



Rust + Moth
Winter 2020

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Companion

ro am and the sky is already
a billowing night ocean;
Dirty patches of clouds, layers
of tasseling grey, like a worn-out dress
that embarrasses every seamstress.
I come to the patio for fresh air.

And there she is, my reclusive neighbor,
rummaging slowly through flowerpots.
Withered marigolds and daisies clutch
at her feet. Her body, thin paper-cut
pressed onto the parapet and trembles slightly.
Then the wind comes, tussling
with the loose ends of her hair.
I'm thinking of a leaf on troubling water.
She sees me and carefully tucks them
behind her ears.

Suddenly the daily routine of the city
breaks like thunder,
She withdraws into her little room,
waddling; the cold air rattles
with each of her tiny steps.

I nod to her, the only one here today,
the only companion
among cars and bikes that rush
towards the falling sky, lacking much
of ceremony.

She smiles back to me,
her eyes gleaming distantly,
like a sea.

Moonrise Kingdom

The month is May and the day a pearl
knifed from the shell of a spring
still steeped, unbidden,
in the cold half tea of winter.

We walk from old colleges to even older ways,
tracing palm lines that unfurl through
brook and bracken, shallow and shade,
and then, a silver-skinned river.

The river flashes its moonstruck scales
as we break from the woods onto its banks,
arching its jewelled neck to touch
the warm mouth of the sun.

Honey-baked in its soft heat,
we fling our apple pips into weaving grass,
water them with baptismal tears
and imagine a grove of apple trees.

Bonfires green and my baby blue.
Tired bones spin towards the north
as we strike out into this new world,
leaving the copse behind to rest.

Which Stage of Grief

When I scatter bird seed,
when I ask about the doves
and whether to feed the geese
as she did, when I wonder
who flies with them.

When I write letters to no one
each morning. When I unpack
picture frames, perfume,
earrings, every small thing
people doing their jobs
have bundled in plastic.

When a peacock, impossibly
white and black, appears
at our roadside preening
its feathers, eyespots blinking out
like the memory of a dream.

When I no longer see her vanishing,
only this splendid ghost for which
grief is a poisonous plant
devoured to grow luminous.

Hallucinations: A Love Poem Pt 2

the smell of ~~skin slip~~ cotton candy
{a}rouses me at night—
hearing heightened, but eyes failing

to take in dark hair like hanging moss,
moon-white linen clinging to moon-blue girl
above me—focusing on open door/

bedroom threshold/empty hallway
& she pushes the balls of her feet into the ceiling—
she will join me in bed;

her toes detach from the plaster, leave
a residue like duct tape from mouths—
I feel fingers in ~~my throat~~ on my breasts;

if she is my desire then I name her
Agency & lift chin, expose neck & jaw—
her satin-moth palms memorizing

each ridge of my trachea;
a ~~brief~~ necessary pain before
I can join her on the ceiling.

Before Escape

—In response to Lori Schreiner's painting entitled "My four-year-old mother with her family in their garden just before fleeing Nazi Germany"

Blue dress behind little-girl prayer hands. Sky
breaks like swirled light amid dull, faded glass.

Like broken light, mother's eyes fade, a dulled
black rectangle already thinned because of history.

She holds her boy already thinned because their history
can't hide his sad cartooned eyes under a light-blue cap.

His sad cartoon eyes don't know their story, its light-blue
flame, small thumping heart of family trying to blend into a dark

picket fence. A family unable to blend even in darkness, child
legs dangle like mittens or firmly part, grounded, to hold the weight

of dreams. Mother's migrant, weightless legs fade like apparitions
on their German soil. There's so much more to a little girl's faith

shown in the leaving, in a little girl's hope amid soiled Nazi schemes.
Blue dress behind little-girl prayer hands. Sky breaks amid flight.

Author's note: The author chose Jericho Brown's duplex form in which to write this poem.

Inhabiting a Body is Easy, Living in One is Hard.

