

RUST & MOTH

Summer 2024

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Blue Resurrection

Dawn casts a tint on the atmosphere—
forms a grey-blue dome as the robins

congregate to trill an incantation.
Their syllables pop like sparks

in the air. Red clay soil anchors
shortleaf pine where their roots

halve the horizon—bark columns
silhouetted against the sun's pink

blush. Their bristles open like waxy
green fans. Oakleaf hydrangea huddle

in pods. Their milky cones huff
air where the river birch sheds

its winter sheath. Paper bark curls
at the edges, spirals into cinnamon

scrolls, drifts down to copper dirt
as the sun kindles on the skyline,

opens orange, blazes blue—
tugs day from dawn.

Oasis

Tree roots have pushed the driveway asphalt up
and a little pool forms there after rain.
Our dog Jamie, sick with cancer,
was obsessed with drinking water from that pool.
Her dry nose would nudge me awake
in the small hours, and out we'd go.

She'd drink her fill, then just stand and look out into the dark.
Something about the illness made her shiver uncontrollably,
but it didn't seem to bother her, so we'd stay.
That winter the little pool would often freeze,
and I'd get hot water to melt the ice so she could drink.
Too cold, I'd nudge her, and we'd head inside to bed.

One day she'd had enough, stopped eating, stuck her head
into the dark under the piano bench, and stayed.
We called the vet then to come with her syringe.
Eight years later I don't park over that little pool,
still remember those nights we had together
just standing in the dark, shivering, resisting going in,
looking forward to sleep.

Sneachta a Shealbhú

Táimid amuigh sa dorchadas agus ag breathnú
sneachta a lasann faoi chón solais carchlóis.
Maíonn m'iníon na calóga go léir
cuma réaltaí ag titim.

Seo iad ar an talamh, ar ár bróga,
inár gcuid gruaige—a deirim léi—na mílte
tuilleadh mianta le déanamh. Bailíonn sí oiread agus is féidir léi
ina lámh bheag. *Dá déine a shealbháinn mé, a deir sí, is ea is mó a imíonn siad.*

Holding Snow

We're outside at dark and witness
snow brightening under a cone of parking lot light.
My daughter claims all of the flakes
look like stars falling.

Here they are on the ground, on our boots,
in our hair—I tell her—thousands
more wishes to be made. She gathers as many as she can
in her tiny hand. *The tighter I hold, she says, the more they disappear.*

Translated from the Irish by the author.

Meditation on a Morning Dose

Ruby nail and arthritic knuckle
lever the pill sorter's orange lid

with its block letter M, Monday,
parody of beginnings.

Her plastic labyrinth of promises
and side effects, emptied and refilled
week after week.

Oval tablets with cryptic numbers,
pale discs so thin they vanish
in the soft folds of her palm.

Each with its own doppelganger
of nausea and tremor, all to buy time.
For what?

She doesn't know
if her body can even hold another pill.

So easy to pour them in the toilet's
waiting mouth,
to hear the soothing swoosh
swallow them down.

She steadies a glass beneath the faucet,
fills it to the top.
Then drizzles in a little more,
 letting water bulge above the rim.

She pauses,
marveling at the glass,
how it bears more than it can.

joy and terror

It's true—

joy and terror do share a bed at night:

covers tucked in tightly over their toes,
two heads of hair spread wildly across silk
pillowcases,

fingers intertwined like longtime lovers
who don't have to try so hard anymore.

I used to write stories about fathers and daughters
reconciling.

Now I write poems about being a mother.

Raining Bones

This morning I found an entangled
hip-joint hanging in the chicken wire,
small bones like offerings on the feeder
where I leave peanuts and boiled eggs.
A whole foot, still warmed by fur,
left in the birdbath by the pair of ravens
I'd hoped to tame. Corvids have been known
to bring trinkets to those who feed them,
recognize the faces of enemies and friends.
But what does he see in mine
that he leaves me only rabbit bones
scattered among succulents and stones?
Bones dropped from high in the sky,
broken over boulders to expose the marrow.
Last spring there was a third raven.
They bounced in unison, up and down
on the fence, cawing an incantation,
an annunciation of their multiplying.
I ponder the hunt, think how much
transpires in the night while I sleep.
All the small deaths and triumphs, the raining
of bones with all our marrow laid bare.

