FRESHWATER
2012
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Freshwater’s fourteenth issue, to be published in May 2013 is open to
submissions from August 15, 2012, through December 15, 2012. Send up to five
previously unpublished poems and a brief biographical note, with name, address,
phone number, and e-mail address on each poem. E-mail submissions must be
Word attachments. One submission per submission period. An e-mail address is
essential for electronic notification and re-submission of accepted work. By mail,
include stamped, self-addressed #10 envelope. Poems will not be returned.

Submit to

Freshwater
Asnuntuck Community College
170 Elm Street, Enfield, CT 06082
or
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Editor’s Note

It is impossible to imagine putting together an issue of *Freshwater* without the dedication and hard work of my students, and this issue is no exception. Once again, my deepest gratitude goes to long-time Editor Gay Paluch, a woman of passion, perception, and incredible dedication, and a poet of rich imagination. Editor Roberta Hoff’s joy in reading poetry, coupled with her extraordinary gifts as a poet, continued to illuminate all class discussions, while her warm, perceptive acceptance letters forged deep connections with poets published in this issue. Editor Eilish Thompson, also a poet of rare gifts, brought a delightful energy and commitment to her third semester working on *Freshwater*. She too offered great insight during the reading period, and her quirky view of life and language, coupled with her enormous intelligence and wonderful sense of humor, made working on the layout of the issue pure delight. Associate Editor Debbie Matusko is a blessing, no other way to put it. Her comments on the submitted poems were consistently perceptive, she wrote courageous, insightful poetry, and she took on countless tasks cheerfully and efficiently, from proofreading to stuffing envelopes to designing flyers. Finally, her thoroughly professional maintenance of our website and her confident work in formatting the issue went above and beyond all expectations. Working with Assistant Editor Karrie Sponaas continued to be a joy, in no small part due to her amazing artistic ability, her pleasure in trying out new skills, her willingness to take on the most mundane of tasks with total enthusiasm, and her delight in responding to poetry, while writing some fine poems herself. One of the real pleasures of working with Assistant Editor Brie Quartin is how quickly and easily she became a valued member of the editorial staff because of her keen, intelligent eye for good poetry, her pleasure in honing her own deeply appealing voice as a poet, her wry sense of humor, and her ability to take on any task with a calm efficiency.
As always, my deepest thanks to Elaine Folkers for being constantly and cheerfully on call for any and all computer emergencies; Falcon Press for the delight they have taken over the past thirteen years in bringing out each issue; and Duncan Morris for his ongoing support. Finally, I am abidingly grateful to President Martha McLeod and Dean Barbara McCarthy for believing in Freshwater and its importance to Asnuntuck.

Edwina Trentham
Bert J. Nitch

Freshwater

Lazing along between the muddy banks
Its hide scaled with wind, and scathed
By Puritan charity. Once, it had a name.
A voice. One could hear it in the rocking
Stones. In the hwait song of the birds.
In winter, the ice could be suckled,
The fish eaten raw, and my Father plucked
Arrowheads from the cold water.
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Twentieth Annual
Asnuntuck Student Poetry Contest Winners
and
Winner of the Fourth Annual Cover Contest

_FRESHWATER_ is proud to announce the winners of the twentieth Annual Asnuntuck Student Poetry Contest, which was open to students from the twelve Connecticut Community Colleges, the Connecticut State Universities, and selected local high schools. This year’s judge, Connecticut Poet Laureate Dick Allen, selected six winners. Following are his comments on the prize-winning poems, published in this issue.

**First Place: “Real Poets: A Plaintive Cry” by Nancy Goodrich (Manchester Community College)**

This allusive poem has a splendid whimsy to it, along with such wonderful specifics as “Earl Grey steeping in handthrown teapots” and a poem appearing beside a “blue dinner plate” as the poem tries “to edge out the eggplant parmesan.” In asking what “real poets do?” it answers the question with a verse triumph. “Real Poets” is a poem that delights in showing how, often, a “real poem” arrives out of the details of everyday life when that everyday life is apprehended with true mindfulness.

**Second Place: “Painting Smiles Is an Art” by Amanda Francis (East Windsor High School)**

Sometimes the best poems are focused on a small action acutely observed. This is such a poem, a poem of paradoxically joyful rhyme that belies the sadness of the perhaps mistreated or overly pushed. Quietly and quite terrifyingly calmly, the poem shows how art can hide the truth about those who seem to have no choice but to attempt to please others.
Third Place: “Better Luck at the Pearly Gates (Better Change Your Ways)” by Eilish Thompson (Asnuntuck Community College)

This is a poem of strong and forceful admonition, one which both hides and reveals its origin of intent. We overhear a life and death struggle and charge, written in terza rima, with the Dante influence added to the Hopkins enjambment. We’re left wondering at how, at the time of any crisis, “the carefree smile others wear” can be “like flowers on a casket.” Shadow and ambiguity may be part of this ambitious poem’s intent.

First Honorable Mention: “Lover’s Scars” by Allison Zaczynski (Asnuntuck Community College)

In this carved poem, we intensely see another’s body. The intensity of seeing is what communicates the acceptance and love the poem’s narrator has for the subject. Here’s a “fishhook” that’s “like an angry initial,” and a “bubbled” “ivory knot” as well as the “sienna rectangle.” It’s a poem in praise of hard-won imperfections on a “welder” (the term may be symbolic, too), a praise of outer scars that may well signify inner ones.

