



The Orchards Poetry Journal

Winter 2022

© 2022 The Orchards. All rights reserved. This material may not be reproduced in any form, published, reprinted, recorded, performed, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed without the explicit permission of The Orchards Poetry Journal. All such actions are strictly prohibited by law.

ISBN: 978-1-63980-259-3



Karen Kelsay, Editor in Chief
Jenna V. Sumpter, Co-Editor
Delisa Hargrove, Assistant Editor
Shay Culligan, Cover Design

For submissions visit our website at: orchardspetry.com



Inspired by the small plot of apple trees near Cambridge, England,
where writers have gathered for years with their books and pens,
we welcome you to pull up a chair and enjoy poetry in the orchard.

The Grantchester Award Winners

First Place \$50.00

1. “The Kingdom of God Is Like . . .” by Jennifer Stewart (pages 17–19)

Second Place \$30.00

2. “I comb my daughter’s hair” by Elizabeth Cranford Garcia (pages 80–81)

Pushcart Nominations

1. “Slightly Lost” by Mike James (page 48)
2. “Cleaved” by Marceline White (pages 52–53)
3. “Alpha” by Nicholas Kriefall (pages 132–133)



Winter 2022

Contents

David Murphy	
The Arrival of Autumn	12
William R. Stoddart	
Fitful Light	13
Words I Bury	14
Sarette Danae	
After Driving Down the Oregon Coast	15
Memento Mori	16
Jennifer Stewart	
The Kingdom of God Is Like . . .	17
Kate Deimling	
Secrets	20
David Henson	
She's Liquid	21
Brandon Burdette	
The Bondsman	23
Susan McLean	
Takedown	24
N.T. Chambers	
Flickering	25
Catherine Arra	
In the Wake of Leaving	27
Noah Berlatsky	
Amidah	28
Sarah Dickenson Snyder	
Eve Leaving	30
Beyond Eden	32



Winter 2022

Marzelle Robertson	
In the Beginning	33
Bill Howell	
A Psychic History of Not Us	34
Linda Gamble	
Flying in Formation	35
David Southward	
Truth in the Midlands	36
Sally Nacker	
Lantern Light	38
Leslie Hodge	
Martha Stewart Living	39
John Whitney Steele	
Long Nights	40
Bart Edelman	
Raven	41
Marjorie Maddox	
Making the Bed	42
Eric Colburn	
Words and Things	43
Gary Glauber	
Incensed	44
Wendy Freborg	
If Children Are the Future	45
Angela Hoffman	
Whatever Will Be Will Be	46
Mike James	
Slightly Lost	48
I'll Give You Something to Cry About	49
Autumn Newman	
Push	50
Lindsay Rockwell	
Dear My Insides Will You Be My Boat	51



Winter 2022

Marceline White	
Cleaved	52
Jenna Le	
Cephalopoda	54
Mary Beth Hines	
New Year's Eve	55
Robert Walton	
Bosnian Brandy	56
Tina Barry	
Mother's Ready	57
Jason Brightwell	
Comfort Remains	59
Family History the Hard Way	60
John Schneider	
Invocation	62
Claudia Gary	
Well	63
Lamplighting	64
Katrina Hays	
In Response to Ms. Ryan	65
Jen Feroze	
A Quiet Poem for When It Rains	66
Cliff Saunders	
Rain Song	67
Jean-Sebastien Surena	
Drowned Bodies	68
Rebecca Yancey	
For a Private Burial	69
Mark J. Mitchell	
Tenebrae	70
John Dorroh	
Checked In	71



Winter 2022

Sandi Stromberg	
Ecru Silk and the Ormolu Clock	72
Diane Elayne Dees	
Riddle in Black and White	74
Karen Greenbaum-Maya	
Estate Sale	75
Deborah-Zenha Adams	
Grace	76
Tim Suermondt	
More Than a Word	77
Zach Czaia	
To the Young Priest at the Church in Duluth Who Spoke With Such Certainty on the Meaning of Baptism	78
Elizabeth Cranford Garcia	
Father Tongue	79
I comb my daughter's hair	80
Mark D. Bennion	
Revision	82
Victoria Lau	
The Birds and the Bees & the Crocodiles Talk	83
Catherine Chandler	
Cinquefoil	84
Bill Griffin	
Impossible Triolet	86
Matthew Cory	
For a Friend After the Death of Her Spouse	87
Jane Blanchard	
Selfie	88
Jacqueline Coleman-Fried	
First Mother's Day	89
Charlotte Innes	
The Ghost Owl	90



Winter 2022

M. E. Goelzer	
Nostalgia	92
Michael Salcman	
Bittersweet	94
George Freek	
Beside the Green River	96
Angelo D'Amato, Jr.	
At the University Cocktail Party	97
Pamela Wax	
Early Morning Fog	98
Gabo Alvarado-Lieber	
The Hunt	99
Danny P. Barbare	
Friends	101
Lara Dolphin	
Deep Time Meal	102
Paul Buchheit	
Addiction	103
Arvilla Fee	
If Only You Had Known	105
Jennifer Stewart	
Vincent's Plane Trees	106
Donald Wheelock	
Defector	107
Michael Estabrook	
Rocking Chair	108
Carey Jobe	
Concerto in E-Flat Major	109
Wendy Sloan	
To Jonathan, as Our Grandson Leo Turns Eight	111
Descent	112
Eileen Trauth	
Departure	113



Winter 2022

Sharon Whitehill	
Green Burial	114
P.C. Scheponik	
Nothing Wants to Die	116
Lisa Barnett	
At Notre-Dame Basilica, Montreal	117
Tina Barry	
Lilies	119
Leslie Schultz	
Stalking Beauty	121
R.T. Castleberry	
Wildling	122
Kathy Pon	
Clockwork	123
Evelyn Asher	
wandering	124
Matthew King	
Irruption: on Incarnation	125
Vivian Wagner	
first snowfall	126
G.H. Mosson	
Treaty at Thirty-One	127
Night Studies	128
Rush Hour	129
Gary Beck	
Creature Comforts	130
Donald Wheelock	
Last of the Living	131
Nicholas Kriefall	
Alpha	132
Omega	134
Lisa St. John	
Piecrust Legend	135



Winter 2022

Sheila Lynch-Benttinen	
The Hills Are Purple	136
Judy Lorenzen	
Never Mundane	137
Elaine Koplou	
Who Tells the Cows?	139
Thomas DeFreitas	
Photograph	141
Carla Martin-Wood	
Infidel	142
Jane Ebihara	
Solstice	143
Allen Ireland	
Two Trees	145
Shannon Lodoen	
The Gift	146
Tom Laughlin	
Walking After a Snowstorm with Kobayashi Issa	147
Shutta Crum	
Witness (with Friend)	148
Biographies	150



Winter 2022

David Murphy

The Arrival of Autumn

At the end of summer when the honey drips from the comb,
when the tall grasses wave in the warm, gentle breeze,
and the orchards that lie north of the farmsteader's home
are rich with apples that hang heavy from trees,
then the shadows begin to lengthen in the southern sun
which sets over a heartland of fields and rolling hills.
And folk feel in their bones that autumn has begun:
a time of black and scarlet leaves, brisker winds, and chills.
It is a time of fog. A time of mists among dells and valleys,
when gourds and pumpkins ripen among the pastures,
and streams flow swift, cold, and clear along the rocky alleys.
Then comes the time for hot tea, woolgathering, a peaceful book.
The time when the black cat, its eyes like gold-sparked jewels,
leaps from the wooden fencepost, and, with penetrating look,
pads across the tufted grass, past the penned-up cows and mules,
on to some destination, secret or lazy or otherwise.
The days grow shorter and dimmer
until the heavens are lit by starry orbs and the lush moonrise,
and all the earth is silvered by their fair shimmer.



Winter 2022

William R. Stoddart

Fitful Light

Floating on this path of fitful light,
I whirlpool sodden leaves, watch
devil's needles fly through October sky,
glide past boulders sponged by dark currents
where, as a boy, raised high like the rapture,
I plucked grace from the blue vault,
my kingdoms long ago built.

I rise above the sink where rocks break
the thin skin of water, hard pressed
on every side but not crushed. And when
I've reached my destination,

there's fire to dry me, whiskey to warm me,
love to embrace me, a home worthy
of my journey, sleep to dream of kingdoms
restored, renewed, reclaimed from the slow burn
of rust on the heavy-handed face of a clock,
and another day hard pressed, but never crushed,
navigating this valley of shadows
over a path of fitful light.



Winter 2022

William R. Stoddart
Words I Bury

I bury words
in cedar—shaved,

sharpened
graphite epigrams
snug among quilts,

wool sweaters,
yearbooks,
yellow paper scraps,

baby's footprints,
transcripts,
sheepskin credentials,

words smothered
in resinous heirlooms
forgotten like whispers

in the night,
all moths to a flame.



Winter 2022

Sarette Danae

After Driving Down the Oregon Coast

I'd like a house by the sea,
not by the ocean, dressed in its silky blues
and wrapped in miles of sand. No, a house by the *sea*,
with its changing colors and moods, restless waves
and rumored secrets. I want to hear it crash
on seal-strewn rocks and rush over pebbles gathered
at the water's edge, rasping against one another
in their repeated choral strain, sounding low and long
like a Gregorian chant.

This house by the sea should be snug or cozy—
words that spin its smallness into worn woolen blankets
and dim firelight. It shouldn't be a house at all, not really,
but rather a cottage or more simply a place
where my heart could stretch slow like a lighthouse beacon
and my pen could rasp against these blank pages,
filling in the half-notes for the sea and rocky coast.



Winter 2022

Sarette Danae

Memento Mori

A remembrance of death,
Some token to carry deep in a pocket
Or placed with care on a desk or mantel.
It could be anything, really,
A trinket or novel—a heavy, leather tome
Or slim volume with fabric cover—
Coins for the ferryman or a sphinx moth, pinned and pressed,
Maybe even a replica of poor Yorick’s skull.
Let your token calm you in rage and awaken you from apathy
And send you *carpe diem*ing with an unbridled yawp.
Let this memento remind you of what’s surely waiting
For me and you but never for us.
No, never us.



Winter 2022

Jennifer Stewart

The Kingdom of God Is Like . . .

A table for two under the stars
where you and I are seated

Sipping cocktails, slowly
scooping little spoonfuls of crème brûlée

Enjoying each other in particular and
not in the abstract when

You remove your wallet, excavate a memory
surprising me with that

Yellow slip torn from a legal pad
scribbled with my longings for you

Penned at a table small, of cherry wood, kissing-close to the
kitchen wall, a glossy and exposed red brick, our favorite

In a rented upstairs duplex, the Pittsburgh North Side
inner city of our first year of married life.

They say our brains are, picture this—
hard-wired for poetry.

Is that why I find myself
craving metaphor and simile, tongue-tied



Winter 2022

With your lemon-gin kisses, lavender-honeyed
their sizzle-buzz savor, the bee's knees buckle, sweat-salted

Preservation of the poem written decades ago for you
forgotten by me, found tucked up in your back pocket

Protected in the dark, fragile like one of those dear
Dead Sea scroll scraps, in a Dallas exhibition,

Me standing side-by-side with you ensconced
drunk on history dimly lit in rows of glass display cases

The shadowy reverential awe, the kingdom of God
in our mustard seed life

A yeast grain measure, be
secretly at work, like those gospel clues of

Nicodemus, the nighttime encounter and everafter
permeated, weighted down with love and

His seventy-five pounds of aloes and myrrh, present
at the intimate end to touch and spice-wrap the body

In the hand of God, the consummate writer,
become a masterful microstory bloom



Winter 2022

Sprung from roots of climactic truth,
the slow infiltration of grafted love.

The kingdom of God is like
firefly sparks freed from the jar

Star-wide, his desire
burning for connection with me.

Come, love, let's set the table
for the wedding feast.



Winter 2022

Kate Deimling
Secrets

My cousin left an emptied retirement fund
and gambling debts to his widow, who found
herself raising kids without husband, health insurance, or home.

My friend discovered her deceased mother
had been expelled for *inappropriate behavior*,
the letter sitting all those years in her desk drawer.

After my uncle's death, my aunt found a shoebox
of letters from his old sweetheart,
a girl whose name she'd never heard.

Between us there are no such things unsaid.
If I die, you'll learn nothing from me dead,
and if I have bored you with endless stories,

at least you will know them by heart,
along with my failings and all I hold dear,
my fears, my thrills, my talents, and my cares,

and it will be my small glory to impart
no pain to you in death but grief,
the only thing we will not share.



Winter 2022

David Henson

She's Liquid

You find her in your bed eating an orange
and having a scotch on the rocks.
Before you can speak, she pours
you a drink and tells you she's liquid—

has slid down trees with the rain,
risen with the sap
and slept in the swollen bags of cows.

You ask how she got into your house.
She smiles and says you carried her,
holds up the orange,
and licks the juice from her lips.

Then she says she watched you shower
this morning from the film
on the bathroom mirror.

You laugh, shake your head.
She smiles again, sips her drink,
lays an ice cube on her tongue
and melts with it. Convinced at last,



Winter 2022

you decide to take a chance—
invite her to pour herself
into your drink,
roam through your veins.

Previously published in Pikestaff Forum.



Winter 2022

Brandon Burdette

The Bondsman

A day: Twenty-four patients jailed in lust's asylum . . .

Was not her mind the teakettle in which you steeped stars?

With wit's skillful spoon, you swirled rich joys and sipped love's
steaming brew . . .

This transpired beneath the punk-jacket of night, studded with
despotic ambitions,
by which all your leisure was devoured . . .



Winter 2022

Susan McLean

Takedown

I had my eye on you.
You never had a chance
to dodge the rendezvous
I had my eye on. You
could not evade my coup,
the program for romance
I had: my I on you.
You never had a chance.



Winter 2022

N.T. Chambers

Flickering

It was so easy then
with all the lovely aching
limb-entwining
nights of dance
reluctantly surrendering
to sleepy-eyed
alarm clock-ridden
caffeine-drenched
frantic mornings
of barking dogs
too few bagels
and hour-long showers
with no soap
that never needed to end . . .
and all the connecting phone calls
making sure
we both still existed
even when we weren't we
but
you and I
out there

 separate
and apart
from the singular echoing heartbeat
that warmed our bed
made us laugh
kept us safe



Winter 2022

whole and young
in a world that couldn't possibly have known . . .