Things I Tell My Students

—*content warning: themes of violence*

On the first day of ecology,
a bit about me, how I earned
my Ph.D. in the mountains
of Colorado, tracing deadly metals
that seep from the mines to the
headwaters and on, downstream,
leaving a swath of loss and those
that adapt, like the vulnerable
caddisflies, who wrap themselves
in stone. The cost of their tolerance—
stress. Recovery, a slow process.

I go over the syllabus, explain
how grades will be calculated.
Tell them what to do in a fire.
A tornado. In the event of an active
shooter. I point to the nearest exits
like a flight attendant. The nearest exit
may be behind you, I say. If you run,
stop to think, don't just follow. Some
students at Columbine ran toward
the shooters.

They know what I mean when I say,
“Columbine,” though that horror
occurred before they were born.
They don’t know it is also
the state’s flower. A five-pointed star
in sky blue, that makes me think
of Jesus on the cross, unable
to pull his arms in, yellow pollen
for the bees bursting from his center.

I demonstrate how to barricade the door.
The desks are bolted to the floor. Any
911 calls go to the county, not campus
police. And what will you do if I am
taken out first? Should it come to that,
you must fight. Note the sharp forceps,
heavy microscopes, the hydrochloric
acid in the flammables cabinet.
Together, I say, you stand a chance.

Then I begin our first lesson. A story
about murder hornets come
to take the heads of our honeybees.
About the hope that our bees
will evolve to be like their cousins
who spit scat at the doors of their nest,
and when that fails and a hornet enters
(I push play on the video), see
how they signal each other, then leap
to swarm a defensive bee ball around
the intruder in the hive. All those wings
whirring, those abdomens vibrating
together generate such heat, they cook
that would-be killer alive.

This is summer.

So I think the summer is slipping away. Like,
all of this was supposed to be The Summer. I mean,
it's July, it takes forever for the sun to set, it's always
hot as balls outside, like, mild levels of lightheadedness
when you get out of your car for more than four seconds,
yes, it's Texas, and it's summer. This
is summer. Summer's about waking up an hour late
and forgetting the lip balm. It's about
having no reason to put on the sunscreen. By the time I'm awake
the dew is already slipping off the grass blades.
Around the corner the owners of the bagel shop
have been up for hours, twisting the dough into
wheels. Are they going somewhere?
No. This is summer, where there are gas stations
but no road trips. It's three hour
naps in the afternoon, not knowing
what it is you did that day, or the day before,
or the yesterday of the day before the day
you don't know what you did that day. Because
this is summer, where every day is hot, and sunny,
but even if it wasn't, it'd still be the same. It's the same
Garamond on blue light screens, not flashing neon orange
arcades. It's clocks, going around slow and fast and
all at once. It's not following the laws of the light circles in the sky
as this circle goes in circles. It's about waking up at 6pm
covered in sweat. It's the same kind of woozy
feel in my head when I get up, like the floor is
slipping out from under my feet. *Something's
going away. Something's already gone.*

The Fog

My head, as foggy as the night.
The clouds draped a blanket
over the headlights.
No halo cast by the porch light,
where my home is-was.

You spun me around,
'get the hell outta here!'
I faltered in my haze,
landed on my back,
boots pointed to the sky.
Thin blood, flowed between the river rocks
from a spigot on my head.
You said it didn't hurt; you were right.
My blood, a bucket of analgesic,
after three bent nights.

My cigarette sighed
a satisfying crackle,
while I cranked the car.
Nowhere to go—but to the light I left,
the way a disoriented moth
flies upside down, before finding its
path back up toward the starlight.