Second Honorable Mention: “How I Almost Drowned at Two” by Rachel Larensen (Asnuntuck Community College)

What a re-reading impulse there is to this poem, its sounds deliciously alliterative (“slip /silent splash sudden . . . sunlight” and “fingertips,” “fascinated,” “fishes,” “floating”). The reader is drawn underwater, sucked in, almost drowns like the child. The poem’s participles swim us deeper until we finally emerge from near terror into pride. How very good the poem is on the tongue, with its captivating child’s voice.
Third Honorable Mention: “Hands at Rest” by Brie Quartin (Asnuntuck Community College)

To use familiar phrases, this is a very straightforward, brutally honest, plain-spoken poem, its lines solidly and surely laid down, mainly in strongly accented dimeter. The poem’s meter emphasizes the anger. The poem’s physicality and woeful scorn is in observing “hands tied [my italics] in prayer” for otherwise they would do more evil. For some actions there may be, from victims, no forgiveness.

*Freshwater* is proud to announce that Asnuntuck Community College student, Victoria Oliver, won the *Fourth Annual Freshwater Cover Contest* with her beautiful photograph taken in Shenipsit State Forest in Stafford Springs, Connecticut. Her photograph is featured on the cover of this issue. (This award was made possible through a grant from the Asnuntuck Community College Foundation.)
Ruth Bavetta

*Looking into the Eyes of the World*

The days go by—
white squares torn
by blackberry thorns.

The detour over the bridge
obsures the road,
a morning moon thrusts
through clouds.
The postman’s lost
his way, the shopkeeper’s died

of an ancient lust.
And tomorrow,
dear staring heart,

you will lie
in the porch swing
singing.
Carmen Germain

Evensong, Mosquitoes

Imagine life
without them,
this Big Bang of insects,
free in the blood feast,
your meat-swamp bed.

Freight trains roiling the countryside,
   mad little nightmares

the better to sip you, my dear.

   Try to fool them, but

inches from your eyes they
   sing on slight legs

praise for the belly swelling,
   the miasma
   about to go out
   into the world.
Sylvia Forges-Ryan

Snapshots of Dominica

And here you see the neon green of the banana trees that shaded us (but not enough) on our hike, and right there the yellow green row of royal palms that pinwheel and hiss in the sky before a storm. Here's the tree, no name, whose trunk bears thousands, no, millions, of sharp black thorns. And this one's the rampant mangrove whose roots like tentacles splay themselves against the dank stone walls of this ruined fort. Here's tangled vine so strong you might hang from it. And this they call a strangler fig, tough enough to kill mature Bwa Mang trees (there's one gripping the river bank we saw before). This is what breadfruit looks like, bumpy, green and round as a balloon. Near it in the mud, a land crab! Did I say we found one clattering behind our bed? And here—but turn it right side up—a snake glints a warning on the stairs, surreal, leading nowhere, of a stone manor house, one of many, they say, burned to its shell, what's left nearly devoured back to bush. No roof or floor, just an interior gone
wild with ferns and vines. Here's heliconia again, its red and yellow blossoms reminding us of lobster claws. This is oleander, beautiful, both the yellow and the pink, but all its parts we've heard are toxic.

The fragrant ginger lily too. One leaf alone's enough to kill a grown man. Yes, bush medicine, they call it. Brew razor-edged lemon grass for fever.

For sick babies, sweet-broom leaf and love bush. For abscesses, cobwebs with salt and rum. For other ills, spiritweed, soursop leaf, tree of life. And for impotence the men swear by *bois bande*. Here's the bamboo grove that gives a human cry in the wind. Here, orchids parasiting on a mango tree, the fruit so sweet, but how it stuck between our teeth! Oh, this? The path to the sea where Caribbean and Atlantic meet. But you don’t get a sense of how steep it is, how exhilarating our fear.

And how strange, on our climb, we must have seemed to the child scavenging through sea trash at the bottom of the cliff, our camera's bright red eye signaling toward that unmoving stonehearted sea, to which we smiling tourists turn our backs.
J. Tarwood

Sky King

After that morning rush
for Big Gulp coffee,
he mans a drone
with his wired Washington room,
plasma screen his hound
to drop death neatly around.

Impervious, orders heard,
prayers never, couldn’t he
be our kind of god?
Rosanne Singer

*Grief*

We are returning from a northern place, horned beasts confused in a temperate zone. Where are the trees to ram our tusks into, air to hold our raw bellows? Your faces show how completely the order and grace of living have abandoned us. Alone is safest in this war between human and animal, until we resurface.

This will happen to you. Inner landscape catches fire and the space between people will not contain you. There is no ravine to bury our noxious odor, muffle the unrecognizable sounds that escape, until that time when we again burn clean.
Jonathan Greenhause

A Reverse Parabola

Río de la Plata, Argentina, 1977

Into the sea, he cried, & we plummeted to the sea.

Into the clouds, we thought, but he could no longer hear us, for he was in the clouds, but we had descended to the sea, diving beneath the surface to search for reflected clouds we’d seen, our bodies dozing among aquatic cumulous & sleeping for hours while anchored to the murky bottom, our arms crossed & our thoughts fixed upon what seemed to be eternity.

Having fallen victim to the Dirty War, we were now strange inhabitants of the sea, where eels electrocuted us, territorial sharks took bites of us, minnows reflected our forms in their silver sheen, & sea anemones—in their poetic justice—mispronounced us.