It was so easy then,
arguing about who was smarter
never caring who won . . .
munching over-baked
cinnamon rolls from the top
to avoid their charcoal bottoms . . .
wondering if we'd ever have a home
of our own in which
to grow crops
raise bassets
and grow old . . .
all the while certain
we had forever
and a night
to be together
to be in love
to be who we were and who we were to be
with tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
always a guarantee . . .
It was so easy then . . .
it's not so easy now.



Winter 2022

Catherine Arra

In the Wake of Leaving

I am the curious doe eyeing you,
ears angled, nose pitched, tracking
your footfall, your scent—
wooly sweat, metal, and gasoline.

I look you straight, eye to eye
as if to say, why are you here?
Who are you to want me—or I you,
so unlike my kind?

To tempt me closer
than instinct allows, reach to soften
my deep-woods resolve that knows
you are he who carries

the guns of your gender, a desire
for flesh, sweet and wild—that
you will always put yourself above me,
never eye to eye.

My animal heart wants
to make this crossing, to be a bridge,
but my back leg is poised to pivot
and run.



Winter 2022

Noah Berlatsky
Amidah

My lips he will open, and my mouth shall pronounce your praise.

Through long practice the Spanish Inquisition
had learned that torture was an inexact science.

You can fill a heretic's lungs with water
or pull a heretic's shoulder from its socket.
But there's no tool to fill a throat with truth
or make a revelation out of brokenness.
The soul, like the flesh, is recalcitrant
even amidst the erratic loquacity of pain.

So they tried the reliable loquacity of loneliness.
Put the Lutheran in a cell alone with silence.
Put the Muslim alone in a cell with fear.
No books, no visitors, the candle burning out,
and wait for the slow crush of years
to pour down the throat like sand
and pour from the throat like truth.

A cellmate joins him there
in stone and time, until confession
blooms like a flower in a dark room, pure as faith.
Sightless, the prisoner hears another,
and hope sparks and flickers like a pyre.
"My friend," he says, "God is here."
There is no friend. There are no lies.



Winter 2022

No knives to lay the muscle bare.
Only a painless pure unburdening.
The listeners outside, invisible, raise their quills,
bird beaks that jerk and clack after each unsluggish word.

Only then, sometimes, do they return
to the room and to the tools,
not to find out, but to confirm
that every secret has been nailed
to the hard blank board of Christ and truth.
Christ loves his truth. And we love each other.
Who would not confess
given a willing ear, and God waiting?



Winter 2022

Sarah Dickenson Snyder
Eve Leaving

How I feel a burning
in my fingertips, on my lips,
when I think of the fruit.
As if *I'd* been bitten.

Will there be fireflies,
those blinking stars
I could have touched but didn't?
Will the lupines bloom
where we're headed—
how the green leaves
waited, and in one wet night
the purple stalks emerged.

Was endlessness a kind
of paradise,
or must I admit
I was bored?

Did you know, Maker,
how I longed for more
than lushness and just breath?

Maybe that was the sin.



Winter 2022

A line of regal turkeys
crosses the meadow. And there a doe,
her young fawn and its tinny cry a rippling
in the long grasses.

Are you ready? he asks.
I nod and stand.

I take nothing
except three apple seeds
hidden in my palm.



Winter 2022

Sarah Dickenson Snyder
Beyond Eden

Did they miss her voice?
The way she used to thank
the peonies for their strong heads,
talk to the wind, sing to the meadow,
hers different from the chirps
of swallows or the owl's night echo.

Had there been a boat there, or did she just float
on the calm water and wonder at the clouds
lying beside her? What if she had stayed with that
horizon, the colorful fish fins sculling beneath her?

All she would have never seen—
the way a swath of snow smooths every edge.
The outline of mountains she can climb.
The sweetness of fall, the dying season,
the one that she is now a part of—
why is it her favorite? Maybe the apples,
their scent pulling her, an obedience
to another gravity—wooden crates piled high
with Macoun, Cortland, Honeycrisp, Empire.

*A half-peck, please, she says to a red-cheeked woman
who palms the bottom of the bag, placing apples
tenderly and saying, You can fit more in this way.*



Winter 2022

Marzelle Robertson
In the Beginning

*you hate
even the thought
of me*

*Irresistible
and bittersweet,
that loosener
of limbs, Love
reptile-like
strikes me down
—Sappho*

After all that, to hate
The thought of him,
To gnaw bitterness
Until your teeth break
And your shining eyes
Grow dim—

But wasn't he mesmerizing
Fluid and sensuous in
The camouflaged twists on the path?
Wasn't it, in the beginning,
The gleaming fang you couldn't resist?



Winter 2022

Bill Howell

A Psychic History of Not Us

Formidable former stories, mostly oddly sad now, say they were proving something to themselves with each other's full support: I loved each being without worry, hoping but never guessing they'd all add up to you.

All we've become since persists by being here. And after all, you're happy—simply want to express how you feel. So this isn't about you not needing me—has less than nothing to do with misplaced truth, trust, money, or lust.

Eventually, nothing is more agreeable than this platonic weather just happening to highlight what we thought we needed to live through & somehow accept with nothing more to memorize or forget.



Winter 2022

Linda Gamble

Flying in Formation

Secured only by mutual indignities,
we board and belt at a distance
of enforced communal intimacy,
tightly tethering touch-me-not limbs,
sharing dead, flying capsule air,
we streak across the sky
between time and space—
symbiotic strangers.



Winter 2022

David Southward

Truth in the Midlands

A scattered flock
of English sheep
dines while standing
ankle deep
in rain-drenched grass
between the steep
chalk hills of Ilam,
where you and I
have come to walk.

Their bleats and brays,
nasal orations
affirmed by meek,
clicking rotations
of their jaws,
are like a conversation
overheard. It could be praise
for a god of sheep, or rain,
or frisky lambs

who wander off,
then skip and canter
back to their dam—
rubbing their hides
against her flank
as if they've only
her to thank.



Winter 2022

Meanwhile,
in the steady drizzle,
you startle me
with a blunt appraisal
of my personality.
I'm *stealthy, suave,*
controlled, you say.
More cat than dog.
And yet the sheep
don't blink, or blush
or look away;

they watch me, bored,
through forelock mops—
like stoners camped
on mountaintops,
smoking till dawn.
To such contented
English sheep,
I'm one more secret
Earth can keep.



Winter 2022

Sally Nacker

Lantern Light

Home, sick, I look at our new lantern
in the front yard, unlit by day.

Fall is coming on;
soon wood will burn,

and smoke will rise
from chimneys all around
these wooded hills. Health
feels so far away. Cries

of jays fill the air now. How
I dream of snow falling toward
the lantern on a quiet winter's
night. Bright lantern. Bright snow.



Winter 2022

Leslie Hodge

Martha Stewart Living

Arriving late at Turkey Hill,
milky moon, no snow yet.
Inside the house are candles set
at each windowsill.

What shall I do this fortnight?
Picking up an antique quill,
I dip it in the inkwell
and write by candlelight.

*Shear the shy alpacas; spin and dye the yarn.
Rake and dry the maple leaves. Save for the Bonfire.
Embroider spring scenes of Mt. Fuji, cross-stitch and French knots.
Butcher poor old Wilbur—such an unfortunate name.
Start the hams in the smokehouse, make sausage with wild sage.
Oil the treadle sewing machine, stitch masks from old linen.
Gather chicken and turkey eggs, save the shells for gilding.
Bake dog treats for Genghis Khan. Ask him, who's a good boy?
Don the gold kimono; write haikus and tankas.
Curry the Shetland ponies. Curl and color the manes.
Make the giant marshmallows; heat the hand-pressed cider.
Invite Cook and Maid and Gardener to the last Bonfire.*

The magazine slips off the bed,
life luxurious and sweet.
I pull the Martha Stewart sheets
up over my head.

Previously published in Smoky Blue Literary and Art Magazine.



Winter 2022

John Whitney Steele

Long Nights

When the earth turns dark
and sap flows underground,

something in me longs
to lie down in my bed

of fallen leaves and turn
to compost cold and dark

until the sog of spring
seeps in through my pores,

but being of flesh and bone
I thaw out by the fire,

sink into my mattress
dreamless half the night,

then pitch and plunge until
I wake up bathed in light.



Winter 2022

Bart Edelman

Raven

Today, sorting laundry,
I found a dazed raven,
Half-asleep in my pocket.
Poor thing appeared haggard,
Told me he hadn't enjoyed
A moment's rest in ages,
As surely seemed the case.
The bird recited metric verse—
The entire afternoon—
Claimed he was a union member,
But then it all went to snot.
He was now disenfranchised:
Out of work, out of money,
And still had hungry mouths
Left to feed in a nest,
Somewhere south of Baltimore;
It made me weep, I'll admit.
However, late for supper,
I placed him gently in the dryer,
Set the cycle to permanent press,
Wished him all the best,
Got on with my life.



Winter 2022

Marjorie Maddox
Making the Bed

Because my friends have died, will die, I praise
these clean white sheets that smell of nothing dead,
their taking off or putting on, the rise
of cotton hope so small I discard dread

ten seconds more. No seashore near these waves
of air, I dream a faithful raft of sleep
to float my loves on prayer past fear or pain,
to sail away my well-worn doubt, to breathe

again a peace that's daily lost, but found
a minute here or there in what is cleansed,
returned for weekly ritual, profound
simplicity of pause. Because my friends

are gone, I breathe in now, the billowed sheets,
the only silent prayer I dare to speak.

Previously published in Fare Forward.



Winter 2022

Eric Colburn

Words and Things

I know how shelved books feel,
The body squeezed, the mind
Word-stuffed too full to find
Any respite in the real—
If “real” means lack of zeal,
Means wordlessness, unsigned
Experience, the rind
Or, say, banana peel
Of life. For words are meat,
Are pith, are fleshy fuel
For living our unreal,
Intense existences.
When words evaporate,
Then all we have is . . . this.



Winter 2022

Gary Glauber

Incensed

Their bitter rebuttal induces a battle.
They bicker, then butter up better, a fable
of thoughts that unsettle, of cages that rattle,
of free radicals that refuse to be stable.

The elements here go beyond periodic
as wrestler pins down the rowdy opponent.
The saga continues: long, episodic,
protracted, unpolished, unspoken but sonant.

The stories that grandchildren one day will hear,
the traumas, the dramas, the conquests in stride,
excused now as legends arising from fear,
this quantum tantrum of stakes amplified.

Today's anniversary caught on a placard
commemorates, decorates what they expect,
lifetime experience never goes backward
to innocence lost or a world of respect.



Winter 2022

Wendy Freborg

If Children Are the Future

If children are the future,
my future has begun to walk.
She toddles with a wide-based gait,
a rocking stance,
hands stretched at her sides.
The joy of mastery is in every step.
No longer content for hours in our arms,
she squirms, protests, wants to explore.
No more quiet play upon a quilt,
the world is at her feet.
I watch with pride although I know
my future has begun to walk away from me.

Previously published in Vox Poetica.



Winter 2022

Angela Hoffman

Whatever Will Be Will Be

There seems to be no cure for the sadness in life
other than to live it—so I let it unfold,
feel every edge that is sharp, soft.
Even though I am unhappy, I pickle the cucumbers
into jars that shimmer like the lake that was supposed to be
our vacation. I pick green beans for dinner, that I eat salted,
battered,
but I am starving for a meaty hug, with a backbone of trust.
I sweep the pine needles off the patio where no one visits
in this awkward time of us figuring out what is meant to be.
I sleep alone with the window open in a king-size bed,
feel the emptiness under the cloud of the feather comforter
as crickets lull me to sleep like I have never slept before.
Even though it pains me, I hold firm to the boundaries I set,
waiting, as summer slips, letting go of all I thought I could control.
I cut the last of the pink hydrangeas, I cut off intimacy.
In the dark of the morning, I sit in the pool of lamplight.
I am anchored. I am adrift.
I buy a good bottle of wine, way over my budget, toast
to whatever will be, will be.
Under the forecast of thunderstorms, I view the northern lights.
I read Oliver, go to the library, find something new by Brene,
read the newspaper full of nothing but bad news.



Winter 2022

While thinking of him, I go to dinner with friends,
and even though the entire world seems to be falling apart,
I find a trace of hope in my roses that still bloom.
I love myself, I doubt every move I've made.
I am falling over the edge. I am held by the center.



Winter 2022

Mike James

Slightly Lost

For Shawn Pavey

All day I've looked for darkness.
It's been so easy to find.

Under pine bristles and in dry ditches,
On playground slides
And well-lit street corners.

The darkness could be scooped up with a thimble.
I could weigh it in my hands as if it was absence.

I could gargle it in the back of my throat,
But all my life
I've been afraid of choking.

My fears have caused many problems.

Most mornings I look out the window for a string of light,
Thin as a spider's web,
To tell me I'm still attached to this world.



Winter 2022

Mike James

I'll Give You Something to Cry About

The moon won't save you on any night.

You can't read the wind marks on the trees,
With or without your glasses.

In any direction you walk,
You fall into
An empty place in your chest.

Grief is a star which keeps you guessing.

There's always an echo which
Rhymes with loss.
For a while now, that's seemed like
The music of the spheres.

Your hands won't work a prayer.
You'd offer up any finger to change that.



Winter 2022

Autumn Newman

Push

He pushes into me—

feral, hard—trying to claim me.

I leave my shell—an ocean

outcast, drifting blue. The vast

contains me as I cannot

contain myself. Another home

awaits—in deeper waters—

where echoes of ancient songs, still thrummed

by giants, will drown me in sleep.



Winter 2022

Lindsay Rockwell

Dear My Insides Will You Be My Boat

Once, I knew a thought.
A miracle of round—
circumference
smooth & edgeless. Then I
found its ocean, hidden
on the other side of grief.
It was blue & blue
round & round & edgeless too
I dove. There was no end
to water. Everywhere. Inside me
& this ocean—
flowers grew
toward sun.
Flowers loving
bees that swim—inside
this round & involute
I'm swallowed.
Such thoughts
wash my insides out. Leave
a trail of fingerprints.
Petal. Flutter. Kick. Up.
I want that boat that wants me.