Future Folk Tales: Crow

Midday glare, white highway,
two crows—

pupils of earth's open eyes.
One dead, one mourning.

She turned away from us,
turned towards the cracked

wing. Her back a testimony.
When the light slanted, she

spoke. I understand greed,
she said. I know scattering

and theft. Amidst all you have
done, I find my way. Your

hearts like glass. Nothing is
hidden, not your loneliness

dark as feathers torn loose,
spun in the gasp of your

shock, your awful wonder
at my grief.

He was my friend.

Insomnia

Another night
without respite.

Dread settled
in the chest.

For every hour lost,
a shadow crosses

the browning lawn
and snuffs out

the silver
seedling of dawn.

To the boy I met at the Cathedral in Year 1

Darkly at Cuthbert's head, the boy shrunken, like rotted fruit
grinning wildly

ignited between my thighs the Leviathan,

unleashing a grumble of maggots inside.

A soulless boy, made from Gothic stone,

he pulled me adrift with the blackened tips of his rotted,
tainted hands.

He carved hell into my doughy flesh, chest heaving with sardonic breath,
sainted tongue

swirling sickly song and sewing incantations to my bed.

With bloody teeth and carnal lips, he the butcher had no rest.

Ravished on lavish silk, I relished in repent for our
disgracing God.

Derelict Fishing Gear

It is dark and cold in the abyss.
The ocean does not give back
the offerings made to the depths.

Tangled, torn and grown shaggy with seaweed,
nets entwined as if in a lover's embrace.
Or maybe strangulation is a more apt term—
knotted together, bitter and bound in the aftermath.

Remnants of enmeshed death,
memories of struggle and scales,
glass marble eyes
and bodies pressed so tightly
that the diamond webbing digs into sleek silver,
engorged with gasping gills
and feathered flashes of deep pink:
proof of life that will not last much longer.

Afterwards the nets hang heavy and silent
and the deck is sluiced clean of suffering.
Again and again the cycle bears out,
wide mouths tossed to the sea
taking everything in a plotted path
until one day something snaps
and death sinks down
in slow motion
settling into sediment,
reclaimed by the sea.

Now life crawls across the rusted metal,
blooms over the rotting wood
and chews at the fibers;
barnacles freckle the surface
and velvety algae oozes over everything.
The teeth of this great beast have been taken,
have been softened in shadow,
have become haunted.

The once hunter now devoured by the deep.

Blood

Ashamed of my own blood, I hid
tampons in zippered pouches in my purse,
used tampons beneath wads of tissue in the trash,
embarrassed someone might glimpse
my muddy crimson, clotted cotton,
claret, catamenia, carmine,
ruby river, soiled moon,
and discover I was woman, female, prone
to crying for no reason,
outsized emotion, tidal sobs and gushing
that warrants eye rolls, knowing looks,
like the ones they gave my mother, always late,
always unbidden, always too bloody
sensitive. So: when you whisper, *I'm bleeding*.
I say, *So?* I pull you to me,
I flush, I flood. I want your blood
on my thighs, my fingertips, my
cheeks, lips ruddy, wet and gleaming.

California

There are four ways that a woman can wreck herself. I know of five and am checking them off like a shopping list. I am cycling through selves and begging the bus to stop so I can get on. I am a disgraced member of this bus's ecosystem or I am waiting thirty minutes for the next one. I am seeking anything I could conceivably breathe.

There are seven ways that a woman can wreck herself but most of these are not compliant with health codes. Mostly what I do is wait thirty minutes for the next one. Mostly what I do is lie and covet and dream vividly about motherhood. There is usually a lot of blood. In a hot tub, I discuss my own mother's hospitalization. Forgiveness, I am learning, is largely a myth. We hold each others' cruelties like buckets of rainwater. My aunt flew across the country in a panic when she heard. What I remember from that week: running through the halls with my cousin, three years younger; a koi pond; a panda statue.

