

POETRY

AT THE

BACKYARD

June 12, 2024
Tahoe Poetry Collective



Table of Contents

Pito, Pito, Colorito *por Carmen Bravo-Villasante*

Tengo Una Flor

Una Escuela en el Fondo del Mar *por Celia Vinas*
Recite by Birdie

Bear Paw Haiku
Scott Green

What the Godmothers Told of Origins
Melanie Perish

Near Here I Remembered-in Columns and Left to Right

On a Street that Should Be Named Loss
Melanie Perish

For Ornithologists, Phlebotomists, Geneticists and Poets

Sight Unseen

0

I Am With You
Aimee Lowenstern

Selection of Poems
John Merryfield

Selection of Poems
Kat Terry

11. Posture
Miranda "MJ" Jacobson

Are You Listening? 8
Miranda "MJ" Jacobson

Sarah Poem- If You're Reading This 10
Miranda "MJ" Jacobson

Manic Pixie Dreamgirl 12
Roxy Hankinson

Surrounded by the Deep 13
Jesse James Ziegler

Curtain Call 15
Jesse James Ziegler

The Ones 18
Jesse James Ziegler

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

7

7



Pito, Pito, Colorito por Carmen Bravo-Villasante

Recite by Birdie

Pito, Pito, Colorito,
¿Dónde vas tú tan bonito?
Voy al campo de la era.
A la escuela verdadera.

Tengo Una Flor

Recite by Birdie

Cuando pienso en un amigo, crece mi flor,
Cuantos más flores doy, mas feliz soy,
Porque es la flor del amor la que crece en mi corazón.

Una Escuela en el Fondo del Mar por Celia Vinas

Recite by Birdie

Hay un colegio
en el fondo del mar
y todos los peces bajan a estudiar

Pupitre de perlas bancos de coral
Pizarrón muy verde
y tiza de sal.

Bear Paw Haiku

Scott Green

Bear paw petrolyph

Granite stone all around me

I climb on with haste

What the Godmothers Told of Origins

Melanie Perish

Distant lands close to home. Foreign voices,
native tongues – these are cell tissue
to us. Paradox is in our marrow
just as ghosts live in the scaffolding of our bones like
native tongues. These are cell tissue:
foxfire on the downed white pine. Our ancients live
just as breath lives in the bellows of our lungs like
wind is-and-inhabits sky.
Foxfire on downed white pine, our ancients live
wings tucked in after celestial navigation, real as
wind is – and inhabit sky.
Herons and fish fly, touch down,
wings tucked in after sensory navigation, real as –
to us – paradox is. In our marrow
herons and fish fly, touch down –
distant lands close to home, foreign voices, native tongues.
First appeared in Persimmon Tree, summer 2020

Near Here I Remembered-in Columns and Left to Right

Recite by Melanie Perish

By Theodore Roetke

First Appeared in Foreign Voices, Native Tongues, Blurb/Single Wing Press, 2021

Now the water's low weeds exceed me* and
the cattails seeding even as blackbirds cluster
launched into the air on the lone live oak
past fence rails into the tangle of raspberry canes
that try to boundary trees and tall grass, stone
piles of dredged stone left from the gold rush
and my mother remembers these ponds
remembers the water and the paper reeds,
its silver surface but does not remember me

On a Street that Should Be Named Loss

Melanie Perish

First appeared in Abandoned Mine, Fall, 2023

He called and we walked
stopped in front of a brick house on Ralston
I think his lover used to live there
down the street from St. Mary's ER.
He asked if I remembered last month
when we were in Vermont,
but we were never in Vermont.
Nerves on Defcon 1 because
he was off his meds and on
mushrooms or Humbolt County
red-haired sensimilla.
In Vermont, he said we tapped
maple trees, drilled a trunk hole,
pushed the spile in, heard sap run.
We were magic, he said. The trees
were mystics, in English and French.
I'm afraid they'll tap
my brain again he said.
I won't let them, I said, and neither
will your brother. Let's stop there.
I left him at his brother's house
I left him in better care than mine,
I kissed his cheek before I left.
His pain was wiser
than my kiss.

For Ornithologists, Phlebotomists, Geneticists and Poets

Aimee Lowenstern

Sight Unseen

Aimee Lowenstern

0

Aimee Lowenstern

I Am With You

Aimee Lowenstern

Selection of Poems

John Merryfield

Selection of Poems

Kat Terry

11. Posture

Miranda "MJ" Jacobson

Are You Listening?

Miranda “MJ” Jacobson

Tell me something about yourself that I wouldn't guess.

Come on, you must have something.. Nothing? Okay, I'll go first.