Fuck it, I don't need help to empty my chest of its hope.
I've counted all the secret passages in my rib cage,
all the unbroken ribs—

I'm the blur where negative space meets positive,
expelling the unwanted rainbows
on the dark horizon of tomorrow,
a beautiful arrangement of flesh that isn't love.

I've asked myself how easy it might be to be made from pearls.
& I keep returning from the dead,
pried open by all the what-ifs.

Even my body is sure it can begin again
& I can't stop the betrayal.

It's destruction whispering through the barrel of a gun.

God knows me. I hear rain when he opens me.

I hold grief near-bent in a world of before & after.

Somewhere someone begs me
to say *I love you* to myself with the subtitles on.

There's a jar inside my stomach
& it's never going to stop breaking.

The Lake Tells Things I Long to Hear

I open myself to the morning,
to the breath of dawn in the hush before

the growing light brushes the sky in prayer & silence.
There a tree leans as if giving thanks.

The lake smells of nostalgia,
years of fear turned peace, *so so* many firsts;

a love of all things that have aged.
It smells of memories

of a girl I no longer know,
I, a tree rooted in mystery with leaves that shade

a hungry cove, palms turned up
in offering (*always offering*) to a sun within reach,

a word that translates to something like a promise.
The lake looks like never having learned sadness,

warm weather biting at cold hands,
reaching *out out out* for this sun

whose rich red-orange shade mocks the color of the gray sky.
And, it reminds me to smile, for my body has become

the sunrise, lingering, letting go, always gifted
with perpetual new beginnings.

Gavia immer

Loon. Prodigious eater of fish
black torpedo in black water.

No one on the surface
can see him hunt or the fish ahead
starburst and

only understand his hunger
by the sudden butterfly of tail
flapping before he swallows.

He cruises, looking steadily underwater
at shadows and light, where the senses
of the upper world are drowned.

I swim deep through summer watching you.
The shadows pass behind your eyes and
occasionally rise as words

or turn and vanish in the depths. I dive
after them fishtailing ahead of me
slippery, nimble.

When November skim ice rimes the shore
each dive is deeper into the cold and black
and white pattern of ice on fish and bird,

and I am bereft as
the loon calls, opening his empty bill
in the hungry air.

What We Don't Say

My mother comes into the kitchen where I'm washing dishes and announces: *I'm going to Costco to buy rice.*
Then she stares at me blankly, waits for me to say something.
After a pause, I say "okay" without looking up.
That afternoon she brings in the mail and insists I take it from her hands, even though I ask her to leave it on the counter.
Our hands do not touch. I know what my mother is trying to say just based on what her body is doing. One hand placed gently against her throat means she wants to seem helpless.
An index finger pressed against one nostril as she looks away means she's about to tell me something untrue that she needs me to believe.
She is nearly 80, and just this year, I've noticed that when she's confused by something I say, her eyelids tremble and shutter like an old-fashioned camera.
Everything she does with her body language begs me to love her.
What I don't say to her but I can say to you is this:
trying to put aside a lifetime of neglect is like trying to reverse photographs, to fade the images from memory until they are empty squares of milky white clouds.
It's like trying to pretend you haven't seen a ghost.
When your mother is aging, it seems cruel to remember her mistakes, when you know you too are so flawed.

Still, you'd rather hold your breath under water,
each time, a little longer, than reach for someone
that you know can't swim.
Outside the trees sway the way mourners do.
Soon their leaves will cover everything.
The dog sits at my mother's feet, waiting to be let out.
She notices him watching her, leans down and stomps
her feet at him in a strange little dance: *oh hello!*
hello! You love me so much, don'tcha? Don'tcha?

