem-and-essay collection <i>One Thousand Civil Servants That Christ</i>. His stories have been honored by the Maine Literary Awards, the Pushcart Prize, and <i>Glimmer</i> 3 and have been published in <i>Sliver</i>, <i>The Collyrie</i>, and <i>The Atlantic</i>, among others. His website is www.douglaswmillison.com.</p> <p>Lorraine Jubber</p>
	<p>Melissa Mills-Mills lives, works and writes in London, Ontario. She is the author of the novel <i>After Drowning</i>, <i>Winnipeg</i> (Publications and Education) which won the 2017 <i>Sliver</i> Best Independent/Publisher Book Award for Contemporary Fiction. Her short fiction has appeared in numerous literary journals across the country. A collection of these pieces was short-listed for the Black Lawrence Book Award. The <i>Lark's Long Beach</i> (Shore Publications, 2016), is her most recent.</p> <p>Tippah of Crayon Man on Tigh Rope</p>
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p	<p>Penelope Parrish is a Pushcart Prize-recognized writer and critic living somewhere in California and teaching most usually at UC Davis. Parrish's recent short fiction has appeared in <i>Bartbar</i>, <i>Ploughshares</i>, <i>Equinox</i>, <i>Verbal Review</i>, <i>Sonic Boom</i>, and <i>Blood and Biscuits</i>.</p> <p>Three Women, These Women Blues</p>
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r	<p>Margi Reinhardt lives in South Orange County, CA. She graduated from California State University, Fullerton with two BA's in Liberal Studies and American Studies, with a minor in Secondary Education. She works as an after-school teacher with several graders, but is pursuing a career in writing. On the surface, her biography looks spot and ban but underneath are signs of struggle. Writing is her relief, so she has decided to take a sabbatical in the novel and essay category.</p> <p>March Six</p>
	<p>Melanie Reibel is a retired RN infection specialist who reintroduced her patients how to be nomads. She received her MFA from San Francisco State University. Her poetry, creative non-fiction and fiction have been published in various anthologies and 15 journals, including <i>Poet Lore</i>, <i>ZYZZYVA</i>, <i>Tulane Review</i>, <i>Poetry Magazine</i> and <i>North American Poetry Review</i> (which represented one of her poems in <i>Sea of Pushcart Prize</i>).</p> <p>SUNSHINE, MOUNTAIN, FOR A MEMBER OF THE ECCLESIAE BILLINGS, MONTANA, 1955-71</p>
	<p>Kate Rogers was shortlisted for the 2017 Montreal International Poetry Prize. She has work forthcoming in <i>Catfish</i>, <i>The Great Outdoors</i>. Her poems have appeared in <i>Pan Ohio Review</i>, <i>Strong Energy</i>, <i>Empire</i>, <i>Anchor</i>, <i>Chin</i>, <i>An Asian Literary Journal</i>, <i>The Guardian's Asia Literary Review</i>, <i>The Observer's Journal of Arts, Entertainment and Culture</i> and other publications. Out of Place, Kate's latest poetry collection, is reviewed here.</p> <p>The Curving Woman, Cully Deck</p>
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	<p>Gianna Saravaglio's poetry has been published in <i>The Cardiff Review</i>, <i>London Grip</i>, <i>The Seattle Star</i>, <i>Arctos</i>, <i>Shore</i>, <i>The Wild Bird</i>, <i>Harvard</i>, <i>One Sentence Poem</i>, <i>Dodging the Rain</i>, <i>Red Coyote</i>, <i>Old Nebula</i>, and <i>Graveling Teeth Publishing's</i> anthology <i>Love Never Hurt? Never Aired</i>. She is the Poetry Editor for <i>San Antonio Review</i>.</p> <p>Myosotis in February</p>
	<p>John Whitney Steinhilber is a psychologist, yoga teacher, assistant editor of <i>Three: A Journal of Poetry, Fiction and Essays</i>, and graduate of the MFA Poetry Program at Western Colorado University. His chapbook, <i>The Stones Always Watch</i>, is to be published by <i>Melissa Benson</i> in the fall of 2023. A Pushcart Prize nominee, his poetry has recently appeared in <i>The Lark</i>, <i>The Orchard</i>, and <i>Dead End Times</i>. Born in Toronto, ON, and raised among the pines and silver birches of Fourth Bay, ON, John lives in Boulder, CO where he often encounters his muse while hiking in the mountains. Website: JohnWhitneySteinhilber.com.</p> <p>Lord of Chance</p>
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	<p>Nathan Teitelbaum is a PhD student at the University of British Columbia, where he studies post-romantic and the intersections of agriculture and aesthetics, drawing on his background in genetics, urban farming, and food safety audits. He has published articles in <i>Intersect</i>, <i>Neotropics</i>, and <i>The Anthropocene</i>. He has a book chapter and review in press, and has disseminated poems in <i>Propaganda</i> and a chapbook held together by dental floss.</p> <p>Play's Poetics</p>