I have a limp in both legs. Not so noticeable since both legs can't seem to work the right way, whatever the right way is. You say right and I say different, but you say tomato, and I've never gotten that saying anyway.

How? Well, it's funny. You see, when I was younger, I had a violent life marked by unfortunate events and made bright by short, sweet moments that were just that. Moments. My brother and I would wrestle, you know, boys will boys, and boy do I love him but he didn't love me enough to not hit me with a mallet the size of a grown man's fist and then some, not enough to not slam the heavy weight into my thigh and send bruises to my bone.

He's soft now. I don't want you to think he's the reason my past makes me shiver with nerve. He's only a product of what he was made in, and no plant can grow without sunlight. He may have hurt me, but who doesn't hurt the ones they love?

The other leg? I'm surprised you're even listening?

What? What do you mean that's negative?

Is a negative not what comes before the picture? It's not so silly of me to think that you might not care about the stories of my legs, when there are galaxies that consume others within. There's just much more interesting characters to further this plot and my narrative is one of tears and something dark.

Right, right, my other leg. I played softball growing up. Although I learned to love the sport, my desire to play grew from the sight of my friends doing things I had never tried before.

I wanted what they had, and I thought playing the instruments they played and learning the sports they dominated at would somehow make me feel whole.

I tore two ligaments in my ankle at a game, and they never quite healed right. It's been years and I still limp in both legs. Someone once pointed out that if I had just done what I wanted to do, maybe I wouldn't have gotten hurt. Instead of following other people's dreams, but how are dreams made if not by the people we share this life with? They said tomato and I said they didn't know what the fuck that even means, and between me and you, I think it was meant to be.

You see, a slight stutter in my stride was bearable, but the balance of the two keeps my posture straight and my mind at bay. Two stains that grace my body with memories I don't like to share, no less with you.

Well you've heard my dirty secrets, now tell me yours, please, please. Nothing? My legs were not enough? What if I were to cut off my arms, carve my torso to bits, give you everything I have and then some, would you then? Would you give to me what you stole so easily, these pieces that I keep so guarded, even in my sleep.

Somewhere along the way, you and I seem to have forgotten that I am the very things others get lost in, the darkness overwhelming and these galaxies are not meant for everyone.

You want another of my secrets?

I'd rather bite my tongue til I bleed, for nothing is free.

Sarah Poem- If You're Reading This

Miranda "MJ" Jacobson

If you're reading this, it means I've finally gotten around to writing something that hurts less than it does to not write it at all. Simplicity in statements made to someone who deserves paragraphs of hyperboles and metaphors and oxymorons, even. Anything other than what I can provide.

You see, if you're reading this, it means I've come back from a place I don't really want to be in anymore. But I find myself stuck there, an endless cemetery of misguided mistakes and deep-seeded regret and I live here because it feels like home.

But you're none of those things. You're light on a Tuesday morning in January. You're the hummingbirds that gathered at the bird feeder in front of my childhood home, before I even knew there was a you to be known, to be loved, to be everything I didn't know I would need.

And you truly deserve more than me.

If you're reading this, it means I've gone back to the girl that I was before, the one who writes poetry that's not really poetry for the ones she loves, even though it hurts. Each key stroke a painful memory that one day all I might be to you is a poem that I wrote that you throw away when it's too crinkled to read.

It's happened before. My tiny dancer abandoned ship long before I found the words to say to her, but I dug the deepest I could, bared my soul to someone I truly wanted to keep, and still she slipped through my fingers. Hold me closer, count the headlights, but she's been driving far too long for me to catch up.

If you're reading this, you've probably realized I'm incapable of writing anything good if it doesn't hurt just a little bit. So is this poem really about you?

Because nothing about you hurts. Did you know that? Did you know on days when my cemetery floods, and I must take cover, I find comfort in the times you sit with my in the living room to watch whatever it is I can find?

No worries if it's bad, we'll find something else, no worries if we've exhausted the subject, we'll find another, no worries if you're sad today, I'll take on that burden. For I'd take every crashing wave and burning bridge, every bad thing that life has to offer, if it meant you didn't think you needed to hold the weight of the world on your shoulders a second longer.

Neither of us want to live but neither of us want to die, and sometimes that's the most poetic thing that I can think of. That two people from different sides of the country could feel the same yearning for something in the life other than what they have and they somehow find each other.

If you're reading this, it means I love you. It means I'd find you in every life, have known you in every life before, and this life we have together now is not one to be wasted.

The starring role to every movie I will ever make, the reason I come out of this cemetery on warm days in July and cold days in December, every Christmas gift I have ever received and every hug I will ever give.

If you're reading this, it means your immortalized. You'll live forever through these words, and that is something you truly deserve.