Winter 2022

Marceline White

Cleaved

Love is the longing for the half of ourselves we have lost.

—Milan Kundera

That feeling of weightlessness, of being carried and cradled
in the meringue of cresting waves, the salt brining me,

changing my nature until I am mostly water, until I
am mostly buoyant on pillowy clouds and a light

sky-blue blanket. Sometimes I tire of all this floating
around. Lightness, too, can be a heavy burden.

Clambering onto the rock to shift perspective, I
loved the smell of sea moss that clung there,

smoothing the jagged edges, the outcropping
arms entreating the sea for another violent embrace.

That's where he found me and cleaved me,
taking my wild self away, taking what's

left to his home. Keeping me close. He calls this love.
His body heavy upon me. His, a thirst I cannot quench.

I live now among these thick rock walls. Bear
him pups with skin, glowing, pearlescent. Take

my children out to sea where the seals surround them
with song and allow them to ride on their silvered



Winter 2022

backs. At night, the moon wakes me with her same
soft light and quiet crooning. I walk the house,

search our barn looking for my lost self. I kiss my
children, walk to the water's edge, cry salty

tears that taste of home.

I call this love.



Winter 2022

Jenna Le

Cephalopoda

A live squid's luminous translucent skin,
its bulging blue eyes with their box-shaped pupils
like a goat's: watercolors can't begin
to recreate such vibrancy; some loophole
embedded in the laws of art forbids it.

Until I stumbled, humbled, on its tank
at the aquarium on my first visit
to Monterey, I never knew how frank
a difference there exists between live squid
and calamari shoveled on a plate:

perhaps there is a moral subtly hid
in this, a mandate not to underrate
ourselves—a tree is more than just its fruits,
a body more than its most common use.



Winter 2022

Mary Beth Hines
New Year's Eve

Cheeks blotched purple with cold, she steps inside,
wafting snow shot through with eau-de-cologne.
A brother, hands on hips, demands explanation.
Another studies her eyes—an examination—
but the test's cut short by a throng of little boys.

Mama, one squeals. Big brothers pull him back.
They dart away, scramble down cellar stairs.
When she seeks them out later, stumbles,
pleads for a kiss, they allow a brief caress,
scuttle off and leave her.

But when she slips outside alone for a smoke,
they see her in a silver light, in stars.
Her fingers spark a weepy cigarette,
and they rush to her side in the icy midnight air,
for a look, a touch, a stroke of her blue-black hair.



Winter 2022

Robert Walton

Bosnian Brandy

Ibrahim
Once greeted me on these steps
With plum brandy.
His eyes alight with joy
At my joy—
Because a stranger
Is a gift from God—
He placed chilled crystal
Between my fingers.
The brandy,
Topaz clear in evening light,
The scent of its blossoms held close
In the fluted glass,
Offered fulfillment
But delivered bliss.

Now,
Bullet holes
Beside his padlocked door,
Each an empty eye socket
In crumbling concrete,
Stare bluntly
At the future they made.



Winter 2022

Tina Barry

Mother's Ready

I wish for my mother's death,
as she does, if only for her to be reborn
lucky. The take for granted kind of luck—

pretty face.
An aptitude for math.
Adored.

I go to a tarot reader.
After a few flips, the death card.
I imagine the drawing

on its face is a knight on horseback,
some sign that my mother will exit
life in a romantic stampede.

But it isn't shining armor, just a hood
draping death's face.
Is it wrong to wish for her end

to be as glorious as the watercolors she painted?
Café scenes and seascapes.
A coral reef—



Winter 2022

red and its shadow—so real,
she could hold it in her palm
like a tiny hand.

Previously published in ONE ART: a Journal of Poetry.



Winter 2022

Jason Brightwell

Comfort Remains

Trace a leg fracture
to the early 80s—faulty
ladder, tree cat.

Split a graveyard with a
headache, drop dead suits.
The empty space is screaming.

I'm in bones here, candlelit
window slits dark,
unknowable, small plea—come.

Delicate ribs—comb teeth,
straighten out these last years,
rearrange your sickness.

One dead night, steady
burn, waxy drip, you came
to tell me you were gone.

But I was vintage dreaming—
grainy film. Holding your hands
too tightly to hear.



Winter 2022

Jason Brightwell

Family History the Hard Way

I am in the dark, apart.
Science-class frog, poison
tongue.

Doomed Jack, drunk on
time, finding wrong ways to
die.

Hungover.

Morning's guarantee grabs
breakfast to go.

Last night's smashed plates
are chewing teeth.

I saw your cancer in a picture
from the early 80s. You were
weeding out flowers.

The pearls in your ears were
words you never put in mine.



Winter 2022

Pin me back, butterfly;
all wings stop eventually.

My heart races
but not for you.



Winter 2022

John Schneider

Invocation

In this unfamiliar moment between biblical
dry-heat lightning flashes, their brief gleam

sinking into fields of scree between glacial peaks
to merge sudden day with deeper night. Throaty

variations rumble over distant granite steeples to wake
what once felt dead, touching our sense of hunger,

a curiosity. And we hear what we did not hear before, finally
recognize the moon's ashen face reflected off unpolished

granite, mirroring all we know of truth. The stars seem
to re-align from known patterns. Our hearts join the heavy

scent of lodgepole pine seedlings sprouting under silhouettes
of ancient junipers, and whatever else is outside waiting to be
let in.



Winter 2022

Claudia Gary
Well

You're well now, but you're not the one he married,
not anymore. Who was that girl again
who couldn't cross a threshold unless carried?
You'd left your courage where you'd left your pen
some years before he found you. Sweet and damaged,
neurotic and confused, you were just right
for one who saw himself as disadvantaged.
He'd feed you, comfort you, prevent your flight.

How did he move you? What spark did he summon?
His mother even more a wounded soul
than yours; you had a tragedy in common.
Too soon, you shared a life out of control.

Until you pulled yourself out of that spell,
he knew you. But he never knew you *well*.



Winter 2022

Claudia Gary

Lamplighting

The man whose lightbulbs burned out one by one
over the past four years, changes them all
this morning. Seeing what the dark has done,
the man whose lightbulbs burned out one by one
refuses one more day's oblivion,
however mild it seems, however small.
The man whose lightbulbs burned out one by one
over the past four years, has changed them all.

Previously published in a newsletter for the town of Harpers Ferry.



Winter 2022

Katrina Hays

In Response to Ms. Ryan

*What's the use
of something
as unstable
and diffuse as hope—*

—Kay Ryan

Of course, it offers no guarantee, no
promise we will get a future bettered or
gain fulfillment of the longed-for thus-and-so.
In fact, sure, it could be seen as pure

childishness: a wish on a winter's night
for loot; an obdurate belief the card
will not report this term's blighted
efforts; and, yes, it can lead to the petard

and the exploding of one's ambitions,
as well as revealing a reality
more dour than delightful; conditions
bound to lead to despair, I agree.

But—
without it the seed in the dark would remain
unbroken, and never lunge for rain.



Winter 2022

Jen Feroze

A Quiet Poem for When It Rains

This is a quiet poem for when it rains,
when heavy clouds gather outside this room,
and stardust sparkles hotly through my veins.

The early hours are sleepless once again,
my stomach rising fecund, tight, in bloom.
This is a quiet poem for when it rains.

When droplets dance against the windowpanes,
you breach like a small whale inside my womb,
and stars, not sleep, are running in my veins.

I think: “Keep only calm thoughts in your brain—
braiding her hair on Sunday afternoon—
turn to this quiet poem for when it rains.”

I want to drink the sky like dark champagne,
fling windows wide for petrichor’s perfume,
embrace the weight of glitter in my veins . . .

Tomorrow is a strange, cratered terrain
when I will don my tired, well-worn costume,
though stardust still gleams faintly in my veins.
I need a quiet poem for when it rains.



Winter 2022

Cliff Saunders
Rain Song

Don't weep for me, storm window.
The grass is in my heart.

Between the raindrops,
I see the passing of time.

Bolt of lightning filling
the void—it's unforgivable.

Spirits wander through the rain,
and one of them is mine.



Winter 2022

Jean-Sebastien Surena
Drowned Bodies

I've always found humor
in the fact that drowned bodies
float better than the living.
We spend all of our lives
learning how to swim,
succumbing to the pressure
below the surface, and
struggling to break free.
We try all manners of escape—
milling arms, flailing feet,
instilling calm, veiled deceit.
Then when our heart slows,
the air stops flowing to
our lungs, and our lips have
sung their last breath—
it is only then, in this
transition to blissful death,
that we learn how to
finally come up for air.



Winter 2022

Rebecca Yancey

For a Private Burial

Find a quiet place in the country
with trees and grass shaded
by a sturdy oak.

Build the coffin of pine
to ease the merging
with earth and life.

Slip an iris,
a pinecone,
or a book
into the box.

Dig the hole deep. Carefully
lower the body. Cover
it with the richest earth,
earth that is damp with rain,
warmed in the sun. Gently
tuck him in by patting down.

Sit on a nearby stone.
Recite a poem or say a prayer.
Listen to the wind.



Winter 2022

Mark J. Mitchell

Tenebrae

The voices of the Benedictines are massive, impersonal.
—Kenneth Rexroth, “Wednesday in Holy Week, 1940”

They sing the darkness. Cold tones, old as stone,
Intoning dead syllables that no one speaks.
An old record that my father once owned.
I’m listening halfway through Holy Week.
It is, my mind knows, an archaic rite,
Mothballed by a dead pope when I was born.
It feels right, apt on this cool graying night
While rags of my deserted faith flap, torn,
Around my guilt-fed soul. A candle glows—
I may light some more to brighten my doubts,
Because this is the rite of shadows.
Once I was taught just what it was about.
The record ends, and there’s nothing done.
I extinguish the candles, one by one.



Winter 2022

John Dorroh

Checked In

I lock myself in hotel bathrooms &
pretend that I'm being held hostage

by traveling spirits who won't release
me until I've consumed all the shitty

in-room coffee. It always ends in some
degree of commotion—hotel security

knocking on doors, check-out time three
hours ago—why'd they wait so long?

I've written seven poems in my head
eaten 2 sleeves of Ritz crackers prayed

to new gods who refused to hear me
until I opened new accounts. Patience

is wearing thin. I've showered until
my skin is pink & raw all the towels

are inside the tub just as they suggest
& my time's just about up here. There

will be questions & comments & perhaps
a big red flag on my hotel folio.



Winter 2022

Sandi Stromberg

Ecru Silk and the Ormolu Clock

Magical emptiness greets me this morning—
the breakfast room all mine. My rickety sense
of sophistication in France not yet endangered.

I feign a certain elegance as I sweep toward
a window table and its Louis XVI chair, the style
fancied by Marie-Antoinette.

As though I, too, were born to live this way,
I lean into its medallion-shaped back,
run my ringed fingers over the ecru silk

and breathe the aroma of fresh ground
Arabica beans. A cold March arches its frosty light
through high, paned windows, starching tablecloths

white, and falls on an enclosed garden
revealing the tight buds of spring. Past centuries
harmonize with the nine o'clock chime

of the ormolu clock in this fairy tale palace.
No matter that in bygone days, women like me
were servants, never clothed in crinoline and brocade.



Winter 2022

I gather my *petit dejeuner*, spread butter on dark slices
of baguette, threaded with sesame seeds and hazelnuts,

and sip my *café au lait*. Deliciously alone
in this communion, I savor *once upon a time*.



Winter 2022

Diane Elayne Dees

Riddle in Black and White

Her short-sleeved sweater with the puffy shoulders
clings to her breasts, Lana Turner style.
She's somewhere in her twenties, but no older;
her eyes, more than her lips, suggest a smile.
Those dark eyes and luxuriant coiffure
give vibes of Miss Lamarr. A showy flower
rests on one side—like Dorothy Lamour.
The look is one of smoldering sexual power,
yet a perfectly tied bow upon her throat
enhances the enigma—who is she?
Regardless what the photo may connote,
the subject still remains a mystery.
All I know is—once upon a time,
my mother looked exotic, chic, sublime.



Winter 2022

Karen Greenbaum-Maya
Estate Sale

An ecru beaded top, and champagne furs,
the score of *Lakmé* with the Bell Song marked,
twelve coral linen napkins: these were hers.
The neighbors come to peep. Cars throng to park.

I see her, sporty silver pixie hair.
The kitchen's ivy-papered, open plan,
and yellow caution tape marks every stair,
each jarring drop from where your steps began.

I think it was her husband who went first.
No books of his except the PDR,
2003. Been years since he was versed
in pulmonology and beating par.

There is no moral here to apprehend.
Someone cleans up. The world is without end.



Winter 2022

Deborah-Zenha Adams

Grace

I take refuge in the sun,
its light a revelation,
grace dispersed without constraint
to both heretic and saint.
Because I don't understand,
I take refuge.

Sanctuary is a gift
to be accepted. Adrift
in the river's one-two time—
breathe in, breathe out—I dream I'm
dreaming and touch the earth, and
I take refuge.



Winter 2022

Tim Suermondt

More Than a Word

Mercy: a fine word,
but I want it to be more than a word.

I want it to be living and purposeful,

a swan on the lake in the park, a man

who's marching with confidence
down the sidewalks despite his broken heart,

a woman who wonders where the best years

have gone yet refuses to be defeated.

Twice a year or so I want to look back
when I'm walking and get the sense

that mercy is following me, like a dog

who's badly in need of a home where she
and I sit by a fireplace, real or imagined.



Winter 2022

Zach Czaia

To the Young Priest at the Church in Duluth Who Spoke With Such Certainty on the Meaning of Baptism

You spoke of questions you would ask, to see
if parents understood the gravity,
the soul-shake of what it means to die
and come back again, up from the water,
gasping. You ask, *how often do you go
to mass? And when was your last confession?*
We are not children of the king before
we dunk, you claimed. We are only *creatures*.
And somewhere softly while you were speaking,
a creature died: maybe a bird beaked in
to glass, maybe a frog croaked its last breath
in this August heat? Or maybe a man
or a woman breathed slower and slower
and stopped. You with your collar, I with my pen,
what do we know of the mystery? What
but tender grasp, but light hold, could let us
see? Could let it open itself like wings
or heart that beat again? Now slow, now faster,
now steady. One and another and another.