re: The Cancellation Fee

We kindly request

24 hours notice for cancellations

If we do not receive confirmation

A fee will be assessed

for the time reserved

with the doctor

We do not double book appointments We reserve this time

just for you We

cannot bill this missed

appointment fee to

insurance We send out multiple

reminders We do not double

book We reserve this time

just for you We try to accomodate

as many patients as possible We request 24 hours notice for cancellations If

you do not confirm there will be a fee assessed for the time reserved

all good receptionists speak in
wise and archaic poetry, each consonant chiseled from mesozoic minerals
each syllable the cooling liquid birthed from
glaciers, tern's wings, hoarfrost.
clad in the chaste white of mission bell poppies
long gone are the days of our ribald vices,
smokes held betwixt two fingers like scout's honor, a harshness to offset our
manic phone-voices
booked two weeks out, three weeks out, four weeks out
i can make you a styrofoam teacup and
i will open your coffeemate with the painterly hands of Cassatt and
i will not grimace when
you leave the bag on my desk and i will mutely blot the grey, viscous puddle.

We are always accepting new patients.
We are happy to keep you on a short call list.
We are closed in observance of Labor Day.

self-portrait as grief

My Baba only asked / for applesauce before we took him away. / We bought
the cheap kind from Walmart, / an eight pack of squeezable applesauce, /
no sugar added, for a dollar eighty-nine. / He only got through three /
before the COVID stripped his appetite. His hazel eyes, / usually dreaming
/ of smoggy Tehran, were now clumsy, dim, unseeing. / My inheritance will
be a Persian copy of the Qur'an stained / with my Baba's tears. / I ate the
remaining five / packets while sitting alone / in the backyard, / my stomach
bloated & hard & cramping. / In this lifetime, what has this body done? /
I once thought / I wouldn't make it to twenty. / My Baba, in his little blue
Ford truck, / once told me / he wouldn't make it to sixty. / I now avoid the
applesauce aisle of Walmart. / How do I write an obituary for someone /
still living? / I turn twenty next week & / my Baba is sixty. / In this lifetime,
/ how have I loved? / Grief is cutting open a rotting apple / with papercuts
on your fingers, / the juice stinging in your wounds. / Grief tastes of cheap
& chunky applesauce, / with no sugar / and too much cinnamon.

Hay Fever

August in Elgin County and the letters peeled themselves
off the sign and melted to the ground in the unbroken heat.
Vacation Bible School at the Bethel Tabernacle,

where after services we taught Sunday school
in the low-slung brick. After the shepherds
were colored in and popsicle sticks crossed,

we crawled behind the organ to the warm, secreted space.
The dust motes swimming in the shaft made you sneeze
but you just laughed. Hooked your fingers in my mouth.

You could have been Judas, blushing in the milky wash of light,
but we didn't kiss, not even as I rolled your stockings down.
The pollen, you said, gave you allergies—so did the dust,

even as it blanketed our bodies in space. Around us, summer
fleeing the transept, chasing the warmth of some greater thing—
a body without clothing, inflamed with our want.

We sat like good girls, palms crossed without touch.
You are older now, and we are far from that place.
On our separate coasts I think of you kneeling and what happens

to girls who name each other's bodies prophet.
Our cloistered sweat and how genesis flickered in the spaces
between, until we learn how to lose each other again.

Birdwatching

My mother says it was the peacock
that did it, the reason I said *papa*
before *mama*. In the memory she made
for me, you took me to the *chhat*
and taught me how to say 'mor.'

I don't remember the peacocks. I remember wanting
parrots.

She insists they were why I forgave
you her bruises: red turning blue,
then green, color of rose-ringed
parakeets. I remember

pointing a fruit
knife at you, blade sticky
with orange pulp. I remember

the forests we crossed
every Himalayan summer;
how you taught
me to listen for a river;
joining tops of blue
pine to bulbuls who flew
across, drawing threads
with our eyes to trace
their flight. I remember
the shrill in Mama's voice

the first time she called my name
for help. I remember
screaming STOP.

I remember learning
to pronounce *or-ni-tho-lo-gist*,
you explaining you weren't
one. I remember breathing

sessions in therapy, sifting
summer from winter, you
from Mama's husband,
my therapist saying I should
hold on to the good things you did.