Into the sea, the milico had cried, but we were already there, so we traced our way from its watery breath, rising in quick ascent as the ocean’s mirrored skin approached & peeled back its placid surface, immersing us in sunlit air, our protracted flight returning effortlessly into the sky, a hundred feet, then a thousand, & up towards the blackness of the airplane’s open door

where the man in uniform grasps our soporific forms again & cries, Into the sea, & once again, our parabolic souls take flight.
Barrett Warner

Afterlife

Did I tell you how much
I liked the maple candy
you sent in December?
Or was I too unhinged
by the French mare's
premature signs of spring—
her eleventh foal inside
only the size of a cat—
to imagine how
the air must have tasted
while the sugarbush sap boiled,
turning from the color of spit
to morning sky,
the same green-gray-amber
Degas painted at Longchamps,
the clouds whorling
like the mare's lastborn
whose busted vertebrae
made him hurt everywhere
but in his lovely eyes
as he raced towards
a barbiturate finish,
angels wearing jockey silks
leading him to where the part
of us that never dies can gallop,
and on our lips
the taste of maple.
Jim Richards

Horses for Hire

Horses are enough to make me worry about the world, their necks thick and heavy, full of blood, their bellies so big I want to be in them. Their ears are enough—skin without bones—the first time I touched one I could hear with my hand, my arm, and into my shoulder blade. Their manes make me violent in the heart, the hair tangled and coated with dust—good dirty. When veins rise on their long faces, when their black eyeballs, with heavy lids and lashes, look out at me with unnerving sadness, when that sound climbs out of them like a scream buried in gravel and their round lips erupt with wet thunder, when they raise their tails and make shining orbs out of apples, oats, and grass, when sweat streaks their sides in the sun, when they smell like saddles—it is enough. And when one walks to me, like this one, its bridled head hung low, as if it were ashamed of making the boy on its back so happy, it’s too much.
Dick Allen

*The One Moment When Everything Was Perfect*

was the moment behind you,  
the one that looked like a pencil mark on a stucco wall,  
that sounded like the single peck of a chicken  
into the shadow you just left  
for you’re always leaving shadows  
or dragging them behind you like criminal mishaps  
and when you turn around to confront them they mock you.  
*Shadowland. Shadowplay. Shadow puppets.*  
“The day was filled with shadows.”  
*Who knows? The Shadow knows!”*  
The one moment  
was an oar blade descending, a finger snap, an eye blink,  
the flick of a light switch, a jaw clench,  
one taste bud awakened,  
a necklace clasp, a pinprick,  
the little cry of “Oh!” that’s never repeated  
in quite that way, even when caught on film,  
so treasure it, say collectors,  
put it into a locket and wear it everywhere.  
Become a collector. Take out your scrapbook at night.  
The world is gray. Quiet might not be its name.
Rhett Watts

Dancers in Pink

(oil painting by Degas, Hill-Stead Museum)

They loom large
clustered peonies
fill the foreground with unavoidable
pink, hot as the present moment.

Tutus are gaudy against softer shades of
cheekbone & silk flower,
pale behind the ear before the ballet.

& isn't it like that? The present moment
sharp in relief, crisp as crinoline netting,
or the aching toe packed in the pointe shoe?

So luminous the stage-lit sheen
of clavicle & décolleté,
it's easy not to notice how the body loves
the restive weight of shadow.

Cool in blue-greens, other dancers
wait in the wings, furtive as the future, the past,
blend into painted shrubbery while

one pearl earring centers the eye, calls it
back to black ribbon about the throat, back to
that loud pink, sonic before the first note sounds.
Primbing a Flying Rafter Near the End of August

A wrinkled lip in sympathy means zero to the butterfly who touched down briefly in the quart-sized can of primer that I held as guardedly as one can in the middle of the woods where no one in my tribe would hear me fall. I clamp my yellow teeth down on the speckled handle of the paintbrush and descend, regretting how the civilized collide so easily and often with the natural. What remedy I have to offer makes descending sillier than staying on the ladder, brushstroke after brushstroke, singing Que sera, sera without much irony until the first beer of the evening beckons, promising to do a little something with the sorrow that sobriety refuses to assuage.
Darren C. Demaree

A Welling Motion

Cracked eel, black,
old heart, here for me,
low-speaker, precious
to lose, more precious
to gain, ribbon
of the family lake,
for a moment, somewhere
we said “Uncle!”
to the mounding love
of our beautiful,
beautiful girls. Loose
loon, left behind
in the bringing,
I can still see your path
beneath the dark drink.
Ace Boggess

*The Self-Pity Song*

misery is not absence
of these things:

chocolate milkshake
swimming pool

big car like a rolling yacht
woman’s tenderness beneath a cyan camisole

misery is awareness
of the absence of these things

lips lacking sweetness
image without skin

the prayer sans a god to grant
*being-for-others*

to that lonely king who rules
from isolation of his cave

what retinas scan & mind creates
poison the diamond water with dust

I am thirsty &
in this desert

I find no comfort
but the dread of beauty

contempt for the beautiful
laughing as eyes

in the back of my head
will weep
Elizabeth Kudlacz

_Sorrows_

Everyone has a sorrow. Look
in the damp darkness of your pants’ pocket
or the left sleeve of your husband’s threadbare shirt where
my mother carried her sorrow, tucked up and handy. Some
folks have so much sorrow it spills out of purses, pockets,
even houses onto curbs filled with the emptiness
of fish bowls, the helplessness of three-legged tables,
the poverty of rusty cages and threadbare rugs. Sometimes
a cardboard sign hand-lettered “free” is propped atop
it all as if we don’t have enough broken mirrors
of our own. I’ve had sorrow so large I had to pay
to have it hauled away. The whole town of Groton saw it,
driving by that maroon and green plaid, overstuffed sofa, sacred
site of first seduction, covered in cat hair those years after
when they comforted me. It sat street-side for weeks,
a cruise ship run aground, before the big city truck came
clattering. Now my sorrows are packed in heavy duty bags,
hidden even from lean men who toss them
into truck’s maw with youthful nonchalance. Still,
there are nights when sharp claws of beastly shrieks
pierce the skin of darkness. In frank morning light,
I have stood wearing freshly ironed linen,
on pavement still dewy with dream, transfixed
by the pungent reds, oranges, yellows
of my broken piñata of sorrows.
Gaynell Meij

*Ask, and it shall be given . . .*

Beyond the door
there is a streaming,
meandering vibratory forms beyond
particles, beyond waves, shadows
of this cosmic form have blossomed
on my skin and burst timeless
fractal fireworks to brighten
my meditation mind.