Winter 2022

Elizabeth Cranford Garcia
Father Tongue

After Stephen Dunn

I've had to stop bowing down to that old
desire—a hand on the head in blessing.
Any string of words that might have meant
you are my pearl. Sure, I've accepted

pretty things: one sapphire pendant. A ring.
If I wear them from that prongy need, or some
frugality inherited like ear shape,
or a dexterous tongue—I can't say.

Is there any sugar I could speak
to loose the red drawstring of that face
so what emerges might be light-filled,
not merely facetious? What crystal might I taste

to unstone language, to make words
a matter of sticks to gather up and burn?



Winter 2022

Elizabeth Cranford Garcia

I comb my daughter's hair

Once, I pictured us in pinks and browns,
a placid-faced and rosy ritual.

Now I stumble through this riotous mass,
its expletives, its broken glass, made

mother teeth wolf red
wolf is howling in my head

when I neglect the very thing you rage
against. Little one, this kind of start

must mean the end will be no tragedy,
the only wish I wish for you. Surely

comb teeth mouth eat
you would eat me like a meat

somewhere in this thicket is a ram—
and can there be a goddess without loss?

Love, there is a grammar school for beauty.
How else could we understand, or envy

chop toe heel shoe
a pair of coal-hot shoes for you



Winter 2022

one another? And oh, to be envied!
The secret tarnished wish of any woman's

heart. Could I give to you, if not
with some aplomb or artful fairy thumbs,

heart heart liver box
stop the box me with your axe

some kin to happiness—the enviable tress,
the bone-blessed magic comb—make you the future

subject-object of any tongue, grant you,
if not bewitching power to stop, to dumb it—

tongue tail knife knife
cut my tongue to make a wife

then, instead, a mother who could learn
the syntax of this tumbleweed, believe

whatever moves unrooted things. The way
they pink the desert's bright and boundless face.



Winter 2022

Mark D. Bennion

Revision

I've pounded to the battle cry
"Never say die." I've re-listened
to Winston Churchill on the brink
when civilization nearly sank into the ocean,
"Never, never, never give up."
I heard these words in school
each time a new semester began,
fiddled with them on the tennis court
during warm-ups, shouted a version
to my daughter before she played
a non-league game of basketball.

But why *never*?
Why not sometimes know
when yielding will prevent
unwanted kinesics or a 70-hour work week,
or the knee-jerk punishment of an oldest child?
Why not allow the sun to break through
like an apology after a fight?

I pick up a tennis ball and re-think
the weight of Rafael Nadal's racquet.
I set it down again,
call to my daughter
whose eyes are open and wider
than mine have been
for quite some time.



Winter 2022

Victoria Lau

The Birds and the Bees & the Crocodiles Talk

*In ancient Egypt, contraceptive pessaries were crafted from
honey, sodium carbonate and the dung of a crocodile.*

—Deuce Flanagan, *Everybody Poops 10 Million Pounds:
The Astounding Fecal Facts of a Day in the City*

Daughter,

it's time we talk about birds and the bees
and the crocodile feces.

Before you have an intimate connection,
you must have the proper protection.

Go down to the blue Nile,
scoop up dung from the crocodiles.

Mix it with honey & sodium carbonate
so that, when you take on a mate,

you'll have a spermicidal fecal barrier;
the dung will make you all the merrier.

Remember, never do a thing
until you make a pessary ring.

Remember, you can choose to be a lover
without having to become a mother.



Winter 2022

Catherine Chandler

Cinquefoil

*The cinquefoil is the symbol of the beloved daughter,
as the leaves bend over to cover the flower when it rains,
as a mother would protect her daughter.*

—Cable Natural History Museum in Cable, Wisconsin

For Caitlin

Each spring she'd pick an early pee-the-bed
for me and say,
This for you, for Mother's Day.
I'd place it in a vase, though it was dead,
and praise its droopy yellow head.

Then later, it was *Loves me, loves me not*,
for daisies know
more than a sprig of mistletoe,
or mothers who (it seems) know diddly-squat.
At least that's what I thought she thought.

And when her lilac love had passed away
one winter, she
said it with roses, gracefully;
came home, crossed out her summer wedding day,
chopped off her hair. Try as I may,



Winter 2022

how could a mother's store of moss and cress
soften the hell
of marigold and asphodel?
Would timid snowdrops make a loss hurt less?
Often no. Maybe. Yes.

It's time and thyme we'll need; the flowering reed;
black poplar, white.
Cactus. Yarrow. Love outright.
The weeping willow and the wishing weed.
Those dandelions, gone to seed.



Winter 2022

Bill Griffin

Impossible Triolet

To hold the bright hard crystal sky—
impossible! To break a piece
and fold it close until you cry,

to hold the hard bright crystal sky
entire: into stillness may you fly
and grant the mourning heart release,

to hold the crystal hard bright sky
impossible to break. A peace.



Winter 2022

Matthew Cory

For a Friend After the Death of Her Spouse

When breezes sway an empty chair
And kiss your trembling, sullen lips
While blossomed maple fingertips
Caress your locks of lemon hair;

When swirling gusts of April air
Wrap gentle arms around your hips
And dry each plaintive tear that drips
From curtained eyes with tender care—

Drink in the breaths that soothe despair
And savor them with tiny sips,
Then hoist the sails of love's lorn ships
And ride the wind—you'll find him there.



Winter 2022

Jane Blanchard
Selfie

The poem proofed, the process is not done:
The editor requests a photograph.
We met last summer, so to send him one
Of me ten years ago would be a gaffe.
When I defer, he presses on behalf
Of some impending online publication.
Perhaps an update would be worth a laugh,
I reason, feeling bound by obligation.
Then sensibly accepting resignation,
With phone in hand, its camera on and turned,
I snap shots, but delete each in frustration,
Until an image keeps from being spurned.
Sent soon, with due respect for protocol,
It shows up later, thankfully quite small.



Winter 2022

Jacqueline Coleman-Fried
First Mother's Day

On the floor in the throne of her car seat,
the camellia-skinned infant whose eyes wander
from blue to gray is surrounded
by fawning relatives.

Evy, named after my mother,
lives in the house my mother adored
for fifty years, in my old bedroom facing south,
always light-washed. How can I not

feel the child is part of my body, though
she is only a great-niece, and I am last
in line to hold her after parents, grand-
parents, aunts, and uncles.

And now—my ache to cradle the child—
though I can barely remember the monthly journey
of egg and blood, the way it squeezed through me
like a river. When I could have budded,

I needed myself for me. At times, I drink
the acid of regret.



Winter 2022

Charlotte Innes

The Ghost Owl

Early on, someone gave me a dolls' tea set. I loved
the tiny plastic teacups, saucers, teapot, plates,

perfect for a midnight feast. We sat in a circle
on the floor, sipping water for tea, munching

biscuits one kid nicked. We were a rebel island
in the brown linoleum sea, in a "home" that wasn't.

When we arrived, my sister was almost three and scared,
while I, at four, went along at first, maybe

to steady myself. I wasn't sure why we'd come.
Did someone tell us our mum had died? And that our dad,

a man alone, could not take care of two small girls?
Or so "the authorities" said—so he told me later.

Right now, we whispered our resistance, had to,
since the "aunts" and "uncles" walked the halls at night.

As for the kids, no faces come to mind. I remember
soft, excited chirps. A warmth. Something hard melting.

Of course, an aunt peeked in. "What's this?" She told us to put
the tea set back in the box, then took the box away.



Winter 2022

I never saw it again. Hurt, afraid to ask,
I stashed away all thought of one thing truly mine.

A year later, we left that place. My father's friends,
two brothers, picked us up and drove us home, the real home.

A couple moved into one of our four rooms with
baby and dog. They cared for us while Dad was working.

Such scenes pop up like snapshots. Except, from this one, wisps
of pain and pleasure curl like smoke around my thoughts.

For just a moment that little girl and I are one.
It's why, after all these years, I feel the urge to cry,

for her, for all the children who've been hurt,
who don't quite understand how loss piles up inside,

or why at times, for better or worse, it bursts out
unbidden. Like leaking landfill gas that can destroy

the earth or help conserve it, toxic memory
can twist its bearer into bitterness or courage,

enough to face the ghost owl observing her as prey.
Nightly, she must stare it down until it flies away.



Winter 2022

M. E. Goelzer

Nostalgia

There was that time, remember? Remember
when the brook between us was shallow, banks lined
with skipping rocks, stepping stones easy between my place
and yours? In my sleep I could hear you sigh
when the fish weren't biting, could hear each separate
leaf of your book turning. It was no mistake

that my ear was so finely tuned that I could not mistake
your whisper for another's. I was primed to remember
the details of how to care for each of the separate
stitches of our purlled existence, the loops aligned
in parallel rows. How I would sigh
when I noticed a link gone, a hole in its place,

me unsure if I would ever be able to replace
what was missing or whether it would be a mistake
to even try. Of course we could not stay side
by side forever. My stories of what I remember
vary like flowers; when I'm inclined
to nostalgia our gardens are hardly separate,

even though I know our memories go their separate
ways whenever we try to recall the same place,
the same meal, the same birthday in a water-lined
park, the same trip that was a mistake.
And my childhood home was never how I remember
it. In my mind, there is a weeping willow beside



Winter 2022

a backyard creek, a leafy fortress with me inside,
a secluded haven of autonomy where I could separate
the hurts and highs that I wanted to remember
from those I chose to forget. A place
like that makes it both easy and hard to mistake
a lake for the sea. I'm glad that you declined

my offer of refuge. When I saw you lined
up, shoulders hunched against the rain, outside
a packed bus shelter, I knew what a mistake
it would be to deny the serendipity of our separate
currents. A river flows through meadows to your place;
that's the setting that I choose to remember.

My coat is lined with milkweed silk. On widely separate
occasions I sigh. I collect stones and give each a special place
in my heart. It would be a mistake not to. I want to remember.



Winter 2022

Michael Salcman

Bittersweet

O the bargains I struck
On the nights before surgery,
Agreed:
The gain of more useful life
At the possible cost
Of a palsied arm
Or clumsy speech,
The rescue of nerves that see
At a possible loss of
Olfactory memory,
The end of pain in a bruised back
For a weakened limb,
All these and more
Acceptable to me
Before our roles and chances
Exchanged
From doer to done upon
And a tumor removed
From beneath my bladder.

I was struck then with the smell
Of uric acid everywhere,
Slapped with the constant wet
Of drip on my leg
And worse
The loss of intimacy.



Winter 2022

From that first night
She became as distant as the moon,
And life took on a new mealy taste.
The apple had turned bittersweet.



Winter 2022

George Freek

Beside the Green River

After Mei Yao Chen

Along the bank, a breeze
cools me like a smiling girl,
enjoying her ease.
A pale moon hangs
between two willow trees.
They haven't had time
to form new leaves.
A frog emits a pompous croak.
Is he calling to his mate?
Will she wait?
In the distance, I hear
a solitary boat
making its way home.
Overhead, stars shine
like glass tears.
I think of my wife. She's
been dead for a year.



Winter 2022

Angelo D'Amato, Jr.

At the University Cocktail Party

“Have you seen the list of the Pulitzer nominees?
My student Sandra earned a spot this year—I
taught her how, among other things,
to effectively employ imagery
in her poems,” I boast to a woman
in the faculty lounge.

A fraying thread dangles from the patch
on my elbow. The cuticle of my left pinky
is crusted with blood.

The woman is wearing a figure-fitting dress.
She smiles and says something about
fishing with her girlfriends.
Then she scampers away.

That morning,
I made flapjacks
for myself.

They were delicious.



Winter 2022

Pamela Wax

Early Morning Fog

Those first months after
you jumped from the Skyway,
I survived with my low beams.
I couldn't see in front of me
even a day, let alone a lifetime.
At any moment unexpected
thunder, lightning could drub me,
followed by a biblical deluge.
When I clicked my high beams,
the light punched back, blinding,
an Isaac unable to recognize
his own flesh and blood. I heeded
my driving instructions: *Reduce
speed. Mind the lines
on the road.* When flooded,
turn around. I attended *minyan*,
attended to my grief.
The droplets, hovering,
dissipated, separating light
from dark.



Winter 2022

Gabo Alvarado-Lieber

The Hunt

Lying on the floor,
hound and human in repose,
as if resting from a fruitful hunt,
that snap-dog built to chase
rabbit and other small prey.

Though that was in olden times—
he is still a friend of mine
even though he “ain’t never caught a rabbit”
as Elvis and Big Mama Thornton complained.
Now snapping up game is my gambit,
and that hound dog is content to fetch
the furry critter toy I throw in jest,
for who knows if it is supposed to fly,
that funny creature in midair he catches,
not anything you’d find in Darwin’s sketches.

Then I am struck by a silly thought,
that if our roles have been reversed
then perhaps that hound dog has deduced
that I should be taking close notes
on his hunting form.



Winter 2022

And so I decide to play along,
admiring and even imitating
his athletic feats,
bounding and pouncing back and forth
until we are back resting on the floor.
He then licks my face,
his way of giving me encouragement
and high praise.

For there is no need for him to know
that the game I bring home
I get in a snap
at the grocery store.



Winter 2022

Danny P. Barbare
Friends

Plugged in
the cord fits
the vacuum
cleaner, talks,
listens when
turned off
it has friends
like the
broom and
dustpan, the
dust mop,
and the mop
and bucket
of water too
socially they
have a clean
and healthy
friendship.



Winter 2022

Lara Dolphin

Deep Time Meal

Maria Montessori sits for luncheon with a plate of spaghetti all’amatriciana, baptizes it with a sprinkling of extra cacio and decides that every bite will be 25 million years. She contemplates the grandness of Earth’s history mindfully winding one bundle of pasta then another. 184 mouthfuls later she is at the beginning of time.

The culinary
clock resets to zero—there
can only be hope.



Winter 2022

Paul Buchheit
Addiction

A ripple imperceptible, like hints
of amber in the tiring balsams, swells
to waves of apprehension, then imprints
a vision on my mind, with carousels
of pirouetting bronze bouquets that plead
for my attention with a fiery spin,
a touch-me-not exploding into seed,
a symphony of reed and violin.
As crippled prey, I cringe before the beast:
its moist and fuming breath and flaxen skin
invite me to a Bacchanalian feast,
the blending of our spirits to begin.
Descent is rapid, sheathed in ecstasy,
devoid of sentiment and certainty.