There are eighteen ways that a woman can wreck herself and most of them are time. I have been a little girl at so many people's houses in so many different nights and mornings and I have always smiled with my teeth and I have never once been honest. I have been sharp and burning and hungry and I have cut all my hair off and my whole life, all of it, I could have been so much prettier. At twelve years old I was apocalypse and now I am granting myself another kind of body.

There are too many sins to count, to confess. The best way for a woman to wreck herself is escape; landing in another world, softly, like an egret into water.

Imaginary Anatomies

The Czech landscape shivers out the sauna's window.
If water moves, we cannot see it: an unclouded
horizon where willows line a riverbank. We
sit entranced, eyes trained beyond.
Some drop their towels—others
wind them tight. Pores release sweat
licking skin, some wear emblems—
a woman's arm vined and ivied, a man's inked
lightning bolts frame the back of his neck where
he's been taking names. One penis, porcine; a woman's
breasts perked. We sneak looks, spy secrets—
the birthmarks of continents, scars abrupting pain,
each body's battleground and all the color:
flesh and flesh—dark, ruddy, diaphanous—
miraculous. That cedar scent and electric sizzle. Mystics
filmy in steam. Among kindred:
vulnerable or what you see is what you get.
Steam rises bird-like, erotic as
the just-budding willows. Sometimes
we wear our bodies, sometimes not.

pomegranates

when grandma breaks the halves the juice
spills over her fingers. soon enough the red

bleeds onto mine. we set to work picking
apart the flesh. some people use a wooden spoon,

but we take our time. why must love be
violence? ghosts shackle my hands in theirs as

red rubies drop into the dish. the men snatch
the seeds with abandon, greedily grappling

for treasure. they suckle the succor dry like lifeblood.
the last seed pops free, my hands as stained

as the empty plates. pomegranate carcass lies
pockmarked like a salt and pepper beard,

phantom sweetness lingering on the tongue i bite
back. my mangled hands fold the debris inside

a crisp paper towel, hidden beside the dog's
bone, the peeled potatoes, my mother's pride.

for months i find red splatters on my clothes.
as hard as we try, grandma has no secret for this stain.

The Underworld

The club is a basement. The basement
is a skull with a wide, unhinged jaw,
a mouth with its tongue lolled out in a slobber

as me and my doppelgängers
climb inside it. No one taught us
how to be wanted.

Our bodies push against the soft
palate of the walls, bathed in
red light, reverberating in the hum

of hunger with nowhere to go. Nowhere
to hide. Spread wetness. Have I ever been
younger

than in these first steps? No one taught me
how to be this version of a man.
Caught between the barbed wire of

teeth. The teeth are bathroom stalls.
The bathroom stalls are an exit
from paradise into something

more sinister but still an Eden
in its own rite. The throb and thrust. No one taught us
that our eyes rolled back in pleasure

are still holy objects. Worthy of salvation.
Fingers fumbling inside each other. He reaches out,
a weathered hand with its chrome-bruised nails

and its calluses, extending through
the basement's pitch. He has found me, this hardened Virgil,
clad in experience and long-stained leather.

He pulls me further into the inferno's
squealing dark. Into the blasphemy and revelation
only our underworld can yield.

Of Strangers

I perched on a rounded concrete ledge
listening. Your black case open on the firm,
filthy ground. Working gig to gig, dollar to dollar.
Idris, son of a jazzman. Your guitar's liquid sounds
peeling off the Harvard Square façades, meeting
brick resistance. We talked that day and for a dozen more,
shared meals in restaurants, strolled down one side
of Commonwealth, up the other. Leaves fiery, sky flat.
The brownstones' tall windows eyeing us, an odd pair.
Hands gloved, scarves around our necks, bunched up.
You, the handsomest man I'd met. Grown. A head above.
Dreads to the middle of your back. Me, baby fat cheeks,
red tresses. Lost little bird. When I complained one day
of soreness, from practicing my own guitar, you pulled
your right arm across my chest, an anchor. Cut, statuesque.
Your torso bent, arched above and around my back.
My scapula unknotted under your left hand's deft touch.
There was no one else in the house where I lived
in the basement, a babysitter for a wealthy family. You were
a stranger. We were alone. Yet when we slept in my bed,
we slept with our backs to the center, until morning broke
through three white squares in the wall. I saw you
years later at a club on the Lower East Side. Case in hand,
on your way to a gig. It was quick, dark, loud. Floor sticky.
Air sour. Yet I could still make out your eyes. Deep
as before and warm. Looking, not at me, but beyond.
To the world, to the sounds I hope you found.