My imagination cavorts
with photons glimmering around
edges of an opening
door. Morphine tampered
pathways led my father to ask,
*Why can’t I push the door open?*
Holding his hand, sitting thigh
to thigh beside him on the bed, I said,
*I heard all you need to do is knock.*

Sitting still at this longitude, solar
morning follows star flecked night.
Some deaths bring a grace that flings
heart’s space
open,
and doors.
Jack Lindeman

*Father’s Day*

After all these years
I still cling to my broom
trying to sweep
those scattered pieces of you
back into my mind.
What destructive mailed fist
shattered your face
into a permanent scar?
What insane retribution
riding the cone
of a whirling tornado
broke up your torso?
The leaves of your skin
have celebrated
their autumnal ritual
and winter is the skeleton
of the man who’s left.
Yet there are words
spoken by you
in my mouth today,
a convincing phrase.
You grope with my arms
for some remembrance of yourself
though still faithful
to that other world.
At least you believed in yourself
when no one else cared.
The earth is good,
you always insisted,
and I keep running into your shadow
reaching for an explicit hand.
Barbara Batt

*How Grandfather Taught Me to Behave*

He cut logs with the screeching band saw, and hung pigs from the peak of the barn, stroking his wild beard as the smoke from his pipe circled, and blood ran into the waiting pail.

He laughed as my new friend, stepping backward from the cows, sat in the ditch that drained the stalls, thick with brown liquid.

In the afternoons, he listened, on the big radio in the hallway between kitchen and sitting room, to strange singing in a language I could not understand. He rarely spoke to me, but watched from those tall, pale eyes, until I felt suspended in his sight.

The day the too proud rooster knocked me to the ground, clamping razors to my back and drilling my neck with a sharp beak, I was afraid to cry, but caught the quick movement of his hands, the steps to the upright stump where he split wood for the kitchen stove, the flapping bird, frozen for an instant, beneath the flashing axe.
Brie Quartin

*Hands At Rest*

The first time  
she tasted blood  
came from the back  
of her father’s hand

flashed strong across  
her mouth because  
at six she dared  
speak out of turn.

Later at his casket’s side  
his hands tied in prayer  
across his chest

she’d bite down hard  
upon her lip  
to keep herself  
from smiling.
Steve Parlato

*My sister Cathy says, “I swear*

she thrives on pestilence and peonies.”
In Mother’s kitchen, waiting for the call,
we’re studying the Living Section; she’s
posed—plastic-smiling—on a blossomed wall.

On paper, our mother states, “I believe
flowers are like children,” (some crap to do
with nurture) and Cathy goes, “Gotta love
Mrs. Green Thumbs! Look how her garden grew.”

They pinch—the photo garden, my sister’s
voice, Mother’s platitudes—like when that bee
stung my infant lip back in the stroller:
a day’s pain, lifetime sensitivity.

We’ll bring peonies to the hospital
after drowning stray ants in Mother’s pool.
María Luisa Arroyo

This Year, My Son

This year, my son, old enough to feel
how our home is sanctuary to each of us,
wants our own Thanksgiving tradition
free from being defined
by grandpa’s medical conditions
and full of the familiar
as we walk around barefoot,
accept each other’s silence,
and speak to each other without harm.

This year, my son, fifteen,
wants the weight we feel to be
the roast chicken stuffed with sage sausage,
wants the dark circles we see
to be the rings our glasses make
on red tablecloth and not under my eyes,
as work and his grandpa’s illnesses
startle me, vomiting, out of sleep.

This year, my son wants me to breathe.
Katharyn Howd Machan

Stark Awake at 4 a.m.

she sees the ice on her windowpanes
make silver of the night’s fake light
and hears her husband sleeping deep
in dreams of their dying daughter.
How to count a thousand sheep?
How to hum long breathless tunes
muffled in a flannel pillow
on a bed a century old?
Instead she sits up on the edge
and fumbles for her dark brown scuffs
and creaks her way out through the door
to new December silence. A poem
hangs taut and stiff out there
but she does not try to touch it.
Time now only for hot tea
in a cup of china roses.
Motherhood is an open hand
with thin fingers flat and useless.
Lana Orphanides

*Your Hair, Mine*

The day after your death I cut my hair
unaware of the tradition of ancient mourners
but thinking somehow to honor you, begin anew,
or, become someone who had not been there

when you died, looking just as before, only
surprised by death’s swiftness against such a warrior.
But I am changed as if passed through a sieve.
Each molecule, crust of skin, shard of bone altered.