The darkness has returned, reflections faint
and grinning like a spectral carnival
illusion twisting from its glass restraint
and in the next bewitching interval
transforming into sheets of wind on stones
across a riverbed; through clearing air
appears the putrid chalky white of bones
enclasped around the edges of my chair.



Winter 2022

Awakened, I am cradled by the roar
of hissing silence, till it dissipates
like shards of vapor on a restless shore.
And as the brooding day anticipates
our rendezvous, I curse the parasites
returning to indulge their appetites.



Winter 2022

Arvilla Fee

If Only You Had Known

A tribute to Vincent van Gogh

In your mind you were blind to the truth,
shattered and shuttered by dark demons
that bound you, unwound you—starry night
could not save you no matter how much yellow
and blue your brush strokes drew; nothing could
bring you back from the brink, not with the drink,
the green fairy, spinning and grinning in the smoke
from your pipe. Perhaps you could no longer hear
with the ear you cut with a knife when all reason
fled and you bled on the floor. You stood on the line
during your time between madness and greatness,
never dreaming your works would be famous. Oh,
how I wish I could travel through time and take your
hand from the gun before your mind was undone
and say: Vincent, you live on the walls in the most
famous halls; your irises bloom in so many rooms!
There's a museum just for you, and your work is not
cheap. *The Wheatfield of Crows* makes people weep.



Winter 2022

Jennifer Stewart

Vincent's Plane Trees

*A rondeau after van Gogh's
The Large Plane Trees
(Road Menders at Saint-Rémy)*

Like a plane tree peels bark to breathe once more
Let what pollutes your soul slough to the floor
Begin again, dare trust what your eyes see
Past hallucinations, find Saint-Rémy
Self-committed, self-commissioned encore.

Work outdoors despite the cold fall, explore
The layers of good laid thick to adore
Reach out to your neighbor, limbs billowy
Like a plane tree.

Learn to balance the explosive color
Yellow, as neutron stars crash, release for
Our enrichment, gold: soft, precious, hardy
See the road menders knelt in bonhomie
Your life stands as sacrament to its core
Like a plane tree.



Winter 2022

Donald Wheelock

Defector

Memory betrays you when it quits
like here-today-long-gone-tomorrow friends,
more than willing to show off Shakespeare sonnets
until a shy and sudden panic sends

the middle of your favorite line away.
Most comfortable among the books and scores
you've counted on for years and day by day,
it recognizes weaknesses and more—

the places you've forgotten in the past,
the stanzas loved the least, the "that" or "which"
connecting clauses laziness learned last.
Fidelity to detail is a bitch.



Winter 2022

Michael Estabrook
Rocking Chair

*. . . in the mirror I see my grandfather
with his gray hair, baggy eyes, old shoes,
but I'm not ready to be him yet . . .*

I wonder what my grandfather did
every day in his little room
off the living room at the front of the house.
I know he'd sit in his rocker,
read the newspapers, both *The Daily
Home News* and the *New York Post*.
But you can't read newspapers all day long,
so what else did he do?
There was nothing else in there
that I could see—no TV or books or hobbies.
Sometimes I'd glance in,
and he'd be sitting in his rocker,
staring out the window into the street
at nothing in particular.



Winter 2022

Carey Jobe

Concerto in E-Flat Major

1. Allegro Maestoso

The mind rouses to music: surging under
life's stagnant pool, it builds to overflow
then cataracts with the creative wonder
one fallen napping while the day runs slow
feels when a tumult rouses him in thunder,
who searches from his drizzle-dusted window
the grays of rain, the driven forest in turmoil,
vast, churning, oceanic green aboil.

2. Adagio

Sundown changes to stars on the lake's glass.
Clouds drift, black icebergs blotting a thin moon.
Water's depths, the sky's depths, become one place,
making, so legend tells, tomorrow's sun
out of the extinguished day's ashes,
or so I think, watching a black unknown
I greet like someone I pretend to know.
Adagio, breathe the muted chords. Adagio.



Winter 2022

3. Rondo: Allegro

Licked slick as rain, tottery, its doe alert
for noise, a newborn fawn blinks at the forest;
struggling up birth streams as though crazed with regret,
salmon plunge past a bear's hunger; breast on breast,
a mother's heart, her child's heart, throb as one heart
—all throbbing with creation. The pianist
rises, bows. Hushed as breath, a crowded pause
breaks like the rush of memory. Applause.



Winter 2022

Wendy Sloan

To Jonathan, as Our Grandson Leo Turns Eight

Leo remembers you the way you were
and are—your spirit, soul, mind, heart—whatever.
So when I say it was at his fourth birthday
that you first seemed ill, he yells, “No! He’s okay!”
“I’m sorry, Lee.” I hug him, stroke his hair.
And he retains it all. How his friends would spar
with you when we picked him up after school
till that became less funny, and more cruel,
as they sensed weakness. Games he learned to love
from catch to batting. Your worn-out baseball glove—
rare, treasured hand-me-down. Those by-gone times
he climbed your lap, your shoulders. Something chimes
between you yet. You recognize him still.
And somehow, I suspect, you always will.



Winter 2022

Wendy Sloan

Descent

I need to come to grips with one disturbing fact:
you're suffering now. No more can I pretend
that happy days can happen, or distract
myself with lies your life will never end.
The end's in sight. In sight with every stumbling
step you fail. In sight with every mumbling
sound you wail; each cough, each half-choked swallow
signals your distress, until the hollow
of my chest howls pain. And that will stay.
I am too tired, and you have earned your rest
in spades. Surrendering to earth's decay
might now be best, once we have acquiesced.
Yet, how it looms! Your life has run its course.
The time has come for pity, not remorse.



Winter 2022

Eileen Trauth

Departure

I thought I knew the way you'd leave. I read
the pamphlet, learned from watching others wane:
the shallow breaths, a last exhale, it said
before the end would come and you were gone.
I could caress your fingers one last time,
say final parting words enough to hold
the feel of fleeting warmth, your hand in mine
as you slipped away, and it grew cold.
But that was not the way you chose to go.
With cheerful chatter as the new year dawned,
you hid behind a happiness tableau
and measured out your last few breaths in song.
You would not let me wallow in farewell;
you left quickly, before my heart rebelled.



Winter 2022

Sharon Whitehill
Green Burial

A much-discussed mutual choice:
to leave no carbon footprint.
Just a lined cardboard box
buried beneath the live oaks
in a Florida land-trust preserve.

Thus you were whisked out of sight
by professional surrogates,
as we'd arranged. A relief,
that first morning of stunned impotence.
And yet, says the voice of my heart,
to shrink from the physical fact of your death
was a craven disservice to you whom I loved.

Only the photos to show what I shirked,
the four strong young men in pandemic masks,
pulling your box on a four-wheeled wagon
adorning the lid with pine boughs
and tiny white daisies, red bleeding-hearts.
Then the lowering into the grave,
earth mounded above,
covered over with pine straw.



Winter 2022

Peaceful and lovely indeed,
but leaving a blankness beyond pain of loss.
All that was physically you, my love—
your kind brown eyes, strong arms,
that natural part in your soft, silver hair—
gone to the swiftness of decomposition.
To nothing but bones.



Winter 2022

P.C. Scheponik

Nothing Wants to Die

Nothing wants to die, but retreats in slow regret
bundled in resistance, thick overcoat buttoned up
firmly at the neck to keep out the winds of change,
the icy breath of not being.

See how the minnows flash away at the egret's shadow.
Look how the ants scurry to build their tiny minarets
at the first whiff of rain.

Notice how the doe raises her white tail, flares her
bitumen nostrils, and leaps away at the snap of a twig
or the rustling of leaves.

The cicada, after decades of sleep, wildly zigzags and
screams as it flees the sparrow's hungry beak.

Even the stones would gladly keep their hold on firmness
if they had their way.

And why not?

Who wouldn't want to stay in this sun-kissed world of
flowers and trees, of chortling brooks and wave-tossed seas.

Who wouldn't want to cling to blue skies tumbling with
cream-colored clouds or green fields of corn that teach us how
to dance for joy in the wind.

There is no limit to the beauty this world gives, and, certainly,
no sin in saying "No" to death and "Yes" to the desire to live.



Winter 2022

Lisa Barnett

At Notre-Dame Basilica, Montreal

*With my 10-year-old daughter, touring
the basilica designed by James O'Donnell*

Before us in the Square, the old church rises.
On stone steps, the tourists and the faithful.
You take my hand, and we advance, surprised,

deep into James O'Donnell's brilliant space—
so overwhelming it compelled his own
late-life conversion. Buried in that place,

he lies beneath the thousand stars that stud
the vaulted imitation sky, beneath
the stained-glass saints and virgins. Suddenly

I recall the Oratoire Saint Joseph where thirty
years before I watched old women climb
three hundred steps upon their knees, certain

of the power of their gathered prayers;
the full black habit of the faithful spread
like crows across the church's well-worn stairs.

Here no one kneels or prays that we'd divine
unless we count the tourists and the guides
who worship for a fee O'Donnell's shrine—



Winter 2022

its chastened intimacies, its strange and gaudy
purity—from which we two emerge,
half-blinded in the summer light, part awed,

part glad to find your father waiting there
unchanged, as though the Basilica did not rise
two-hundred twenty-eight feet in the Square

and were not solid, meaningful as prayer.



Winter 2022

Tina Barry

Lilies

We hurried across 53rd Street, my hand in Mother's,
both of us dressed fancy for a day in the city. Sun cast
a building's dark diamond on the pavement,

and I thought, *That's art, too*. And glamorous,
although I didn't know the word,
couldn't have told you why.

Inside, a swoosh of wool skirts, men's sports jackets,
one dull gray. Eyes closed I saw (see, still)
the underbelly of a dove.

A vast room at the Museum of Modern Art,
on each tall wall, as if seeded and birthed
there: water lilies.

You'd say it was the flowers, crushed
from Monet's days, their offering
of furled hearts, that moved me.

More than awe. But in my navy coat
and ugly galoshes, mouth wonder-dumb,
that's the word you would have used.

When a stroke scrambles your brain, when my mother
loses words, when a ghoul levels a country, I consider
the soul. Wonder what feeds it, what gobbles it away.



Winter 2022

I ask for a whiff of mineral pond water, the ting
of a lightly tapped triangle, some sign—
any sign—to learn the lilies live inside me.

Previously published in ONE ART: A Journal of Poetry.



Winter 2022

Leslie Schultz

Stalking Beauty

For Karla

While spiders silently spin their webbed nets,
weaving form from designs deep within them,
you cast your eye out, into the wide world,
into chill waters of a cypress swamp,
or onto the rings of a weathering stump,
or at the rhythm of color marching
in strict lines down a colonial wall.

You are alive to the lively sparrow's fall,
the shorebird's inherent yoga poses—
ferocious, three-toed, stabbing elegance—
to yellow birds aglow in green bowers,
to eagles perched or skyward and soaring,
and to the inward gaze of quiet owls.
Your gaze on the part gives life to the whole.



Winter 2022

R.T. Castleberry
Wildling

Comfortable in the cold,
mist tendrils rising
across morning garden,
dew-dampened boots
dry in the rising wind.
Cracking this year's journal,
I release pleasure to the river.
Behind a dome of December clouds,
the sun struggles.
Seasonal birds stir to wing,
lofting at flurry speeds.
Across the water, a deer, a fox,
surprise black bear and cub
at the shoreline.
I tip Southern tea, ice-brewed,
from a camper's metal cup,
tinker with sketch tracings
from New York, New Mexico.
There is radio word of gale rain
loosed in the evening.
I'll read and dine to the squall
of water's rush against the dock,
sleet's scatter off casement windows.
Sleeping against worry, I'll wake
to daybreak's mystery unmasked.



Winter 2022

Kathy Pon
Clockwork

More than coffee, what gets me going: Ribbons
of white-faced Ibis, noiseless. Unfolding with sunrise,

V formation, vectors vibrant against a canvas
smeared pink, expands to black cables, a waltz

in flight. One undulation in unison, wings
flap & glide, necks extend forward, purposed.

How mysterious! Rhythms stirring trajectory,
magical hour of beetles and grasshoppers

crawling irrigated pastures. Quick drop,
long legs wade the mud-drenched fields,

curved bills probe downward. Indigo foragers
busy beneath a warming sun. Ignoring me

as I stroll by, a whole congregation absorbed in
fowl activities. Later, at dusk, a bookending of day,

Ibis again lift, inky lines reshape to Victory,
home bound to roost, nests in sedgy grasses.

Perfection, these circadian sky-time sweeps,
a wild avian faithfulness to each moment.



Winter 2022

Evelyn Asher
wandering

Imagination is the eye of the soul.
—Albert Einstein

clipped wings catch me nesting.
autumn's brilliance fading.

airplanes cut through air above
epoch pines, a heritage
hardwood forest.

sculptures bow entry to
red-tail hawks' nesting ground,

secretive, solitary nesters
waiting out cold weather
tucked in crowns of tall trees.

wandering broke barriers of my limitations,
from clipped to soaring wings.



Winter 2022

Matthew King

Irruption: on Incarnation

Some winters, the finches, famished, sojourn in the south.
We watchers wait, eager to witness their irruption
into yards they choose to visit only if they're forced.
It's not a regular migration. Some disruption
of their habitual source of sustenance will need
to send them far from home for the unknown food they need.

A flock of Arctic innocents arose from the road
ahead; they fell, behind, down into flattened bodies.
You lost your breath. We caught it and will hold it for you
until you've lived the death that's bound inside our bodies,
until you've digested the fruit of good and evil,
known in actual guts the good on Earth, the evil.

This is the sacrifice I've made for the Christmas feast,
writing altered by dying light. Our father himself
shot the bird and then went back to rescue another
wounded in the water, unable to feed itself.
I thought I could never begin to do this justice,
but what in the end does it have to do with justice?