Manic Pixie Dreamgirl

Roxy Hankinson

I don't think I know what true love looks like
I don't think I want it either
I think I want to be your Manic Pixie Dream Girl,
All dyed hair and vintage clothes
All touch and fire and adventure.

I want to be electricity in a rainstorm for you,
Reckless and wild, and so undeniably alive.

I want you,
To listen to me talk about how I don't believe in love.
And fall for me anyway
Fall for this trick of togetherness.

I want to be your Manic Pixie Dream Girl,
One night stands and weekend air.
Soft touches and secrets you never thought you'd tell anyone.

I want to teach you how to dance after you say you can't,
So you can teach the next girl.
The one who wants to be more than a candy-colored fever Dream

I want to be your Manic Pixie Dream Girl,
This extraordinary hallucination who writes poems in orange peels.
And tells the most vivid lies.

I want to be your Manic Pixie Dream Girl.
Because after you have fallen in love, I can run.

Manic Pixie Dream Girls are not supposed to last long
We are fleeting,
All rain dances and false promises.

I don't think I know what true love looks like,
But I know how to make you fall,

How to be a dream so perfect you never want to wake up.

Surrounded by the Deep

Jesse James Ziegler

When we are pulled under to the depths of everything into the realm of
darkness

below the grave where the dead dwell we become drawn in to the utterly
silent

words escape us to shape a new horizon the sky becomes indistinguish-
able

from the abyss of violence and perpetual melancholy we may realize we
can go no further the path ends, the way ceases the pendulum has swung
beyond our reach and we must move out of our own way for it to swing
back

It is not us who swings. We are relentlessly pursued.

Until we turn.

Being fully known and fully loved are not mutually exclusive

We may become convinced

by circumstances we've had a hand in which in turn

have had a hand in us that we must remain hidden somehow surrounded
by lies

in order to be worthy of love while the deepest parts of us cry out in hope
that it isn't one or the other but yes and

When we are pulled under to the depths of everything it is there we encoun-
ter our center

Into the realm of light

above the sky where the living dwell we become drawn in to the utterly
silent

Words escape us to behold the new horizon

Finally we see the silence for what it is

A chance to be fully known and fully loved

A chance to choose a path grounded in hope
A chance to plant trees rooted in forgiveness

We see better in the silence

We hear better in the darkness

So we become opened up to the epiphany that we cannot be too far gone
to return too far lost to be found or too much to remain

We become opened up to the truth we cannot run away from ourselves we
cannot remain hidden and seek but we can try to hide and still be sought

We must stay still to be moved We must be moved to remain still We must
allow the depths within us to remain in hope

and the depths which surround us to fall away in silence to return in humil-
ity and remain in love

Curtain Call

Jesse James Ziegler

That's why the tomb was empty. Jesus was rehearsing the curtain call.

There are time honored traditions being carried out in houses all over the globe, and these houses, most of them, are made of brick, mortar, steel, wood, adobe, earth and stone meant for a small handful of kin to dwell within at most, down to those who live alone.

Some houses are made of cardboard, tarps, and trash bags which have been cut at their seams to open up coverage.

Some houses however are built upon the foundation of hopes and dreams, using the framework of craft and storytelling, with a sturdy roof of imagination, intricate fixtures to accentuate the narrative, meant for the public at large to thrive within.

There are time honored traditions being carried out here as well. I am of those. Playhouses where let's pretend is commonplace and creating the world anew is a daily practice.

I suppose that's why this poet fell for theatre as a second love, shortly after my first thunderbolt struck in the form of verse, because my dreams are big enough to fill an entire stage, my voice can reach out to the back row and up to the stars at the same time, the heart on my shoulder tends to rub off on others and anything is possible on the page or the stage.

There is one time honored tradition within the world of theatre which I will wave my magic wand over and adopt henceforth.

Such a gesture is long overdue and I'm in the midst of writing a show now. A tradition outside of the performance itself. When the music's over as the Lizard King once said.

Some see life as a comedy, Some as a tragedy, Others a test, a game, or a gift. Those can all be true as my attention drifts. I'm more concerned about what comes next, When this perplexing production ends.

You see in my show there are the same wars we have here, the same glossy political ads, the same lies, same betrayals, and same murders. But, in my show, everyone gets to come back out at the end to cheers

So everyone can know when this show is over the entire cast of characters gets to return to the stage, holding hands, taking a bow together, at first individually, and then in unison.

Heroes and Villains, Children and the Elderly, Men and Women and all those who prefer not to say.