Metamour

It took a man to bring us together,
looking for a porno fantasy:
him at the center, towering
over two women on their knees.
You were younger and hotter than I was, a wringer.
Our bodies intertwined, my eyes
dripped down your toned stomach,
puddled into shame at my fat thighs.
You lifted my chin and
kissed me.
It's been many seasons since then,
your hair changing from blue to silver
and back again. My spine has loosened
like a spring. There's so much space
without him. With you
a full bed feels like a queen.
Most of the time, we
don't think about him at all.
I hold your hand and marvel that
you are so so soft

Outside

Outside, the branches flutter in the breeze
Giving the winter moon a delicate
Exoskeleton. Like fruit in a crate
Nailed shut, like pulp fibres after you squeeze
Out juice for the nth time, like a disease
That locks your body into a stalemate—
Outside the branches,

The dancing bones of the moon, I appease
Night with flakes of pain, watch darkness dictate
How earth spoons sadness onto the moon's plate,
Trains the moon to shrink and spin as we please—
Outside the branches.

Routine

She turns his chin
toward her and lathers his face
with white foamy cream.
Then dips the razor
into a bowl of warm water.
She begins cheekbone
to neckline—a straight path
between white heaps
as though clearing fresh snow.
She instructs him to flatten
his upper lip, then
works in short strokes
from one side to the other
until his skin is clean.
Even though he only sees
his children, the specialists,
and the occasional visitor,
she insists on this routine.
4 pm each day before supper
and then the evening news.
This is something she can do.

The Last Memory Our Daughter Had of Me

Our daughter in her death bed awoke
for half a day and recalled how I

arrived, a fury of reproach
and industry, my wings pinned back,

my arms all hiss, how I chastised her
a week before, how I roused her

from her bed and made her sit
upright at kitchen table to eat

a steaming bowl of golden guilt
and skinny pale snakes that flopped

while I changed her sheets and cleared
the nibbled food from the floor

beside the bed before her death bed,
so many crumbled Oreos

and greasy Taco Bell wrappers,
the food of gods she used to say.

And that, that hectoring mother voice,
the swoop and pound and push of that voice,

that's what she carried with her
across the murky Acheron

to eternity.

Month of Night

Here nothing calls to me.
Here all I lose I shed
off season, letting the wind
have its bite, letting the chill
take a fingertip or two. Here
I leave my fear of what falls
with the night, come
comforted by the winter dark
having no want of me. I wade
to wincing in the black
pitch and roll of evening.
I wade to my thighs in the
freeze, my hips too deep,
silence now a murmur
nearer my name.
Here I will find what drifts
with the snow, or is obscured.
The gooseflesh. The hair
on end. The exposure,
the warning, the loss of feeling
where it used to matter. What rises
with the night after I have been
left? An ask or a need
and me now numb to it;
the air a mouth all gums.
A sound almost
my name, and nothing
still calling to me, fangs
blurred soft as fur.

Golden Anniversary

Last night, we were choosing
a house. There were three of course,

as in all tales like this. None fit.

*Oh don't you remember, I asked you,
we already lived in that one once?*

One had stairs that petered out.
Another seemed to have no windows

and rooms with no clear purpose.
The third still smelled of mouse.

How odd we were together
last night, divorced so long, and you dead.