Winter 2022

Vivian Wagner
first snowfall

snow quiets
the world,
reminds us
that silence
has legs



Winter 2022

G.H. Mosson

Treaty at Thirty-One

Midnight of orange-violet light
aglow alongside city windows
and draping over faint streetlamps
effuses into this studio,
bends down and burnishes each of my things,
instilling in them a warm perfume
to baffle me when I come home.
For I've built a bunker to what I love
as would a bird—first twig, then leaf—
to buffer this nook and make it my own.
Now settled in, I'm glancing around
for a partner to share in this handmade dream.
Meanwhile, I'll comb through midnight's hair
as streetlamps and moonbeams tincture the breeze.



Winter 2022

G.H. Mosson

Night Studies

Night laps against translucent panes
around my desk-light's buoy and floods

the rented room where I live and study
as if I sail on an ancient ship

far from the hold of commercial hubs
across the mute engulfing lull.

Far off, the wheeling seagulls caw.
They fade like choices I could have made.

Instead, I trace how night grows young,
tattooing my mind with this seized time

beside an open window, and drift
into the flow of creative dreams.



Winter 2022

G.H. Mosson
Rush Hour

With moonlit snow
on bowed black boughs,
the dawn in a blush
bestars the street
where men and women
wedge into cars
and I too dress
for the known landscape.

My dreams become
the walls and fade
as ice-gemmed glints
invite my sight
into this haze
of snow and exhaust
replacing night's
departing hush.

Today as wide
as we perceive,
yet hard as the caked
tires of parked cars,
and again on the cusp
of Baltimore's din,
my warm breath sculpts
the chill and lingers.



Winter 2022

Gary Beck

Creature Comforts

The leaves are falling.
Autumn winds blow cooler.
We walk the streets a little faster
urged on by biting winds.
Yet throughout the land
there is no normalcy,
only seasonal change.
Most of us remain inside
in urban enclaves,
with advanced technology
that lets us stay at home
in inclement weather,
in a semblance
of a well-ordered life,
immune from climate,
except when disaster strikes,
catching us unprepared
for the struggle for survival.



Winter 2022

Donald Wheelock

Last of the Living

*Mankind's true moral test (which lies deeply buried from view),
consists of its attitude toward those who are at its mercy:
animals.*

—Milan Kundera

It would be fitting for
some creepy-crawly thing
impossible to adore,
unheralded, to bring

the whole thing down at last,
the last girl, boy, and all.
Without us there's no past,
no God, no Bang, no Fall.

We've brought it on with force,
sent all those species packing,
this self-destructive course,
accountability lacking.

The chain-of-being snapped.
(The selfishness that hid it!)
While human beings napped,
the creepy-crawlies did it.



Winter 2022

Nicholas Kriefall

Alpha

The proud moon hangs with as much certainty
As a king dying in his bed.

The sycamore modestly sheds its skin,
Reaching as far as it needs to.

The ocean warns its endless invaders
While the reef whispers a plea to hush,
Cradling the ghosts of our origin.

All will one day
Be auctioned to the highest bidder.

Men will cheat and reign,
Slander their creator like some deformed monster,
And then beg for forgiveness.

Even the child growing in its mother's womb
Will face great pain and fault
And will one day need forgiveness.

Nature accepts the loss of its own babies
Even when a lion
Slays his young to sustain his pride.



Winter 2022

And we, with an understanding of right and wrong
Will continue seeking right,

Which remains, for the time being, a concept,
A word resting in books.

The stubborn fire will eat what it wants
While the sky crawls on legs of lightning.



Winter 2022

Nicholas Kriefall

Omega

Thunder rumbles in the east—
Earth's objections.

Deep within, dinosaurs rest
Eyeless and scattered.
What would we have done with them?

This tiny life crawling across the screen
Of my bedroom window,

Had it a voice, what it would tell me
It needed to do before the sun set?

Ribbons of contrail separate the sky
Over a veil of starlings.
See the way they move.

Below them, traffic spreads like a spine.
Drivers break and shout
And lay on their horns.

Thunder in the east—
Earth's closing statement.

Will she ever miss us?



Winter 2022

Lisa St. John

Piecrust Legend

Singing a rhythm, a whispersoft knowing from
sister to sister, a sacred song promising.
Handle it softly; start forming a tenderness.
Tribal, sororal, and ancient as firepits—
moments as ovenwarm teachings, an endlessly
magical poetry. Murmuring blessings of wonder.

Delicate pie crust dough, nothing like heavy bread.
Smells of the baking bread told me that all was well.
Tribal, sororal, and ancient as birthing time,
chronicle womanhood wisdom as circular.
These are the stories, the speaking of women's hands.
Mother's first language; the fathers come later.

Sometimes, together they laugh uncontrollably.
Leave it alone now. Some touching destroys a thing.
Tribal, sororal, and ancient mythologies render a beauty here.
Broken as life can be, thankfulness beckons us.
Prayers to flour and water, to salt and to fat!
Gather together the sisters. Continue remembering.



Winter 2022

Sheila Lynch-Benttinen

The Hills Are Purple

tall sage green pine
against a pewter-gray sky
everyone is a work in progress
until the day they die

yellow sun rises
cries of the mourning dove
you're very lucky in your life
if you find one true love

the rain falls from the sky
the river runs to the sea
practice kindness
in all you choose to be

the smell of cinnamon bread
the sound of a chickadee
you will be constantly changing
getting to where you want to be

the hills are purple
the mountains are blue
keep daily gratitude
in all you do



Winter 2022

Judy Lorenzen

Never Mundane

This morning on my walk,
Silver Creek holds the vast blue sky
in its long, thin mirror—reflecting
cumulus clouds drifting high above me.
A Western Meadowlark
pausing on the fencepost
sings its loud, flutelike song
in rain-washed air—
its low-pitched, long notes
on this warm,
quickly disappearing morning
that never held a more glorious sound,
is a sweet serenade—
these fields and road ditches
are filled with these songsters
writing their melodious songs
on manuscripts of air
on the score of this universe.
A cow saunters in the pasture,
grazing, content with her life,
swishing her tail.
The sun is evaporating
the dampness.
A truck passes by;
dust rises in the air
then descends on me,



Winter 2022

but nothing is mundane or maddening
about this morning—
this yellow-shirted Meadowlark
wearing its black V microphoned shirt,
singing the song in its heart—
or this thin coat of dust covering my face and hair.
Who can explain
the world in a particle of dust
or the song of a bird?
I love this world!



Winter 2022

Elaine Koplou

Who Tells the Cows?

The true mystery is the visible, not the invisible.

—Oscar Wilde

Who tells the cows in the field
to lie down? How do they know
when to stand?

How does the flock know
which bird to follow? Who decides
which one should lead? Where do
they learn to navigate?

Where
do fish learn to school?

Magnolia buds stay fat through
the winter, undisturbed by the cold.
Where do they learn to weather
the weather?

Watch
as the sunflower turns its face
to the sun, its back to the dark—
each slender stalk pivoting
with the light.

Watch
as the caterpillar learns to fly.



Winter 2022

Once, forlorn and spent, I wandered
through the garden and came upon
the peony, newly dressed in summer red—
its velvet petals soft and reassuring.

I ran my fingers along its delicate edges—
so fragile—thinking the storm would
surely take it that night. But
they folded themselves together at dusk
and opened in the morning
to the sun.



Winter 2022

Thomas DeFreitas

Photograph

Ruins of a Cistercian abbey.
Summer's heat greens
the cloister-wreck.

A low stone wall
out of Frost's blank verse
winds beside a stooped elm.

Grass, moss, ivy
(heedless, creedless)
claim these saint-acres as their own,

this church of ghost-stone
whose time-bitten archway's
ablaze with strong low sun.



Winter 2022

Carla Martin-Wood

Infidel

No manifesto holds my heart in sway,
chained to a creed unlivable, manmade.
No holy book informs my every thought,
nor yet compels me kneel and be afraid.

And yet, my soul is manna-fed indeed,
well nourished by the bounty of this earth—
the leaf that floats downstream and skims the rocks,
and winter pods that die till spring's rebirth.

These mountains that embrace the rising moon,
while crickets chant their vespers down below—
each life, each sound, this breathing, boundless orb,
this world holds every lovely thing I know.

My heaven's here: this "pale blue dot" in space,
replete with every humble, human grace.



Winter 2022

Jane Ebihara
Solstice

to the fog that softens sharp edges
shields the distance clings to the darkness

to the Long Night Moon that hasn't yet
finished its shift

to the deer who forage these woods
and turn their backs to me—the one
they are supposed to fear

to the wind that whips the pines
interrupts the shadows then stops
as if to catch another breath

to the birds I know are here
but shelter in silence
high in these trees

to the hot cup in my hand
the blaze of the fire the warm
socks on my feet and a new year near

I give thanks



Winter 2022

to the berries on my neighbor's holly
that squirrel sprawled on the split-rail fence
the frost on the lawn
and the contrail of a jet overhead

where someone is leaving
where someone is coming home



Winter 2022

Allen Ireland
Two Trees

Left in the cold outdoors, misshapen, stunted,
It is the Christmas tree that no one wanted.
Nature looks to have taken pity on it;
The snow she sent, at first as dull as dust,
Now sparkles like tinsel off its frozen crust.
She's even hung some homemade ornaments:
A crinkled oak leaf, barely hanging on,
Has just unhooked itself and drifted down
To settle where the fir-tree snags have caught it,
And there are other limbs where leaves have blown.
And look! A bright-red cardinal flies far
From its warm nest, and perches on the crest
To play the role of angel or of star.

The tree's owner, a fragile white-haired lady,
Stands and studies the crooked evergreen,
Her window like a mirror in between . . .



Winter 2022

Shannon Lodoen

The Gift

The kindling wood, the cedar bow
Were all but ash and cinder now.

The fire had burned from dusk to night,
And none remained but dying light.

But then to me there did unfold
A sight most wondrous to behold:

Amongst the coals a phoenix curled,
Its tiny wings not yet unfurled.

It raised its head and said to me,
“Fear not, I shall return to thee.”



Winter 2022

Tom Laughlin

Walking After a Snowstorm with Kobayashi Issa

The neighborhood's spruce
frosted against a blue sky

puff of snow, a druid's pipe
hidden beneath bows

white pine's delicate fingers
flicker with sunlight

their rays warming taps
snowy house of cards downward

mist sparkling now in the breath
of this birdless day



Winter 2022

Shutta Crum

Witness (with Friend)

I'll put my coat on and join you.

See the farm field? How the snow
shapes and shadows it,
hugging the furrowed clay—
no matter how many seasons it lies fallow.

The surfaces of things glisten.

Beneath that flimsy veil
The wild mustard and burdock have died back.
The scratchings of paw and hoof are hidden.
But the snow belies its gentle demeanor—
the old, hard ruts are still there.

We both know that . . .

Wind, rain, hail may scour and scuff the earth,
but there's little that pummeling can do
to smooth the way for someone who's fallen
on the stubble of an old pain. For someone
who walks that field every day.

We won't throw a hopeful dawn upon it.



Winter 2022

Clods and briers rise up
through thin disguises.
The puckered field always catches an ankle,
grabs at a heart.

So, give me your hand.



Winter 2022

Biographies

Deborah-Zenha Adams is an award-winning author of novels, short fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry. Her work has appeared in *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *One*, *Sheila-na-gig*, and other journals. You are invited to visit her website to read samples of her work: www.Deborah-Adams.com.

Gabo Alvarado-Lieber was born and raised in Venezuela. He is an international affairs and national security professional. While he was growing up, his main artistic outlet was playing the violin. He now enjoys writing poetry.

Catherine Arra is the author of four full-length collections and three chapbooks. Her newest work *Solitude, Tarot & the Corona Blues* is forthcoming from Kelsay Books in 2023. Arra is a native of the Hudson Valley in upstate New York, where she teaches part-time and facilitates local writing groups. Find her at www.catherinearra.com.

Evelyn Asher lives in a rural community in North Georgia, USA. She is a member of The BARDS that meets monthly as part of Brenau University's Lifelong Learning Institute. She published a collection entitled *A Gypsy's Tapestry: A Woman Observed. A Woman Observing* in 2014. She also edited *A Bridge of Hope: A Collection of Poems and Testimonies for Caregivers*. Evelyn coaches persons in organizations to help them understand decisions from varying perspectives. She compares wordsmithing to tuning of a piano.

Danny P. Barbare resides in Greenville, South Carolina. His poetry has appeared in NoD, the University of Calgary and Clamor, and the University of Washington at Bothell. His poetry has been nominated for Best of Net by *Assisi Online Journal* and has won The Jim Gitting's Award at Greenville Technical College, and The Gilchrist Studio Award. He lives with his wife and family in Greenville.

Lisa Barnett lives and writes in the Philadelphia area. Her poems have appeared in *The Hudson Review*, *Measure Review*, *Poetry*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, the anthologies *Extreme Sonnets* and *Sonnets: 150 Contemporary Sonnets*, and elsewhere. She is a three-time Howard Nemerov Sonnet Award finalist and is the author of two chapbooks.



Winter 2022

Tina Barry is the author of *Beautiful Raft* (Big Table Publishing, 2019) and *Mall Flower* (Big Table Publishing, 2016). Her writing can be found in *The Best Small Fictions 2020* (spotlighted story) and 2016, *The American Poetry Journal*, *ONE ART: a journal of poetry*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Nasty Women Poets anthology*, *The Fourth River*, and *Rattle*. She is a three-time Pushcart Prize nominee and has several Best of the Net nods. Tina teaches at The Poetry Barn and Writers.com.

Gary Beck spent most of his adult life as a theater director and worked as an art dealer when he couldn't earn a living in the theater. He has also been a tennis pro, a ditch digger, and a salvage diver. His original plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes, and Sophocles have been produced Off Broadway. His poetry, fiction, and essays have appeared in hundreds of literary magazines and his published books include 36 poetry collections, 14 novels, 3 short story collections, 1 collection of essays, and 7 books of plays. Gary lives in New York City.

Mark D. Bennion's most recent poetry collection is *Beneath the Falls: Poems*. He and his wife, Kristine, are trying to figure out how to raise five children. They welcome your advice.

Noah Berlatsky wanted to be a poet but gave up 20 years ago. But he's trying again. He won an Honorable Mention for the Wergle Flomp 2022 Humor Poetry contest, which was encouraging.