Patient Profile: The Girl Who Accidentally Killed a Child With Her Car

I teach her how to place the contact lens carefully on the tip of her finger. To examine the flare of its lip, make sure it curves in, not out. The lens is lightly tinted blue for visibility. To make it easier to see the small thing.

I know who she is. I imagine she knows I know, is used to being the girl who looked at her phone for a tragic instant. Read the internet comments saying she deserves to die. Her pale lashes are salt-slippery with saline, stuck together in tiny blond mountain peaks. They escape her grasp every time she brings the lens to her eye.

“It’s the nature of the eye to close when something is coming toward it,” I say. “You have to override your body’s involuntary defense mechanism.” I show her how to pry her eye open by holding the lid, not the lashes. Still, her eye squeezes shut when it sees her finger approach.

“Sometimes it’s easier not to look,” I say, and show her the trick of glancing away at the last minute, the necessary distance her sensitive cornea needs. It works. She adheres the contact to the white of her eye. Air bubbles collapse with audible gasps.

The smallest of graces when she looks toward it, the transparent shield slipping between her pupil and the rest of the world.

The Repairs

I. To Do

Everything around this house is broken — the door, the kitchen window, the flooring, my wife. I dream of nail guns, screws. My heart becomes a level she keeps hiding. I wake and another shingle has fallen into our yard.

II. Door

I pencil each place I need to shim. This how I show her I'm making us secure: keep out drafts, all nighttime insects. I'm replacing the door. How long until we replace each other, leave faint marks of where we once stood?

III. Window

I cut my thumb opening the box, imagine my wife saying, *oh*. I suck the red back into my mouth, slip the window into place. I wipe the panes of fingerprints, specks of blood, catalog what becomes clear: the pot of clematis, scatter of leaves, her on the garden bench. The phone in her hand, how she saves her best laughs for him.

IV. Drain

My wife leaves hair twined around shampoo bottles, hieroglyphs of wet curls on the shower walls. I translate each one before picking them away: *Woman in Love with Tiny Vortex, Grief of Drowning*. When she calls me to unclog the drain, what else can I do but reach inside, untangle all the knots she's made?

V. Floor

I sweep the debris, pocket a key to a car we don't own anymore, a green button to my wife's coat, the one that used to be her favorite. How many things we've lost to dust, to stains and rips. The new floor is oak. I lay the planks, tap them secure. She's bought a pair of black stilettos. I'll hear her everywhere she goes, feel her walking the spike along my spine.

VI. Garden

I plant mahonia for her — yellow flowers which will outlast her winters. Bleeding hearts, shade lovers. My wife watches, touches my shoulder. She says *barberry*, says *ligustrum*, *nandina*. Directions for beauty, for a way back from the landscape we let ruin itself. My hands are dirty, but I keep digging, setting everything in place. She picks up a trowel. We bury the twisted roots until all we see is foliage, the bright tiny blooms.

My Sister Sees a Burning Cross

her hands in her pockets, feet turned
out east&west, her boyfriend – dark face an
 echo in his draw-string hoodie – is asking us
 about the white folks out here. we say they
don't bother us much (we say hi to the sheriff
so he knows our faces better than his bullets,
 we smile at the neighbors so they know our
 terracotta legs splayed out on the lawn) they
just spook us sometimes. bullhorn bb-guns late in
the night, humming country music with reverb engines
 & DO NOT TREAD ON ME flags sprouting
 hairs on they pick-up trucks
& a porch light comes on. my sister grabs her boy's
hand and we laugh, white teeth signal lights on our
 faces, shout Just Three Negros Passing
 Through! as the old man rattles his door,
& we jog down the hill, my sister thumbing the house
key & my hands easing out of fists. she tells us she's
 seen a burning cross before, out on Black
 Star Canyon, where the coyotes like to
hide in ditches & press their undersides into the cool
earth when the sun hangs itself at 97 degrees,