	<p>S.J. Tynes in the person behind <i>Atmosphere Publishing</i>, was named award on the 2013 <i>Dave Duggan Award for Genre Poetry</i>, and has been published in <i>Islands of Mind</i>, <i>California Quarterly</i>, <i>Carillon</i>, <i>The Greenbriar</i>, <i>Wabash Journal</i>, <i>Three</i>, and <i>Tigerhawk</i>, and online at <i>Albatross Poetics</i>, <i>Unbound</i>, <i>Poetry Pacific</i>, and <i>Scarlet Leaf Review</i>, as well as reviewing several chapbooks, including the critically acclaimed <i>Our Story</i>. S.J. Tynes's website is at http://www.sjtynespublishing.com. The <i>Atmosphere Publishing</i> website is at http://www.atmospherepublishing.com.</p> <p>New Poets</p>
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v	<p>Carla Vance Carter Vance is a writer and poet originally from Colorado, Ontario, Canada, currently residing in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Her work has appeared in such publications as <i>The Street Set</i>, <i>Contemporary Verse 2</i> and <i>Melodramatic Review</i>, amongst others. She was previously a Mellon Foundation University Fellow. Her latest collection of poems, <i>Place to Be</i>, is currently available from <i>Blackout Arts Press</i>.</p> <p>Blood Love</p>
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	<p>Ben Ward is a journalist, a writer, and an Associate Editor of the <i>London Reader</i>. He curated the issue "Which Iron Will?" on mental health stories and "What You Don't Hear" on travel writing. Among other publications, his writing has appeared in <i>Southwester</i>, the <i>Global Intelligence</i>, and occasionally the <i>London Reader</i>. He is working on his second degree in creative writing at the University of New Brunswick and lives on an island between Fredericton, NB and London, England. You can find him on twitter @BenWardWrites.</p> <p>New Poets</p>
	<p>Henry Matthew Ward (Matt) is a Tennessee native with a BS degree from Middle Tennessee State University and an MA from Ohio State University. He retired from teaching and real estate development in 2005, leaving time for his hobbies of classical music and writing. He and his wife live in Knoxville, TN.</p> <p>There is a Place</p>
	<p>Lorraine Wheeler is a Canadian writer and visual artist based in Ireland. Her prose, poetry, and art criticism has appeared in Ireland, Canada, USA, Luxembourg, and online. Her artwork is included in public, private, and corporate collections in Ireland, USA, Canada, UK, Belgium, and Australia.</p> <p>I'll Meet a Tree</p>
	<p>Louise Whitford lives in Yorkshire, UK. Her poetry and short stories have been widely published, most recently in <i>Anchor</i>, <i>Pushing Out the Boat</i>, <i>Alexander</i>, and <i>English Review</i>. In 2020, she won First Prize in the Arts Quarterly Short Story Competition and the <i>Winnipeg</i> Poetry Competition and was awarded an M in Creative Writing (Distinction). She is working on a fantasy novel.</p> <p>Ode</p>
	<p>James W. Wood recent work has appeared in <i>Volunt</i>, <i>PRISM International</i>, <i>The New Yorker</i>, <i>San Diego Light</i>, <i>The North Star</i>, and <i>The Interpreter's House</i> (USCIB). He is the author of six books of poetry, most recently <i>The Emigrant's Farewell</i> (<i>The High Noon Press</i>, Leeds, UK, 2018) and gave up in Canada, becoming a citizen in 1981. His new lives in the Gulf Islands off the coast of British Columbia with his wife, son and dog.</p> <p>Amphibian</p>
	<p>Anna Jeffer Wright is a native to the dirt of Birmingham, Alabama, but has called Alabama, Massachusetts and Louisiana home. She holds a master's degree in English and creative writing from the University of Alabama, Birmingham, and a master's degree in urban planning from Tulane University. She lives and works in New Orleans. Her fiction and poems have appeared in <i>Arctos</i>, <i>Birmingham Arts Journal</i>, <i>Chin</i>, <i>Fable</i>, <i>Grain Magazine</i>, <i>Gravel</i>, <i>The Hollow Oak</i>, <i>Interim</i>, <i>New Ohio Review</i>, <i>New Orleans Review</i>, <i>On the Coast</i>, <i>Red Horse Review</i>, <i>Roanoke Review</i>, <i>Saltwater</i>, <i>Southern Literary Magazine</i>, <i>Union Station Magazine</i>, <i>Yes, Poetry</i>, and <i>Zooch</i>. Her debut short story collection, <i>Nobody Knows How I Got This Good</i>, won the recipient of the <i>North First Fiction Award</i> from Livingston Press. Her author website is available at www.annajefferwright.com.</p> <p>The Lark's Choice</p>
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