Jane Blanchard lives and writes in Georgia (USA). Her collections with Kelsay Books include *After Before* (2019), *In or Out of Season* (2020), *Never Enough Already* (2021), and *Sooner or Later* (2022).

Jason Brightwell lives in a tiny coastal village tucked along the Chesapeake Bay where he finds himself routinely haunted by one thing or another. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in journals including: *Gravel Magazine*, *East Coast Literary Review*, *Phantom Kangaroo*, and *The Tower*.

Paul Buchheit is an author of books, poems, progressive essays, and scientific journal articles. His poetry has appeared in *The Lyric*, *Illinois State Poetry Society*, *Maria W. Faust Sonnet Contest*, *The Journal of Formal Poetry*, and other publications. His poetic rendering of *Alice's Adventures* was published in 2022 by Kelsay Books.



Winter 2022

Brandon Burdette is a 35-year-old poet from Los Angeles, CA. Poems of his have been published in *Oberon Poetry* of NY and *The Thing Itself* (Our Lady of the Lake University, TX), as well as many other literary journals.

R.T. Castleberry, a Pushcart Prize nominee, has work in *Steam Ticket*, *Vita Brevis*, *As It Ought to Be*, *Trajectory*, *Silk Road*, *StepAway*, and *The River*. Internationally, he's had poetry published in Canada, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, France, New Zealand, Portugal, India, the Philippines, and Antarctica.

N.T. Chambers is a former teacher and therapist. The author's works have been published in the following journals: *Grassroots*, *In Parentheses*, *You Might Need to Hear This*, *Nine Cloud*, *The Elevation Room*, *Wingless Dreamer*, *Months to Years*, *New Note Poetry*, *Bright Flash Literary Review*, *Quibble*, *Indolent Books*, and *Inlandia*.

Catherine Chandler, poet, translator, and editor, has authored six poetry collections including *Lines of Flight*, shortlisted for the Poets' Prize, and *The Frangible Hour*; recipient of the Richard Wilbur Award. Her latest work, *Annals of the Dear Unknown*, a historical verse-tale, was published by Kelsay Books.

Eric Colburn is a writer and a high school English teacher who lives in the Boston area with his wife and two children.

Jacqueline Coleman-Fried is a poet living in Tuckahoe, NY. She has taken poetry workshops at The Writing Institute at Sarah Lawrence College and with poet Jan Freeman. Her work has appeared in *The Orchards Poetry Journal*, *Pensive*, *Sparks of Calliope*, and *pacificREVIEW*.

Matthew Cory (Matthews, NC) teaches tennis and writes sonnets and metered poems. He won *The Lyric*'s Spring 2021 quarterly prize for his poem "Envy," has work featured in *The Lyric*, and has a poem forthcoming in *Westward Quarterly*.

Shutta Crum's chapbook *When You Get Here* (Kelsay Books) won a gold Royal Palm Award. *The Way to the River* is her latest. Her poems appear in numerous journals: *Mom Egg*, *Calyx*, *Boulevard*. She's authored sixteen books for young readers, including a Smithsonian Magazine and an ALA notable book. Please visit www.shutta.com.



Winter 2022

Zach Czaia is a poet and high school English teacher working out of Minneapolis, MN. His second collection of poems, *Knucklehead*, was published in 2021 with Nodin Press. He also hosts a dialogue-driven podcast, *Open Your Hands: Conversations on Craft & Vision*, in which he reads and engages in conversation with other contemporary poets.

Angelo D'Amato, Jr. is a writer based in Boston, Massachusetts. He holds MFAs in Fiction and Poetry from Lesley University and Albertus Magnus College. He has had stories and poems published by *Passenger's Journal*, *Calliope*, *Hare's Paw Lit*, *Solstice Literary Magazine*, *New Note Poetry*, *the Tupelo 30/30 Challenge*, and has a story forthcoming from the Oslo Writer's League.

Sarette Danae is a writer hailing from Seattle. Her poetry has been included in international and local publications, most recently in *The Metaworker* and *Amsterdam Quarterly*. In 2018, she was selected by *Writing Texas* as their Best in Poetry recipient for her piece "Migration."

Diane Elayne Dees is the author of the chapbooks, *Coronary Truth* (Kelsay Books) and *The Last Time I Saw You* (Finishing Line Press), and the forthcoming chapbook, *The Wild Parrots of Marigny* (Querencia Press). Diane's author blog is Diane Elayne Dees: Poet and Writer-at-Large.

Thomas DeFreitas was born in Boston, educated at the Boston Latin School, attended state schools for two years, and has been writing poetry for four decades. His full-length collection *Longfellow, Tell Me* (2022) was published by Kelsay Books, as was his chapbook *Winter in Halifax* (2021). Thomas currently lives in Arlington, Massachusetts.

Kate Deimling is a poet, writer, and French translator. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Slant*, *Tar River Poetry*, *I-70 Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Plainsongs*, and other magazines. She lives in Brooklyn, New York and is an assistant poetry editor for *Bracken*.

A native of Pennsylvania, **Lara Dolphin** is an attorney, nurse, wife, and mom of four amazing kids. Her first chapbook, *In Search of the Wondrous Whole*, was published by Alien Buddha Press. Her most recent chapbook, *Chronicle of Lost Moments*, is available from Dancing Girl Press.



Winter 2022

John Dorroh may have taught high school science for a few decades. Whether he did is still being discussed. His poetry has appeared in a wide range of journals including *Dime Show Review*, *Bindweed*, *Selcouth Station*, *River Heron*, *Feral*, and *North Dakota Quarterly*.

Jane Ebihara is author of *A Little Piece of Mourning*, *A Reminder of Hunger and Wings*, and *This Edge of Rain*. Her poetry has appeared in multiple journals resulting in nominations for both Pushcart and Eric Hoffer Prizes. She serves as Associate Editor of *The Stillwater Review*.

Bart Edelman's poetry collections include *Crossing the Hackensack* (Prometheus Press), *Under Damaris' Dress* (Lightning Publications), *The Alphabet of Love* (Red Hen Press), *The Gentle Man* (Red Hen Press), *The Last Mojito* (Red Hen Press), *The Geographer's Wife* (Red Hen Press), and *Whistling to Trick the Wind* (Meadowlark Press). He has taught at Glendale College, where he edited *Eclipse*, and, most recently, in the MFA program at Antioch University, Los Angeles. His work has been widely anthologized in textbooks by City Lights Books, Etruscan Press, Fountainhead Press, Harcourt Brace, Longman, McGraw-Hill, Prentice Hall, Simon & Schuster, Thomson/Heinle, the University of Iowa Press, Wadsworth, and others. He lives in Pasadena, California.

Michael Estabrook has been publishing his poetry in the small press since the 1980s. He has published over 30 collections, a recent one being *Controlling Chaos: A Hybrid Poem* (Atmosphere Press, 2022). He lives in Acton, Massachusetts. Please visit his website: <https://michaelstabrook.org/>.

Arvilla Fee teaches English for Clark State. She has been published in numerous presses including *Poetry Quarterly*, *50 Haikus*, *Haibun Online*, and *Drifting Sands Haibun*. She loves to make people feel connected. For her, poetry is about being in the trenches with ordinary people who will say, "She gets me."

Jen Feroze lives by the sea in Essex with her husband and two young children. Her poetry has appeared in a variety of publications including *One Hand Clapping*, *Atrium*, *Dust*, and *Spelt*. She was shortlisted for the Dai Fry Award for Mystical Poetry and can usually be found with her head in a book and her hand in the biscuit tin.



Winter 2022

Wendy Freborg is a retired social worker and former editor who writes poetry, humor, and history. Her work first appeared in print in 1964. More recently, her work has appeared in *WestWard Quarterly*, *Chronogram*, *Peeking Cat Literary Review*, *Rat's Ass Review*, and *Literary Cocktail*. She and her husband live in Northern California where they enjoy being grandparents.

George Freek's poem "Written at Blue Lake" was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. His poem "Enigmatic Variations" was also recently nominated for Best of the Net. His collection *Melancholia* is published by Red Wolf Editions.

Linda Gamble is a retired reading specialist from New Jersey. Linda has published poems in print and online journals and has recently published her first poetry book, *Meanderings*. She has also published articles and instructional materials for the education market and is working on a middle grade novel.

Elizabeth Cranford Garcia's work has most recently appeared in *Anti-Heroine Chic*, *WordCity Lit*, *Artemis*, and *Prometheus Unbound*. She is the current Poetry Editor for *Dialogue: a Journal of Mormon Thought*, a Georgia native, and mother of three. Read more of her work at her website: elizabethcgarcia.wordpress.com.

Internationally anthologized, **Claudia Gary** teaches workshops on Villanelle, Sonnet, Natural Meter, etc., through writer.org. Author of *Humor Me* (2006) and chapbooks including *Genetic Revisionism* (2019), she is also a health/science journalist, visual artist, and composer of songs and chamber music. View her bio on pw.org/content/claudia_gary or follow her Twitter @claudiagary.

Gary Glauber is a widely published poet, fiction writer, teacher, and former music journalist. He has five collections, *Small Consolations* (Aldrich Press), *Worth the Candle* (Five Oaks Press), *Rocky Landscape with Vagrants* (Cyberwit), *A Careful Contrition* (Shanti Arts Publishing), and most recently, *Inside Outrage* (Sheila-Na-Gig Editions).

M. E. Goelzer makes her home in upstate New York.

Karen Greenbaum-Maya is a retired psychologist, former German major and reviewer of restaurants, and two-time Pushcart and Best of the Net nominee. Collections include *Burrowing Song*, *Eggs Satori*, *Kafka's Cat*, and *The Book of Knots and Their Untying*. She co-curates Fourth Saturdays, a poetry series in Claremont, California.



Winter 2022

Bill Griffin is a naturalist in rural North Carolina. His ecopoetry collection, *Snake Den Ridge, a Bestiary*, unfolds in the Great Smoky Mountains with illustrations by Linda French Griffin. Discover Bill's microessays, photos, and poetry by a hundred Southern poets at GriffinPoetry.com.

Katrina Hays' writing has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *Apalachee Review*, *Bellingham Review*, *Crab Creek Review*, *The Hollins Critic*, *Plainsongs*, *Psychological Perspectives*, and *Tahoma Literary Review*. She is Regional Editor for *Fireweed: Poetry of Oregon* and lives in Bend, Oregon. Please visit katrinahays.com.

David Henson and his wife reside in Illinois. His work has been nominated for two Pushcart Prizes and has appeared in various journals including *Front Porch Review*, *The Lake*, *South Florida Poetry Review*, and *Gone Lawn*. His website is writings217.wordpress.com. His Twitter is [@annalou8](https://twitter.com/annalou8).

Mary Beth Hines' poetry collection, *Winter at a Summer House*, was published by Kelsay Books in 2021. Her poetry, short fiction, and nonfiction appear widely in literary journals nationally and abroad including, most recently in *Hole in the Head Review*, *Inflectionist Review*, *The MacGuffin*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Saint Katherine Review*, and *Valparaiso Poetry Review*. Her short fiction was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Visit her at www.marybethhines.com.

Leslie Hodge began writing poetry again after retiring in late 2018. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in publications including *Sisyphus*, *The Main Street Rag*, and *The Journal of Undiscovered Poets*. Leslie writes poems to try to make sense of her life in a way that resonates with others.

Angela Hoffman lives in Wisconsin. Her poetry has appeared in *Solitary Plover*, *Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets' Museletter* and *Calendar*, *Agape Review*, *Verse-Virtual*, *Visual Verse*, *Your Daily Poem*, and *Writing in a Woman's Voice*. Her first chapbook, *Resurrection Lily* (Kelsay Books), is scheduled for release in 2022.

Bill Howell has five poetry collections, with recent work in *Canadian Literature*, *The Malahat Review*, *The Orchards Poetry Journal*, *Queen's Quarterly*, and *Two Thirds North*. Originally from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Bill was a producer-director at CBC Radio Drama for three decades. He lives in Toronto.



Winter 2022

Charlotte Innes is the author of *Twenty Pandemics* (Kelsay Books, 2021) and *Descanso Drive* (Kelsay Books, 2017). Her poems have appeared in many publications, including *The Best American Spiritual Writing for 2006* (Houghton Mifflin, 2006). Originally from England, Charlotte Innes lives in Los Angeles.

Allen Ireland's poetry has appeared in *The Road Not Taken*, *Red Planet Magazine*, and *The Lyric*. He has published two poetry collections: *Loners and Mothers* (2017) and *Dark and Light Verse* (2021). He works for a consulting firm in Helena, Montana.

Mike James makes his home in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He has published in hundreds of magazines, large and small, and has performed his poetry at universities and other venues throughout the country. His many poetry collections include: *Leftover Distances* (Luchador), *Jumping Drawbridges in Technicolor* (Blue Horse), and *Crows in the Jukebox* (Bottom Dog). In April, Redhawk published his 20th collection *Portable Light: Poems 1991–2021*.

Carey Jobe has published poetry over a 45-year span in *Kansas Quarterly*, *The Lyric*, *The Road Not Taken*, and other journals. He is the author of a volume of poetry, *By River or Gravel Road* (University Editions, 1997). He lives in the south of Tallahassee, Florida.

Matthew King used to teach philosophy at York University in Toronto. He now lives in “the country north of Belleville,” where he tries to grow things, takes pictures of flowers with bugs on them, counts birds, and walks a rope bridge between the neighboring mountaintops of philosophy and poetry.

Elaine Koplw, retired English teacher and union organizer, is Director of the Sussex County Writers' Roundtable, Associate Editor of *The Stillwater Review*, and was Associate Editor of the former Paulinskill Poetry Project. A three-time Pushcart Prize nominee, her poems appear in the anthology *Voices From Here Volumes 1&2*, *Tiferet*, *Spillway*, *Adanna*, *Edison Literary Review*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Exit 13 Magazine*, *Lips*, *Journal of New Jersey Poets*, and elsewhere.

Native to Missouri, **Nicholas Kriefall** published his first collection of poems, *Attic Pieces*, in 2014 with Unsolicited Press. His work has appeared in *Barrow Street*, *Conium Review*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Grey Sparrow Journal*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Writing Tomorrow*, *Enizagam*, *The Healing Muse*, and is forthcoming in *Evening Street Review*, *Helix Magazine*, and *Concho River Review*.