says it scared her half to death, a cross
smoking just as the night was straining out
its stars, & she ran the rest of the way home. her boy
sucks his teeth, says Nah, No Klansman Gon Catch
Me, Throw Me Into The Trunk Get-Out Style,
& we ask if lovecraft country on TV, that jordan peelee
show with sundown towns – Yeah, That One,
& How Whack that the white folks
threatened to shoot him when he
asked for his pop, & how they shot at him anyway when
they dug his father out from under the slaughterhouse.
Nah, he says, You Wouldn't Catch Me Dead
In There. I Woulda Drove Out So Fast They
Wouldn't Of Known – I'd Be Gone & my sister and i
laugh, taking our shoes off at the door, knowing with
our fingers pulled up in fists that we'd've
dug him out that slaughterhouse too, another
black man under the dirt. & we turn on the porch light.

Mother Taught Me Trees Are Stronger

Somewhere past morning
a praying mantis cleaves her mate
because children require fuel.

What leaves the body is gone,
the worms and flies gone, hatched and flown,
as mushrooms sprout to clutch the loam.

I sow my garden in thick soil,
root sage and lavender. Between me
and the passing dead: a bit of earth.

What roots deepest will come back.
When I was young, I cried
at the felled crack of breaking wood,

the stunted fields of jagged stumps.
We can't last, but they keep counsel
with futures we will never see.

Home is Where the Dandelions Grow

The road bends inwards, compressing. Leaves float
 off their spindly branches. It's summer, and the sky
Carries a certain weightlessness. The dandelions live in that

Inverted world, their florets pulled into their bulbous heads.
 Mama strolls down this road toward her new house,
The air buzzing in a language she does not yet understand.

She gingerly pulls open the wooden gates. The yellow bulbs
 Beckon her, and she runs, nuzzling their blades like his skin.
The leafy mosaic hides her scars. *Mama* scallops the petals

Like a safehouse. Carries them into the attic; places them atop
 The greying photograph: it's her wedding day, and
Baba is smiling, so striking against his usual scowl,

His usual brittle hands searing her face. The next day,
 the barren dandelion heads watch as *Mama* thumbs
the spineless English dictionary; watch,

As she rubs the whitener on her skin. The clock ticks
 Forward, or backward. It all sounds the same.
The petals are the only things that don't leave her.

Pojoaque Summer

It felt like waiting for condensation to run
the air toffee thick wanting wind.
Sweating, peeling apart shirt-skins from my back
I show you my goosebumps and you touch
calling the heat prickly, the sunsets cotton candy.
I memorize your bent back, scraped knees.

You always had a project;
extracting the guts of a toy, a microwave
making the most of the things washed up
on our desert shores
trash treasures frankensteined together.
Things were always breaking down around here.

We ride our bikes all over town
using pocket money to buy paletas
waiting for the moon to arrive.
Casino billboards invite anyone to stop here.
We go howling through the arroyo
our voices over and into the hot wind
blowing across our freeway-quilted desert.
Cars pass the billboards but don't turn back.

We peek in the plastic-wrapped windows
of new houses built for people not from here;
people bold enough to trade traffic and Starbucks
for monsoon rains and quaking aspens.
They concrete the ditches that line their land
and when the rains bring soft, vulnerable water
it flows straight forever, unable to cut its own path.
Money can rewrite nature, bulldoze the past.
Money is the balloon that brought a man to Oz
and named him a wizard.