I would weave wisps of your hair into mine,
take your kindness and your strength, carry them
into battle and fly like the great gray
hawk who visited me unexpected

this morning as I sat among your things
listening to the earth and the sweet grass sing.
Simon Perchik

*

Alone in the womb it was your heart
listening for night after night
—even then two ears were not enough

for coming around to hear out the rivers
that would become her breasts, each
holding on, calling the other—with both hands

you make a cup from a thirst
older than clay and darkness, drink
the way all arms are filled with dirt

with fountains and promise—not yet born
and already a tongue shows through
reaching across as the doomed touch

still warm from moonlight and longing
—before you had a mouth you bathed this darkness
over and over as if it too could drink

from kisses :these teeth, the sun
it once was and long ago
lost its shoreline and footing.
Rachel Larensen

How I Almost Drowned at Two

bump or slip
silent splash sudden
quiet like downy quilts and clean sheets
bright with sunlight
like fiery logs breaking and sparking
soft like pudding
angel with golden halo
spread eagle
fingertips wavy
fascinated by another world
of fishes and slime shine
always, thereafter
diving towards that world
drugging towards that world
sleeping, sexing
underwater bliss
floating, smiling, flying
Look how long I can hold my breath, Daddy!
Donna Pucciani

Meltdown

from a photograph by X Woods

I never heard the crack.  
I never saw the first fissure  
as the temperature rose above freezing  
for the first time in months.

The clods of ice wander  
listlessly on dark industrial waters  
like lost sheep. They watch each other  
decay in the oil-slick river,  
then swallow the poison themselves,  
tokens of their own disappearance.

Once they were whole,  
a wool-white vestiture  
that clothed the river edge to edge,  
the seamless fabric of winter’s sorrowful loom,  
unmoved and unmoving, draped  
like the bedclothes of a dying woman  
for whom hospice cannot patch together  
another life, whose fingers pluck  
the linens in brief spasms.

The frozen anti-shroud unravels  
day by toxic day  
as thaw brings certain death.  
Now the flock of chunks  
has morphed into unrecognizable shapes.  
Say your prayers, little lambs.  
Join the jigsaw river.
Standing in the Bonaventure River is no mean feat if you have no shoes on: this gin-clear water stings to soothe. Cold laps toes to claw-clench, joints strain to marbles unfeeling as I peer down transfixed, look beside and between ten numbed nubs into steady eyes of smooth oracle-pebbles where silenced truth rests near salmon pools dark and mysterious. I recall yesterday’s cast brought one to surface, a lip-hook from a former fisher hung like a sneer: a mark of near-miss, like the skin mass by my right ear.
**Ephemeral**

_Sanguinaria canadensis._
The bloodroot of my childhood rose out of snow-blighted leaves in the woods behind the house, their stark white petals scattered by breeze no more than a heavy sigh, cut root spilling red sap like blood.

“There is blood,” our ninety-year old mother said, stumbling out of the bathroom, worn face white as a hospital gown. It was May, when lily of the valley were in bloom, a planted patch of long green tongues lapping up house eaves’ cool shade—favorite flowers, carried carefully in her bridal bouquet.

We couldn’t believe how quickly the old house sold this Spring, just as the lilies’ new leaves were unfurling, just after bloodroot’s last petal let go.
Jonas Zdanys

The House in the Distance

The light in the window
of the house in the distance,
the dry touch of the old door
you scratched your initials on,
cold sparks gathering together again
in the blue unraveling of the year’s
last January sky, ash to ash
in the slow light of the old room.

Cold and blue, cold and blue—
the light of the full moon rises
out of its little box and follows me
like a nail bending under accumulating ice.

I float past on a colorless wind,
turn once and once again,
the snow from the light of the house
on the flat of my hand,
the wishbone of unencumbered cold.

This is how we arrive,
as glass bleeds in the windows,
as moonlight leans in doorways
and memories stack flat
in the clear night under the cellar stairs.

I slip up and out from the shadows
of our last address, whisper and burn.

I fall and fall away.
I fall away.
Melissa Carl

*Long Wide Night*

Awake, under two quilts in a cold room. Midnight becomes the space into which breathing scrapes itself into sound. The body says it: *hollow, hollow*, the body’s word hour after hour in the dark, the body waiting for the mind to dream or disappear.

The bedroom objects have small sorrows of their own—curtain slightly torn, mattress dented, clothes left to wrinkle on the floor. The radiator hesitates and ticks, a struggling Morse code tapped slowly out.

Thoughts lose their sentences like leaves falling from leaves, sycamore love letters meant for burning.

Pointless, this staring at the wall as though it might relent, sigh beneath its paintings, take its wallness elsewhere.

The mind follows itself to the window, skims the glass. *Glass.* It’s a word with a cut in it. Brittle. Hard. Like the huge, nearly-winter moon, that ship whose cargo is a corpse. Like the sandbox in the neighbor's yard, the mild contents and plastic buckets now necropolitan. The heart slips, viscous, along such stark apartness—this is what a prayer was meant to save—something like a heart swallowing itself whole.
Pat O’Brien

Palm trees notwithstanding

the torrential rain they failed to
hold above our huddled selves

romance me yet.

No trip south is without
desire rekindled. My aunt

from whom I lied my way
into the raging night

is dead. Long dead.

Still, her complicated glance
peers beneath every tree

with something that seems

like forgiveness. She knew
he waited down the street.

Or so it seemed when I

returned in disarray.
Drenched. Smiling.

When she pretended to sleep.
Chuck Tripi

Advice to Younger Men

Unlikely, that a naked woman in the desert longs only for a place to lie down. One in twenty thousand chances she has waited there for you. One in sixty thousand times desire knows its destinations, gives itself direction through the waves of heat arising visible from those untouchable sands. If you go, go quietly, bring water. Bring a lasting shade, a cooler breeze. If you should leave again, leave water. Leave a lasting shade, a cooler breeze. You will carry her with you. Ten thousand years, the arid winds, yet to blow the sands away.
James Doyle

Too Many Eyes Out There

We know—spent the first half of our lives counting. And over the eyes: wigs, brains, ears, brows. How to displace all that ugliness. Start over? We stayed inside, but thoroughfares dead-ended at every window, midnight marriages, walls cracking, futures yowling to come in. We rearranged furniture until we wore out the combinations and the house started repeating itself. Okay, then, the second half of our lives microscopic, swimming forward, into the retinas, such a large and gelatinous world, slower and slower, never even a moment’s rest, sluggish, overgrown, where nothing is named. Adam’s arms heavier than mine, barely able to move in place.
Eilish Thompson

Better Luck at the Pearly Gates (Better Change Your Ways)

Swear on Your sacred words it wasn’t that I ignored my heart in that minute it took to cave into the dark of remorse, backbone curved into a shadow puppet,

neither my sense. Logic, deformed, was the part of me not to be overwritten, tyrannical, not caring for the choice my spotless record begs of me: obedient, aside from it.