Winter 2022

Victoria Lau is an MFA student at Lindenwood University. She was the third-place poetry winner in the Random House Creative Writing Competition in 2013. Her poetry has also been published in *The Olivetree Review*, *Rogue Agent*, and is forthcoming in the *Gyroscope Review*. She is an English adjunct lecturer at Queens College, a writing assistant in BMCC Writing Center, a poetry reader for *GASHER Journal* and the marketing coordinator assistant for *The Adroit Journal*.

Tom Laughlin is a professor at Middlesex Community College where he teaches creative writing and coordinates a visiting writer series. His poetry has appeared in *Green Mountains Review*, *Ibbetson Street*, *Drunk Monkeys*, and elsewhere. His chapbook, *The Rest of the Way*, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2022. You can visit him at www.TomLaughlinPoet.com.

Jenna Le (jennalewriting.com) is the author of *Six Rivers* (NYQ Books, 2011), *A History of the Cetacean American Diaspora* (Indolent Books, 2017), and *Manatee Lagoon* (forthcoming, Acre Books, 2022). She won Poetry by the Sea's sonnet competition. Her poems appear in *AGNI*, *Pleiades*, *Verse Daily*, and *West Branch*.

Shannon Lodoen is a doctoral candidate in English at the University of Waterloo, where her dissertation explores the relationship between digital technology and identity formation. When she is not working on her academic research, Shannon enjoys reading and writing poetry, hiking, drawing, and working on her novel.

Judy Lorenzen is a poet, writer, and English teacher from Nebraska. She is widely published in literary magazines, journals, newspapers, and on websites.

Sheila Lynch-Benttinen has had a varied career in Boston in the arts and sciences for over 35 years. Her poetry has been published in over fifteen journals, and ten times by Haiku Universe. She has degrees from U. Mass. Amherst and Harvard University. She lives with her husband of 45 years and her bearded collie.

Professor of English at LHU, **Marjorie Maddox** has published 13 collections of poetry—including *Begin with a Question* and *Heart Speaks, Is Spoken For*—a story collection, 4 children's/YA books, including *Inside Out: Poems on Writing and Reading Poems with Insider Exercises* (Kelsay Books). *In the Museum of My Daughter's Mind* is forthcoming. Visit www.marjoriemaddox.com.



Winter 2022

Carla Martin-Wood is a poet and photographic artist, whose poems have appeared in a plethora of journals and anthologies in the US, England and Ireland since 1978. She is the author of several books, including *The Witch on Yellowhammer Hill* (The 99% Press, 2016).

Susan McLean, a retired professor of English at Southwest Minnesota State University, is the author of two poetry books, *The Best Disguise* and *The Whetstone Misses the Knife*, and the translator of a collection of Martial's Latin poems, *Selected Epigrams*. She lives in Iowa City, Iowa.

Mark J. Mitchell has been a working poet for forty years. His latest full-length collection is *Roshi: San Francisco* published by Norfolk Press. Another, *Something to Be Subject Of* is due soon from Psiki Porch, and a novel is on the way. He lives with his wife Joan Juster.

G.H. Mosson is the author of five books, including *Family Snapshot as a Poem in Time* (Finishing Line, 2019). His poetry and literary commentary have appeared in *The Evening Street Review*, *Rattle*, *Tampa Review*, and elsewhere. Mr. Mosson enjoys raising his children, hiking, and literature. Visit www.ghmosson.com.

David Murphy was born on Easter Sunday in a small city in Oklahoma. He graduated from Oklahoma State University and Kansas State University. He worked in northern Afghanistan during the war, then in Saudi Arabia, Mexico, and the United States. He currently writes full-time in a pueblo in Mexico.

Sally Nacker was awarded the Edwin Way Teale writer's residency in 2020. Publishing credits include *The Orchards*, *Quill & Parchment*, *Your Daily Poem*, and *The Sunlight Press*. She lives in a house in the woods. *Kindness in Winter* is her new collection (Kelsay Books, 2021). Visit her www.sallynacker.com.

Autumn Newman is a metrical poet. Although she still writes in form and sometimes free verse, she is much more interested in using meter to create her own forms, patterns, and cadences. She is equally interested in moving beyond iambic pentameter and into the vast, magical world of metrical diversity.

Kathy Pon earned a doctorate in education but in retirement returned to her passion for poetry. She lives on an almond orchard in California, and now studies with Seattle's Hugo House. Her work has appeared in *Plants & Poetry Journal*, *Mindful Poetry Moments*, and *The 2022 Poetry Marathon Anthology*.



Winter 2022

Marzelle Robertson is the author of several chapbooks including *Listen* (Dancing Girl Press) and *Toward the Terminal* (Alabaster Leaves, forthcoming). Her poems have been nominated for Best of the Net and appeared in numerous journals, most recently, *The Comstock Review*, *Concho River Review*, *Cyphers*, and *Freshwater*. She is a former teacher and school counselor in East Texas.

Lindsay Rockwell is poet-in-residence for the Episcopal Church of Connecticut. She's published in *Connecticut River Review*, *Amethyst Review*, *Iron Horse Literary Review*, and *Willawaw*, among others. Her collection *GHOST FIRES* is forthcoming from Main Street Rag press in 2023. Lindsay holds a Master of Dance and Choreography from NYU's Tisch School of Arts and is an oncologist.

Michael Saleman is a child of the Holocaust and a survivor of polio. Poems in *Barrow Street*, *Café Review*, and *Hudson Review*. Books include *The Clock Made of Confetti*, *Shades & Graces: New Poems*, winner of The Daniel Hoffman Legacy Book Prize and *Necessary Speech* (Spuyten Duyvil, 2022).

Cliff Saunders is the author of several poetry chapbooks, including *Mapping the Asphalt Meadows* (Slipstream Publications) and *The Persistence of Desire* (Kindred Spirit Press). His poems have appeared in *I-70 Review*, *Stone Poetry Quarterly*, *The Parliament Literary Journal*, and *The Heartland Review*.

P.C. Scheponik is a lifelong poet who lives by the sea with his wife, Shirley, and their shizon, Bella. His writing celebrates nature, the human condition, and the metaphysical mysteries of life. He has published six collections of poems. His work has appeared in many literary journals. He is a 2019 Pushcart Prize nominee.

John Schneider lives and works in Berkeley, California. His debut collection, *Swallowing the Light*, is forthcoming in 2022 from Kelsay Books. His work has been published in *The Worcester Review*, *Tampa Review*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *The Orchards Poetry Journal*, and elsewhere. His poetry has been a Merit Award winner in the *Atlanta Review* 2021 International Poetry Competition. He is also a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee.

Leslie Schultz (Northfield, Minnesota) has three collections of poetry: *Still Life with Poppies: Elegies*; *Cloud Song*; and *Concertina* (Kelsay Books). Her poetry has appeared widely, including in *Able Muse*, *Blue Unicorn*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Poet Lore*, *Third Wednesday*, *Naugatuck River Review*, and *The Orchards*. She serves as a judge for the Maria W. Faust Sonnet Contest.



Winter 2022

Wendy Sloan's collection is *Sunday Mornings at the Caffe Mediterraneo* (Kelsay Books, 2016). Her work has appeared in journals and anthologies including *Able Muse*, *Measure*, *Mezzo Cammin*, *Think*, and *The Raintown Review*. Sloan was a finalist in the Howard Nemerov Sonnet Competition. Several of her poems were nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Sarah Dickenson Snyder's collections include *The Human Contract* (2017), *Notes from a Nomad* (nominated for the Massachusetts Book Awards 2018), and *With a Polaroid Camera* (2019) with *Now These Three Remain* forthcoming in 2023. She's had Best of Net and Pushcart Prize nominations. Recent work is in *Rattle*, *Lily Poetry Review*, and *RHINO*. Please visit sarahdickensonsnyder.com.

David Southward teaches in the Honors College at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is the author of *Bachelor's Buttons* (Kelsay Books, 2020) and *Apocrypha*, a sonnet sequence based on the Gospels (Wipf & Stock, 2018). David resides in Milwaukee with his husband, Geoff, and their two beagles. Visit davidsouthward.com.

John Whitney Steele, a psychologist, yoga teacher, editor of *Think: A Journal of Poetry, Fiction, and Essays*, and graduate of the MFA Poetry Program at Western Colorado University, authored two poetry collections published by Kelsay Books: *The Stones Keep Watch* and *Shiva's Dance*. John lives in Boulder, Colorado.

Jennifer Stewart grew up running wild across acres in the Midwest. She sojourned in cities and now runs somewhat respectably through southwestern desert suburbs. A teacher, poet, wife, and mother, she's finding her little way through middle life. Her work has appeared in *Heart of Flesh*. She reviews movies on YouTube.

Lisa St. John is a writer living in the Hudson Valley of New York. Her chapbook, *Ponderings*, is available at lisachristinastjohn.com. *Swallowing Stones* is forthcoming from Kelsay Books. Lisa's writing is published in journals like *The Poet's Billow*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Light*, *Entropy*, *The Poetry Distillery*, *Poets Reading the News*, *Chronogram*, and *Sleet*.

William R. Stoddart lives in Southwestern Pennsylvania and has published work in *The New York Quarterly*, *Ruminant Magazine*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, *The Molotov Cocktail*, *The Writer*, *Pedestal Magazine*, *Dodging the Rain*, *Third Wednesday*, and other journals. His poetry was nominated for a Pushcart Prize.



Winter 2022

Sandi Stromberg writes in Houston, Texas, where she landed after 20-plus years as an expatriate in Switzerland, Spain, England, and the Netherlands. She is a three-time Pushcart and two-time Best of the Net nominee. Her poetry has appeared in print and online in many journals—and been translated into Dutch for *Brabant Cultureel* and *Dichtersbankje* (the Poet’s Bench).

Tim Suermondt’s sixth full-length book of poems *A Doughnut and the Great Beauty of the World* will be coming out later this year from MadHat Press. He has published in *Poetry*, *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Georgia Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Smartish Pace*, *Poet Lore*, and *Plume*, among many others. He lives in Cambridge (MA) with his wife, the poet Pui Ying Wong.

Jean-Sebastien Surena is a poet and spoken-word artist hailing from Queens, NY. In June 2021, one year after the start of the pandemic, Jean published his debut chapbook *Quarantined Thoughts*. A short film based on one of its pieces, “Unbroken,” was selected to 4 different film festivals and awarded “Best Poetry.”

Eileen Trauth is a poet, playwright, and author. Her poetry has appeared in *The Boston Poet*, *Braided Way*, *Common Threads*, *Loch Raven Review*, *PoetryXHunger*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, and in several anthologies. She is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writers League and the Ohio Poetry Association. She lives in Cincinnati, Ohio. Please visit www.eileentrauth.com.

Vivian Wagner’s work has appeared in *Slice Magazine*, *Muse*, *McSweeney’s Internet Tendency*, and other publications. She’s the author of a memoir, *Fiddle: One Woman, Four Strings, and 8,000 Miles of Music* (Citadel-Kensington); a full-length poetry collection, *Raising* (Clare Songbirds Publishing House); and five poetry chapbooks: *The Village* (Kelsay Books), *Making* (Origami Poems Project), *Curiosities* (Unsolicited Press), *Spells of the Apocalypse* (Thirty West Publishing House), and *Birch Songs* (Origami Poems Project).

Robert Walton retired from teaching after thirty-six years of service at San Lorenzo Middle School. He is a lifelong rock climber and mountaineer with ascents in Yosemite and Pinnacles National Park. He’s an experienced writer with published works including historical fiction, science fiction, fantasy, and poetry. Walton’s novel *Dawn Drums* won the 2014 New Mexico Book Awards Tony Hillerman Prize for best fiction. “Sockdologizer,” his dramatization of Abraham Lincoln’s assassination, won the Saturday Writers 2020 Everything Children contest. You can visit his website at chaosgatebook.wordpress.com.



Winter 2022

Pamela Wax, an ordained rabbi, has authored *Walking the Labyrinth* (Main Street Rag, 2022) and the forthcoming chapbook *Starter Mothers* (Finishing Line Press). Her poems have received awards and have been published in numerous literary journals. She lives in the Northern Berkshires of Massachusetts.

Donald Wheelock's poems have appeared in *Able Muse*, the *Alabama Literary Review*, *Think, Blue Unicorn*, and many other publications. His chapbook, *In the Sea of Dreams*, is available from Gallery of Readers Press. Kelsay Books issued *It's Hard Enough to Fly*, his first full-length book of poems, this fall.

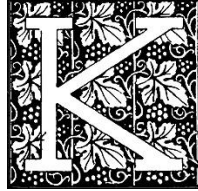
A Baltimore-based artist and activist, **Marceline White** has had her writing in *The Indianapolis Review*, *Atticus Review*, *Snapdragon*, *The Loch Raven Review*, and other journals; and in anthologies including *Ancient Party: Collaborations in Baltimore, 2000–2010*, and *Life in Me Like Grass on Fire*. Essays, op-eds, and other writing have appeared in *Woman's Day*, *Baltimore Fishbowl*, *Baltimore Sun*, and *Mother Jones*. When not engaged in activism, she can be found learning how to better serve her two cats, posting too many pictures of her garden on social media, and reminding her son to text her when he arrives at the party.

Sharon Whitehill is a retired English professor from West Michigan now living in Port Charlotte, Florida. In addition to poems published in various literary magazines, her publications include two scholarly biographies, two memoirs, two poetry chapbooks, and a full collection of poems.

Rebecca Yancey is a retired English teacher. She learned about the power of poetry from teaching it. She has published in *The LummoX*, *Miramar*, *Ibbetson Street #44*, *Muddy River Review*, and *Plainsong*. She was a finalist in a one-sentence poetry contest at *Third Wednesday*.



Winter 2022



The Orchards Poetry Journal is a subsidiary of **Kelsay Books**, a selective poetry publisher that prints and releases titles from mid-career and award-winning writers.

We have four imprint companies to accommodate chapbooks, children's books, full-length collections, and formalist poetry.

Open for chapbook and full-length submissions year-round at www.kelsaybooks.com

502 S 1040 E, A-119
American Fork, Utah 84003
KelsayBooks.com