We wandered through them, back
and forth, stepping between decades,

murmuring *surely not that again.*

Family Evacuation with Gulf Fritillary Caterpillars

Hurricane Ida, August 29, 2021

—for Maria and Donald

Our friends who shelter us
grew a Maypop vine
 these last three years

 so they could offer food
to the Pensacola caterpillars
who gorge now on the poison

(to us) of its blooms
which are purple
 and intricate as geodes.

 The edge of the storm
tracked us here. Its tongue lolls,
huge and gray, across the horizon.

Ancestral butterflies
flash orange against the grass
 like an emergency.

 Some of the caterpillars
have wrapped themselves in cloaks
and hang still as they liquefy.

Clarity

Each morning I stir my oats, but first,
some salt to make them bearable,

and there are apples to be sliced,
black tea to burn off the residue of dreams.

The woods still call to remind me I am alive.
So many deaths already. But newness comes:

this year the fiddlehead ferns, the baby flickers
in the tree, the pink gleam inside their mouths.

This year my first wood duck, the sassafras root
I dug and saved to boil, the living cold of water

to tame my hands, and all over my face
the scrub of early morning sun.

Atta Ruti

—*Calcutta 1974*

A fistful of dough, torn from dough,
above the flour-gritty rolling ground, sponge moon
balled into being between my palms, quashed,
finger-pressed, but stubbornly ovulate, no matter
how the stone beneath it turns, no matter
the pressure of the spindle, as if a moon ballooned,
went flat, fell from round sky to flat earth,
grew and shrank, shrank and grew, between rotating rock
and rolling wood, beneath the upstrokes of will and practice,
between the axis of scripture and angle of verse,
as if what transpires between Shape and Shaper
is not wholly in the hand of either.

For Theo

In the book about the family of mice
who must move to avoid the spring threshing
of the tractor, there is a clumsy crow
named Jeremy. Every good story needs
a clown, a jester, a fool; a silly goose.

And here he is, distracting us from the story
with what distracts him: a silver, glinting
scrap of tin. It lies in the grass, reflecting
the sun. He's entranced, mesmerized; forgets
the question the mother mouse has asked him.

There is likely a part of his crow brain,
that olive-sized nugget of bird wisdom
and feathered lore, that spins the question
like a top, tightly wound and nearly drilling
a hole with its focus ... before tilting,

wobbling, and tumbling on its side. I ask
if you know the difference between tin
and aluminum, since we're paused inside
this pause, this glow, your head on my shoulder—
and truth is I don't know either. Your breath

on my neck is dandelions after rain,
or just the breath of a boy I'm learning
how to love. No, you say. And I'm proud—of us
both—men who do not know and say so.
Back inside the story, Jeremy the crow

breaks the spell of his reverie with a jolt
and tells the mama mouse he can fly her
to safety that night. Can you imagine?
I mean being the crow, but also the mouse.
Being the metal, and also the sun.

Despite This Being Easter Morning

The world remains all dog-brown mud and drifts
of struggling grass. The sun tries to vanish in the stream.
No Easter hat or matching pocketbook. No sliding back
into the shine of wooden pew. No holy statues or spirits
of middle-age women dressed in salt and sanctity. Still,
this morning is buckshot with possibility, shrieks of small
birds rending air. No Easter basket. No scent of chocolate
and marshmallows. No cellophane grass. Only
a pause in the earth's yawning. A yapping sky.
New budding twists of trust, speckled & green.

About the Contributors

Sarah Banks writes poetry and short fiction. Her work has appeared in *Autumn Sky Poetry* and is forthcoming in *Lit Shark Magazine*, *Fiction on the Web*, and *Thimble Literary Magazine*. Sarah lives in Mississippi and enjoys working in her garden.

Dan Murphy teaches at Boston University. His work has appeared in *Sugar House Review*, *The Summerset Review*, *The Indianapolis Review*, *Slipstream*, *Terrain*, *TAB*, *Rust & Moth*, and elsewhere. His debut manuscript *Estate Sale* was named a finalist for the Barry Spacks Poetry Prize and the Terry J. Cox Poetry Award.