We wait, watching roadrunners,
building a second sun from our joy,
divining our adulthood from the purple sky.
The wind blows golden over the broken things,
the unfinished projects.

napalm girl

do you know what petrol
and soap makes? no,
I don't mean the bar soap
from the local market. not the ones
you can find at
a temple, but maybe in
the hands of the same gibberish
-speaking man who held
the Carbine to the temple
of your great-aunt. I don't mean
the petrol your father used
to let his truck live a little longer,
but what ended them. do you know
what ribs can mean? no,
not the ribs of a well-slit pig,
boiled with the apathetic soup
of a soldier's heart. I mean
the taste of a gunshot

and the battered bellies that have felt
everything but fullness. do you know
what a home is? not the rotting crumbs
your brother sits at, not the gale
burning his body. and not
mortality slotted between
gums and teeth. I mean
how your braid pastes itself
onto your skin like a lover
whenever a windstorm begins
to lean close, whenever
the boy's mouth turns into a slice
of distorted melon... I mean
how people always want
what they can't have,
how they confiscate the world
and call it *war*:

Night Shift

The charge nurse finds me wet
& shivering
in the supply closet

She shuts the door
flicks the light
looks at me the way
a mother looks at her child,
the kind of mother who eats
her young

She steps closer
(like I am cornered prey)
hands me a wad
of paper towels. This is not
an apology. This is a command
to finish what I started
to accept that I will
be devoured

*When I was young, the charge nurse
says, a patient pulled a fist-full
of hair so hard he left a bald spot
at my crown. She tilts her head
lifts her synthetic wig
Beneath her stocking cap
I see naked scalp
fruitless earth
my future*

*I know women who are limping
I know women who are dead. Be grateful,
the charge nurse says
sliding the next patient's medication
into my scrub top pocket,
the water wasn't hot*

Duplex: Leftover Man

The dead found their way into his fists.

At night, he held the knife in one hand.

He held the chicken breast in the other.

I wanted to touch his hard shoes, hard belt, hard wrists.

He made harder demands, so I never touched him.

When he played Clair de Lune, I gnawed the song to the bone.

Thunder fell like a song and bruised my bones blue,
minor chords scattering like horses.

Dinner scattered across the table, dressed in white.

I feasted on rice and spring rolls, pork, duck, crab.

I feasted like a king and a granddaughter.

He never crumbled. He ate my leftovers,

the crumbs. Later, he washed the moon away.

The dead found their way into his fists.

feast and famine.

the faces of the children shrink
away, as they always do, eyes
wide, shoes abandoned in the
flowerbeds. the gate swings
back into the garden where
she dances alone, giggling through
shattered yellow teeth, cooing
as they drop
from rotted gums

darling daughter of the dead delights
in splinters from her feet from treehouses
haunted with the ghosts of friends
imaginary. her sweet soul hungers
for the laughter of the living, whispers
with a confidant, don't you love
the smell of worms bursting through
the dirt? or the way
barren stems float against the breeze?

for now she trades sweet
whispers with stained teeth and
empty sockets uncovered by the
rain, there is comfort in the way
they gasp *once more, once
more let's
play once more.*

Undetectable Explained to a Cousin

What does it mean, you know, to you?

*I massage a rose petal onto each temple
And breathe in its perfume.*

So, you're like taking care of yourself, right?

My body discovering song.

But I mean can you, like, give it to
Anyone else?

A bird ate from my hand and fluttered away.

Can you be in love with anyone else?

And this lifetime and next and next and...

I guess what I'm trying to ask is
Does it bother you that I'm asking?

*My hands using a rosary as expression;
As the blood I'm trying to get to you.*

So, you like, take medication every day?

A rose petal floating down my esophagus.

I mean, like, what does it mean to you?

My body sung its undeath.

on meditation

—dedicated to Matsuo Bashō

a frog sitting
on the muddy shore
an unseen lake
still in silence

a frog sitting
still in silence
on the muddy shore
an odorless lake

a frog in silence
on the muddy shore
sitting still
a tasteless lake

all the seasons
rounding circles
frog and lake
still in silence

see the frog
it moves in silence
diving in cool
the lake untouched

silence
and
nothing
but silence.

How You Thought It Would Happen

You would take the pain with grace.

You would split in half like an August peach,

then climb into a warm bath. The work
would be quiet and, if not clean, then at least pure.