Trees cut down tragically early, well before their time, Those burned down in wildfires, and the ones left to grow long enough to give everything they could ever give, a bountiful harvest, Holding hands together

Chadwick Bozeman and Sidney Poitier come out on either side of Selena and the entire line of three are wearing matching Hawaiian shirts with leis and smiles just as bright

My friends Donald and Darrick come out together nervously and excitedly for they're finally going to be able to celebrate their twenty first birthdays together at the massive after party lovingly prepared by Anthony Bourdain PAC and Biggie come out together holding hands and take their place in line beside Nipsey and Emmet Till who are already there.

Malcolm and Martin come out together laughing and smiling red ink still fresh upon their costumes

My Mother-in-Law St. Erma, My Dad, my Mom's walking partner Susan, and their dear friend Brooke all come out together and I'm smiling so intently at the National Geographic Monarch Butterflies hoodie my father's wearing as a nod to my Mom that I almost don't even notice the gray in his hair has been washed out and the lines on his face have been wiped away already.

Kurt Kobain and Billie Holiday come out together waving to the crowd smiling and blowing kisses

All the nice folks from the Pulse nightclub in Orlando along with those from Club Q in Colorado Springs would come out along with the students at Sandy Hook and they'd all take their place in line.

Ghandi and Mac Miller come out holding flowers in their teeth and pirouetting downstage to raucous applause while the kids from Tech in Blacksburg, Uvalde, Parkland, Santa Fe and Stoneman Douglas are playing their meanest air guitars as laughter abounds

Sharon Tate, Natalie Wood, Nicole Brown Simpson, and Princess Diana come out together starting the giant beach ball into the nearby audience

Most are standing by now wiping away tears bearing witness to their own soul's revival

Prince and Bowie light saber battle downstage before taking their place in line beside Betty White who's arm in arm with Robin Williams

Trayvon's popping all the skittles his heart desires until the company bow at the very end

George Floyd's pretending to have a bird on his shoulder and Sam Cooke is bringing it on home to me in my show

The missing and murdered indigenous women those deemed small enough to fall through the cracks in the system get to return and listen laughing, smiling, and hearing you cheer for them the way they so richly deserve in the show I just wrote

There are no understudies in this show but it feels like a church revival and there will be a grand reunion. Y'all are getting the early waits on those pearly gates

And me? I'm content with the show I've written.
happy to wait in the wings watching others get theirs

I am a playhouse, anything is possible within me. If you choose to be of those anything is possible within you as well.

We're all getting to touch stage in this magnificent show. So let's hold hands and smile, turning toward each other as we take our final bow together.

The Ones

Jesse James Ziegler

Merriam-Webster defines revolutionary as
constituting or bringing about a major or fundamental change
This is for the ones who are being the change
for the ones who help feed others souls
This is for the ones who help pick up the refuse as they're walking by
and who stay late to have
those much needed conversations
This is for the ones who always seem
to call at the right time
know the right thing to say
and understand the times
not to say anything at all
This is for those who still give
when they don't get
who still hug when they've been struck
for those who seem like lightning
in a bottle to others
but ordinary to themselves
This is for the ones who help lessen burdens
others may be ill advised
ill prepared or inexperienced to handle
The ones who see and feel others pain
This is for the ones who get in early
stay late and grind when no one is watching
The ones who can take the long view
This is for the ones you've known the longest
who have your back unwaveringly
The ones knocking at the door when you're sick, depleted or down
This is for the ones you need the most
The ones the world needs more of

The ones who turn down the glare a bit
Who light up a darkened heart
who turn down the static a bit
Who light up a darkened room
who turn down the noise a bit
Who light up a darkened world
This is for the ones who notice the little things
Who appreciate the details
and who go the extra mile
This is for the ones running on fumes
without a refueling station in sight
who pause and breathe long enough
to see others stranded on the side of the road
in need of a ride
This is for the ones who check to see
if everyone has a ride
If everyone has eaten
If anyone needs a drink of water
or to go to the bathroom
This is for the ones who know and feel
who see and realize
who own and empower the truth of the matter
In a war torn world of inequity and injustice
In a mismanaged world of corruption and abuse
In a depraved world of greed and emptiness
In a lost world of misinformation and fleeting fame
the most revolutionary thing one person can do isn't to fire a gun, drop a
bomb, start a war or overturn a government
the most revolutionary thing anyone can do
is love

**Sabado
Mercado de Creadores**

22 de Junio | 13 y 27 de Julio | 17 y 31 de Agosto | 14 de Septiembre

3:00-7:00pm

ARTE - ENTRETENIMIENTO - CERVEZA ARTESENAL - COMIDA FRESCA

8428 TROUT AVE., KINGS BEACH

www.tahoebackyard.com para mas informacion

Poetry At The Backyard



Presented by
Tahoe Poetry Collective

Sponsored by