Brian Duncan lives in New Jersey with his wife Margie and two cats. He worked in a virology laboratory for many years. He enjoys devoting his retirement time to poetry, gardening, and hiking. His poems appear in *Whale Road Review*, *Passengers Journal*, *Thimble*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *ONE ART*, and *Elysium Review*.

Erin Schallmoser (she/her) is a poet and writer living in the Pacific Northwest. Her work can be found in *Nurture*, *Paperbark*, *Catchwater*, and elsewhere. She is the founder and editor-in-chief of *Gastropoda*.

Ken Hines has been an ad agency creative director and a college English teacher, two jobs that require getting through to people who may not be listening. A recent Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee, he lives in monument-free Richmond, Virginia with his wife Fran.

Poet and printmaker **Tammy Greenwood** is a Louisiana native residing in California. She is a Pushcart Prize nominee, and her work appears or is forthcoming in *Rattle*, *Whale Road Review*, *SWWIM*, *Door is a Jar*, *ONE ART*, *Rust & Moth*, *Orange Blossom Review*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Santa Fe Literary Review*, *Poetry South*, *FERAL*, and elsewhere.

Elisabeth Harrahy's work has appeared in *Zone 3*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *The Café Review*, *Passengers Journal*, *Ghost City Review*, *I-70 Review*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Sky Island Journal*, and elsewhere, and has been nominated for Best of the Net. She is an associate professor of biology at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Elizabeth Hsu (she/her) is the Eighth Youth Poet Laureate of Houston, Texas. She was a semifinalist for the 2023–2024 National Student Poet. She is a poetry alumnus of the Adroit Journal Summer Mentorship and the Iowa Young Writers' Studio. Find her poetry forthcoming or published in *miniMAG*, *Eunoia Review*, and elsewhere.

Crystal Taylor is a neurodivergent poet, lover of dogs and flash. Her work has been published in *Cosmic Daffodil*, *Last Stanza Poetry Review*, *Meat for Tea*, and *Dorothy Parker's Ashes*.

Lea Marshall's poetry is forthcoming in *Cider Press Review* and *The Ecopoetry Anthology Volume III*. She was a finalist for *Shenandoah's* Graybeal-Gowen Prize for Virginia Poets, and her work has appeared in *A-Minor*, *Rise Up Review*, *failbetter*, *BOAAT*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *BODY*, *Diode*, *Thrush*, *Broad Street Magazine*, and elsewhere.

Margaret Malochleb is a writer and editor based in Chicago. Recent work appears or is forthcoming in *Frogpond*, *Rattle*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, and *I-70 Review*.

Lucy Rumble is an emerging writer from Essex. Her poem won third place in the 2023 Tap Into Poetry contest, and her work has been published in *Crow & Cross Keys*, *Myth & Lore Zine*, and *Needle Poetry*, among others.

Deidre Cavazzi is a poet, storyteller, and choreographer. She lives in California, where she can often be found hiking beneath redwoods or looking for wildflowers. Deidre is currently completing her MFA in Creative Writing at Dominican University and also holds an MFA in Dance from the University of California, Irvine.

Shana Graham is a Seattle-based writer, producer, and educator. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Cimarron Review*, *Witness*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *CRAFT*, *West Trade Review*, and others. Shana also creates living stories in the form of large-scale events filled with music, artistry, and general mayhem.

Cora Anderson (they/them) is a young queer poet living in Brooklyn, New York. They enjoy language, love, music, and sunrises.

Amy Pence is the author of two full-length poetry collections including *Armor*, *Amour* and the hybrid *[It] Incandescent* (both Ninebark Press)—as well as two chapbooks. Her most recent is *Your Posthumous Dress* (dancing girl press, 2019). She's a part-time tutor and has taught poetry at Emory University and in other workshop settings.

Katerina Matta (she/her) is a high school student from the San Francisco Bay Area. Her writing has been recognized by the Kennedy Center and the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. When not writing, she can be found playing beach volleyball or attempting to walk her dog.