Later, they would kick loose the bathroom lock,
call your name, bind the edges of your leave-taking

with catgut and medical-grade love. But you'd
be stronger. Livid. Liquefying. Reality

wasn't even close: you slunk to bed, barely
bleeding. It was your senior year. The next day

(supposed to be the first day
of your afterlife), you helped the juniors

write college essays. Your body was muted
and light and unremarkable: cafeteria peaches

diced and floating in syrup. No one knew.
Nor would they, for years. On your knees

you studied for a French exam, cradling
a battered grammar: *Here is*

the imperfect. Here is the conditional.

Listen carefully for the difference.

About the Authors

Aiden Heung is a Chinese poet born and raised on the edge of the Tibetan Plateau. He writes about his personal past in a Tibetan Autonomous Town and the city of Shanghai where he now lives. His words have appeared or are forthcoming in the *Australian Poetry Journal*, *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, *Poet Lore*, *Hobart*, *Parentheses*, *Barren Magazine*, *Carolina Quarterly*, and *Potomac Review*, among other places. He is a reader of world literature.

Caithlin Ng is a poet from Singapore now based in London. She gained a BA in English from the University of Cambridge and an MA in English from University College London. She specialized in transnational feminist literature and has had her creative work published in anthologies including Cambridge's Notes and the UCL Publishers' Prize.

Jean Theron is a poet and writer whose work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Harpur Palate*, *Atticus Review*, *Yes! Magazine*, *Pressenza*, and elsewhere.

Alexandra Savage earned her BA in Creative Writing from University of Central Oklahoma and is a poetry MFA candidate at Oklahoma State University. Her poems have appeared in *The Central Dissent* and *Petrichor*. When she isn't doing research or revisions, you can find her cuddling her house rabbit.

Theresa Senato Edwards has published two poetry books—one with painter Lori Schreiner, winning The Tacenda Literary Award—and two chapbooks. Nominated twice for a Pushcart, once for Best of the Net, Edwards received writing residencies from Drop Forge & Tool & Craigardan, is a poetry editor for *American Poetry Journal* and a poetry mentor for *COUNTERCLOCK*.

Ariana D. Den Bleyker is a Pittsburgh native residing in New York's Hudson Valley, where she is a wife and mother of two. When she's not writing, she's spending time with her family and every once in a while sleeps. She is the author of three collections and twenty chapbooks, among others. She hopes you'll fall in love with her words.

Lucia Owen is seventy-eight and hasn't got time to waste. She lives in rural western Maine since moving there fifty years ago to teach English. She wrote poetry once and now has rediscovered that writing is central. She has published work in three anthologies in the past year.

Joan Kwon Glass is a biracial (Korean/Caucasian) second-generation American who lives near New Haven, Connecticut. Her poems have recently been published or are upcoming in *Rattle*, *SWWIM*, *Rogue Agent*, *Sublunary Review*, *FEED*, *Ghost City Review*, *Rise Up Review*, *Vagabond City Lit*, *TRIVIA: Voices of Feminism*, and others.

Michele Penn Diaz is a neurodiverse/OCD poet living in Portland, Oregon with her husband and an unruly miniature schnauzer. In 2015, she received a BA in English from San Francisco State University. She works as a glorified receptionist and enjoys being surprised with baked goods.

Ashley Hajimirsadeghi's work has appeared in *Into the Void Magazine*, *Corvid Queen*, and *The Shore*, among others. She is a poetry reader at both *Mud Season Review* and *Ex/Post*, attended the International Writing Program's Summer Institute, and was a Brooklyn Poets Fellow.

Eliza Browning studies English and art history at Wheaton College in Massachusetts. Her work has previously appeared or is forthcoming in *L'Ephemere Review*, *Vagabond City Lit*, *Contrary Magazine*, and *Up the Staircase Quarterly*, among others. She is a poetry editor for *Ex/Post Magazine* and reads poetry for the *COUNTERCLOCK Journal*.