I’m aware of the rules, yes, heard of prior cases, similar. Court, Yours, here, emits a peculiar light; off-white, just perhaps, but coarse to touch; apathy deals the lightning bolts that cast my judgment.

Pray: if untimely death is so reprehensible a sin, then God, kindly cart me away to live in virtue, in love with a different course. The carefree smile others wear, tangible truth, is like flowers on a casket.
John Stanizzi

Communion

When the avenue was cleaned
by whirlibirds of seeds
in a polished city with sparkling windows,
I’d sit in a bucket full of water on hot September days,
or lie on the cool linoleum floor between
my grandmother’s big brown shoes
and stare up into the mystery
of snaps and nylon under her dress.
She was an excommunicant,
and Tony the nice man with a wife and children
would be there most days,
sitting at the sunny table and speaking
so softly I couldn’t hear.

My grandfather was gone by then,
and his red-headed daughter was put on a bus to somewhere
by her red-headed mother Jenny the prostitute,
and whenever my grandfather did come around
he’d always wipe the corners of his eyes
with the backs of his wrists
whenever he talked to me.

The only thing my grandmother ever needed
she couldn’t have,
until the day at Mass
when I drank the Blood of Christ
kept it wet on my lips,
and took His body cupped in my hands,
back to her in the pew
where I nudged her,
opened my hands to the great disobedience,
and nodded.
No she said as I kissed her mouth,  
Blood of Christ,  
broke His body,  
ate half,  
put the other to her mouth,  
Body of Christ,  
salvation’s relief shining through  
the guilt in her face.
Even Then

Every Sunday
he hung life-sized
at the end of my pew
long and white
but for the blood at his head
his right side
and where he was nailed to the wood.
A blush of lipstick
no nun could scrub away
had seeped into the porous plaster
where women worshippers kissed his feet.
Each time I put my mouth
above the spike
to his cool hard foot
I thought of real flesh
and when the others bent
for the benediction or to be blessed
I followed instead
the arc of his ribs
the line of his limbs
the sculptor shaped so well
that even then, O lord,
even then I was lost
in the beauty of men.
Allison Zaczynski

*Lover's Scars*

I want to memorize the scars
of your welder's arms

the thinly carved fish hook
horizontal on the creamy underside
like an angry initial;

the ivory knot—
raised criss-crosses bubbled
across your left hand;

the thin silk-like thread,
tucked just above the knuckle
of your thumb;

the sienna rectangle, imperfect
slanted across your right forearm
like a branding.

I trace them all
to become versed
in the stories
of your body.
Lindsay Illich

On Watching You Eat a Clementine

The way your mouth tends
the pith with such sweet patience
makes me want to give you
the valentine of my body scan,
a skiagraphy of bone and tendon.
I watch you peel it,
can’t help but think the rind
a signature of loss, your coffee
spoon’s bravura, the aver
of morning so still it writes
itself, like the typewriter bird
whose tree outside becomes
a conference of birds, the clearing
welter of your throat, organs
on paper, my ilium
unfolding in your patient hands.
Janet Greenberg

(In a dream: I see)

a sunset pausing on its haunches
at the end of a long road. A gull flies out
in huge fluid freedom from the face of a cliff,
pulling our chins aloft. I fill my lungs
with salted air, my bare toes tease
the sand, still warm. Your bronze legs scissor
through the surf. Beach plums coaxed from dune
gardens scent the cottage snug between the mounds.
Day lilies fringe its silvered porch. The ocean sighs,
her inhalation draws the curtains out and lifts
their lacy skirts.) Your soft breath
stirs my mane. A loosened tendril streams
across my sleeping face, embeds
itself within your beard. I brush the roving
lock aside, our legs unbraid, and
as the sea exhales, we drift
toward dawn.
Dennis Saleh

Shorebound

Blank wind Tentative sky
Pensive gathering of clouds

A silent ringing in the air
italicizes the horizon

Something like a canvas
But no artist No intent

The sea makes its way
to the beach head down

Lowered as though
thatful Preoccupied

The sea says nothing
But again and again
Don Barkin

Nieces on the Beach

A thousand years ago or so
they wheeled down the beach
in a glittering of cartwheels.
I didn’t think they could possibly reach
the hunched toes of boulders at the end.
Since then, one has teetered into
an early marriage, while the younger
is still wheeling free as a spare tire
that will go into a lazy spin and
fall on its face in a dead clap.
Pierced by their parents’ divorce,
pierced by his drug use, pierced by her
platinum resolve to get on with her life.
Plus all the usual confusion of youth.
We fly all day to see them at Christmas,
hugs and grins, but nothing
so perfect as that sparking fire-wheel
of arms and legs and sunburst
of flung hair. One was as lank
as a thoroughbred, the younger thick
and springy as a pony. They did reach
the end of the beach, and the calendar flipped
to a new year, and kept on flipping
in time with the rush of the shuttling tide.
Then this Christmas quit with a wintry scene
of snow tinted blue by the shade
of woods, and a snowy path somewhere.
Amanda Francis

Painting Smiles Is an Art

We painted smiles on our pretty little faces.
We stitched ourselves up in all the right places,
Careful to disguise any last traces.