Daniel Brennan (he/him) is a queer writer and coffee devotee from New York. His work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize, and has appeared in numerous publications, including *The Penn Review*, *Sky Island Journal*, and *ONE ART*.

Lee Peterson is the author of two full-length poetry collections, *Rooms and Fields: Dramatic Monologues from the War in Bosnia* (Kent State University Press) and *In the Hall of North American Mammals* (Cider Press Review), and a chapbook, *The Needles Road* (Seven Kitchens Press).

Sophia Carroll (she/they) studied chemistry at Smith College and biology at Brown University. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Cadaverine*, *Current Affairs*, and *SmokeLong Quarterly*, as well as on her Substack, *Torpor Chamber*. She is working on her second novel.

Hibah Shabkhez is a writer of the half-yo literary tradition, an erratic language-learning enthusiast, and a happily eccentric blogger from Lahore, Pakistan. Her work has previously appeared in *Pleiades*, *Miracle Monocle*, *Glasworks*, *Windsor Review*, *Moria*, *CommuterLit*, and a number of other literary magazines.

January Pearson's work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Los Angeles Review*, *Poetry South*, *Tahoma Literary Review*, *2River*, *Rust & Moth*, *Notre Dame Review*, and other publications. She was named a finalist in The Best of the Net 2020 Anthology.

Cecil Morris retired after 37 years of teaching high school English, and now he tries writing what he tried teaching students to read and (maybe) enjoy. His poems have been published in *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Hole in the Head Review*, *The Talking River Review*, *Willawaw Journal*, and other literary magazines.

Christine Barkley is an Irish-American writer based in the Pacific Northwest. Her poems and personal essays have appeared or are forthcoming in *Manhattan Review*, *Grain*, *The Journal*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Salamander*, *The Indianapolis Review*, and *the Pinch*, among others. She is a poetry reader for *TriQuarterly* and *The Maine Review*.

Anne Yarbrough's first collection *Refinery* (Broadkill River Press) received the 2021 Dogfish Head Poetry Prize. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Poet Lore*, *Gargoyle*, *CALYX Journal*, *Cider Press Review*, *SWWIM Every Day*, *Spillway*, *THRUSH Poetry Journal*, and elsewhere. She lives along the lower Delaware River.

Andy Young's second full-length collection, *Museum of the Soon to Depart*, is forthcoming from Carnegie Mellon University Press. Her work has appeared or will soon in *The Missouri Review* and *Drunken Boat*. A graduate of Warren Wilson's Program for Writers, she teaches at New Orleans Center for Creative Arts.

Tara Bray's work has been published in *Poetry*, *Hudson Review*, *New England Review*, *Shenandoah*, *The Southern Review*, *Narrative*, and *Mississippi Review*. She is the author of *Small Mothers of Fright* (LSU Press 2015) and *Mistaken For Song* (Persea Books 2009). She resides in Richmond, Virginia with her husband and daughter.

Poet and lyricist **Sati Mookherjee** is the author of *Eye* and *Ways of Being*. A third collection *Des'* is forthcoming in 2025. Her collaborations with contemporary classical composers have been performed or recorded. Her work has been awarded an Artist Trust/ Washington State Arts Commission Fellowship Award.

Justin Bigos lives with his daughter in central Vermont, where he stocks produce at his local co-op. He is the author of a book of poems, *Mad River* (Gold Wake, 2017), and has published poems and stories in places such as *Ninth Letter*, *New England Review*, *McSweeney's Quarterly*, *Forklift Ohio*, and *The Best American Short Stories 2015*.

Judy Kaber is the author of three chapbooks. Besides having appeared previously in *Rust & Moth*, her poems have appeared in such journals as *Hunger Mountain*, *Poet Lore*, and *Prairie Schooner*. Recently, her poem "Sword Swallowing Lessons," was featured on "The Slowdown." She is a past poet laureate of Belfast, Maine (2021–2023).

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