Kandala Singh is a qualitative researcher and writer from New Delhi. She lives with her partner in a flat which looks out at Ashoka trees and escapes to the mountains as often as she can.

Elizabeth Vignali is the author of three chapbooks, the most recent of which is *Endangered [Animal]* (Floating Bridge Press, 2019), and the forthcoming poetry collection *House of the Silverfish* (Unsolicited Press, 2021). Her work has appeared in *Willow Springs*, *Cincinnati Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Tinderbox*, *The Literary Review*, and elsewhere.

Amanda Auchter is the author of *The Wishing Tomb*, winner of the 2013 PEN Center USA Literary Award for Poetry and the 2012 Perugia Press Book Award, and *The Glass Crib*, winner of the 2010 Zone 3 Press First Book Award for Poetry. Her recent work appears or is forthcoming at *The Huffington Post*, *CNN*, *Mulberry Literary*, and *The West Review*.

Christina Miles is a seventeen year-old poet based in Orange County, California. Her work discusses themes of inheritance, cultural displacement, and the tumultuous journey of finding contentment. She reads for *Hominum Journal* and *ShePersists.net*, where she acts as a managing editor and contributing editor respectively.

Ann V. DeVilbiss has had work in *BOAAT Journal*, *Grimoire*, *The Maine Review*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, and elsewhere, with work forthcoming in *Columbia Journal* and *Pangyrus*. Her chapbook, *When the Wolves Stay Quiet*, is available from dancing girl press (2019). She lives and works in Louisville, Kentucky.

Emma Miao is a fifteen year-old poet. Her poems appear in *Cosmonauts Avenue*, *Glass: A Journal of Poetry*, and *The Emerson Review*. Her spoken word and piano album, *Oscillation*, is forthcoming this winter. She loves watching sunsets and listening to the ocean.

Alanna Offield is disabled, queer, Chicana, and a chronic oversharer from New Mexico, United States, now living in the North of Ireland. Her work has appeared in *Abridged* and was longlisted for the 2020 Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing and the 2020 Mairtin Crawford Award.

Aneska Tan is a student from Singapore who likes to write when she is not fighting her way through academia. Her work is upcoming in *Eunoia Review*, *Willawaw Journal*, and *Riggwelter Press*. She hopes to own a writing hut someday (much like Mark Twain's), and in the after hours you'll usually find her wallowing in her inability to leave the house.

Taylor Lauren Davis is a retired nurse and current law student at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. In 2019, Button Poetry named Davis first runner-up in its annual video contest. Born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee, Davis is a proud black southerner.

Grace Q. Song is a Chinese-American writer from New York. Her poetry and fiction have been published or are forthcoming in *CHEAP POP*, *Glass: A Journal of Poetry*, *The Margins*, *Passages North*, *PANK*, and elsewhere. A high school senior, she enjoys listening to ABBA and Yoke Lore.

Darby Joyce is an experienced writer in various styles, including poetry, fiction, narrative nonfiction, and journalistic nonfiction. Her work has been previously published in several collegiate and online literary magazines, and has received awards for outstanding undergraduate fiction. She lives in Baltimore, Maryland.

Anthony Aguero is a queer writer in Los Angeles, California. His work has appeared or will appear in the *Bangalore Review*, *2River View*, *The Acentos Review*, *The Temz Review*, *Rhino Poetry*, *Cathexis Northwest Press*, *14 Poems*, *Redivider Journal*, and others.

Suraj Nanu resides in a hill station in Kerala, India after retiring from his official engagements with the government. His credits include many works published on academic matters and governance issues as well as creative writings in Malayalam, his mother tongue. He writes haiku and poems in English.

Sheila Dong lives in Tucson, Arizona. Their writing has previously appeared in *Open Minds Quarterly*, *Old Pal*, *Arcturus*, *Moonsick Magazine*, and other places. *Moon Crumbs* is their first chapbook, published in 2019 with Bottlecap Press.

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