We smiled like pretty little faces do.
We lied about the things we knew were true,
Lied to ourselves, to them, and you.

We painted the lies.
We stitched up the traces.
We saw to disguises,
Faced with disgraces,
Lost among those with painted faces.

Just for you.

We painted smiles on our pretty little faces,
And smiled. Like pretty little faces do.
Steve Parlato

*Stuffed Bells*

He’d watch her kneading lumps of meat, raw egg and rice, long hands stripped of gold, pink chuckshreds caught beneath her nails. The jade bells would stand, wax bowls packed—a fistful per—fingerclefts molding vertebrae along curving spines.

In the stove, they’d sizz, foil-shrouded, as she spooned hot broth over their skulls. Darkening to avocado, like the range-hood, their charred membranes, slipping, liquefied. Below, red coils would flicker, as the peppers bled, her Pyrex filling with bitter juice.
Edward A. Dougherty

**Kool-Aid and the Story of Art**

That whole cult-thing  
in Guyana gave Kool-Aid  
a bad rap. We feed  
on sugary stories  
then get stung by the tart.

Art, someone said,  
must be tragic  
to be true to life.  
*Get in line,* I guess they’re saying,  
*and bring your cup.*

What about the summer heat,  
the golden inflatable pool?  
What of the balloon-headed  
neighbor boy who squeals  
until his voice rises so high

it disappears  
—his shoulders  
glisten, his mouth gapes  
with drenched joy, and his lips,  
a red moustache above them, are blue.
Nancy Goodrich

Real Poets
A Plaintive Cry

What do real poets do?
You know,
The ones whose poems appear on creamy pages
Shelved with Tennyson and Shelley?

Do they wake in the morning,
Earl Grey steeping in handthrown teapots
Gazing at snowy trees,
Metaphors blowing softly through their brains?

Do they forget to feed the meter
On the way to the toy store
For that princess wand
Because they’re working on a sticky line?

How do they get the laundry done
When their childhoods
Stream back to them
In similes midst years of therapy?

Are their husbands patient
When a newborn poem
Appears next to their blue dinner plate
Trying to edge out the eggplant parmesan?

Do they drive over the bridge
Careful to stay in the narrow lane,
Struggling to put fog and Chinese classical music
In the same stanza?

How do they do all the stuff—
Taking the dog to the vet,
Painting their toenails Revlon Red—
And still have room for all the words?
Jean Esteve

What the River Isn’t

A river’s not philosophy, no one I know
has slumbered on the river bank deep in river dreams to wake
answered, and with all an answered-man’s aplomb.
   No, the river is a lizard
   and likewise mum.

The sea, if it’s a jackpot, is not about to say so.
No one I know rode waves
of ocean coin and ocean dollar bills. Not rich
   the ocean is a jellyfish
   flattened and transparent on the beach.

The sky is not a battlefield where evil gets its due
and you
get studded with medals for your valor.
   It’s blue
blankets, rumpled sheets, some scattered pillows
where baby skies are built.

Virtue never stayed penned inside the pretty home.
White curtains just laundered and fluffed
in a fluff-dry machine
billow in the soft wind
that sneaks through the kitchen door left open
when virtue took it on the lam.
   Your house, dear, is a bingo game
   played with utter concentration.

This then is the
fundamental
enigma of environment.
Susan Johnson

Roomier Digs

A hermit crab scrapes by exchanging shell for shell. A novelty brought home from the beach, one takes off across the kitchen looking for roomier digs.

Where is my nerve that would let me clamber over table tops out of a childhood of sleeping bags and bunk beds? We like our comfort. And honestly would you ever follow a rabbit down a hole? Wouldn’t it be dark and dirty? Full of spiders and turds? A gull chooses the largest eggs to sit on for the same reason Grandfather chose the biggest piece of pie. Still we admire those dog packs that pack for trips abroad to broaden their horizons.

Though it’s always the same horizon riding the same planet with the same bats hoisted above those of us scratching at the surface, a surface that never gives. But what makes you tick? In all your life have you ever touched a cow? We pilot past osprey nests, fish nets and red knots as swans arrow across the estuary, billowing sleeves of wind. Reverse me, please. Let me roll down this wave through rocks broken by rivers before my mind becomes a big old seal that rises to periscope the scene before slipping back into the soft waters of the bay.
Barrett Warner

*Maine Is Not the Place to Grow Bougainvillea*

in spite of lakes and loons
and strawberries big as your skull.
Mine is like an octopus,
thorny arms reaching,
a yoga of pink and red.

There are so many more tactful
men than I—any one of them
would have dug out a birch canoe,
carved hearts in the varnished paddles.
*For you*, he would have said,
*the water, the birds, for you.*

Instead, I bring a tropical plant
to our lakeshore cabin
as if to say I'd rather
be in New Orleans with its horns,
 crayfish and accordions.

The word *Bougainvillea*

is almost one-fourth of a haiku.
I imagine her sunning herself
surrounded by Japanese poetry.

*That plant will die in a few*  
*weeks, she says, and then we'll all*  
*have to deal with your grieving.*
I'm bounding one step ahead,
planning the funeral, storing ashes.
When flowers die do you send people?
She backs down. The air and water
are too nice here, the midday sun
warming her bare cajun loins,
all too nice to menace the world
by arguing over the impossible.
Where do you want to put it? she says.
Over here, I say, by the banana tree.
Steve Straight

**The Language of Trees**

“Supposedly, a special plant flowers
only on Midsummer Eve, and the person
who picks it can understand the language of trees.”

When I discovered it in my flashlight’s beam
dee in the island’s woods at the base of a giant white pine,
an impossible orchid that had to be the cure to something,
I heard with the first whiff of its earthy perfume
what sounded like the chatter of saplings nearby,
and when I held it to my nose came the awareness
of an invisible music that has been playing all along.

I realized then that we have all heard hints before,
like foreign words that come from similar roots,
the quaking aspen in a breeze like a flock
of Japanese women giggling behind their hands
of pale leaves, the sharp cry of an old limb
being amputated by a gust of wind,
the sighs of spruces sagging under the weight of snow.

As I inhaled my comprehension sharpened,
and I could make out discussions of climate
and weather, the sacred work of squirrels,
and what seemed to be a kind of religion
based on lightning. A cedar told the story
of being astonished by the texture of a bear,
a birch at the edge of the water described the moonlit view.
The dead at their feet were cherished as if alive,
ants and beetles slowly working them
into mulch and then to soil.
I can’t say I really understood all I could hear, perhaps because human evolution is in the teething stage, or I was just getting used to sixty-seven words for bark, but even with all the trees around me the woods were quieter, the conversation gentler than you might expect, and I noticed the older, taller trees, their bark darkened and thickened, said hardly a word, as if they understood how language fails us and spent their days listening to the wind.
Joseph Murphy

As It Is

A wave shimmers loose from a shell’s gleam,
As if to coax these words
Toward open water;

As if meaning could be pried
From sound; shaped by another’s lips
And heard.

As if it weren’t mad
To gather images as others do shells,
Pressing them forward,
Line after line.

As if those images had the strength
To wield, carry; to reach
Past the brain’s hollow; to emerge
Through a willow leaf’s surge
Or a worm’s skin
And whirl back alive through one day’s
Dog-eared page.

As if that page could burn in the beak of things,
Breathing or not;
Plumb the source of a dream; measure
One night’s width.

As if that dream were to shake me awake,
Offer images chipped
From the breadth of another’s sleep.

As if those images could wriggle up,
Surface within my reflection;
Change the way I imagine.
As if it were enough to witness
The world as it is,
And still wish to set a sea-shaped fin
On dry land.
James Doyle

Rice Fields

Rice water curries the fingers
cording stalks
in knots of ten for export. Monks

whitewash the marsh, a sudden
lightfall, cloud
of flamingoes solid on two legs.

Prayer wheels spin. Yaks in caravan
carry bowls of rice
over the Himalayas. The breathing infant,

wedding rice, death-bed rice. A mother
arranges calipers
at the table to measure syllables,

ricepaper delicate and brazen with calligraphy.
Her family meditates
before eating. Plates steam the windowsills.

The swollen rice fields run white with fog.
Swampwater laps
the ankles of women walking the rows.
Hannah Watkins

Vultures

The doe runs, desperate, chasing away the vultures, kicking at the crows, circling the field on frantic feet. Shadows of the birds stretch across the length of her delicate body, dark wingspans in this setting sunlight and fly across meadow grass laid flat by growling machines. The longer I watch the vultures return and return again, the louder the voices become, harsh rebukes to the crying mother, telling her to respect the tearing teeth and leave behind her broken baby.
Jonas Zdanys

The Invention of Zero

On the table, wind.
The left hand pressed against the outside wall.
Footsteps across the cobblestones.
The pale rider on a dark bicycle.
Wax that will not melt.
Blood in the corner of the mouth.
The holy fire of night birds healing.
The lost salt of living.
The small chains of the century fallen to silence.
The cold dew on the cross posts of the gate.
Statues of mist as the fog lifts.
The eyes of women hiding in the dark.
The third knock.

The sun today set on the wrong horizon:
black and white, certainty from uncertainty,
a search for what we have not yet lost.

And I am everywhere, rising like a sudden shout
on the brink of a world in which I play no part.

I turn, a shadow between generation and death,
the final shape and substance of the narrow orbit
of the closing north, the self-intrusion
of the assonant emptiness that betrayed me to dust.

Under this hesitant step,
in a world cleanly divided,
I stand triumphant and immortal
at the center, the circumference.
Dick Allen is regarded as one of America’s leading poets. His seventh collection of poetry, the Zen Buddhist-influenced Present Vanishing, was published by Sarabande Books in October, 2008. It received the 2009 Connecticut Book Award for Poetry. Allen’s previous two collections, The Day Before: New Poems and Ode to the Cold War: Poems New and Selected, also were published by Sarabande Books. He has received a Pushcart Prize, National Endowment for the Arts, and Ingram Merrill Poetry Writing Fellowships, among other awards. His poems have been included in The Best American Poetry annual volumes six times. Allen’s new poems have appeared recently in or are forthcoming in Poetry, RATTLE (along with an extensive essay on Buddhism and Poetry), Hudson Review, American Scholar, The New Criterion, Gettysburg Review, The Georgia Review, The Cincinnati Review, Atlantic Monthly, New England Review, and Ploughshares. He and his wife, poet and fiction writer L. N. Allen, live near the shores of Thrushwood Lake, in Trumbull, Connecticut. In 2010, Allen was appointed State Poet Laureate of Connecticut (2010-2015), succeeding John Hollander.

María Luisa Arroyo, a Massachusetts Cultural Council Fellow in poetry educated at Colby, Tufts, and Harvard, has published individual poems in many journals, including CALYX: A Journal of Art and Literature by Women, PALABRA: A Journal of Chicano and Latino Literary Art, The Women's Review of Books, and Centro Journal. María Luisa, whose first collection of poems, Gathering Words: Recogiendo Palabras, was published in 2008 (The Bilingual Review Press, Arizona State University), enjoys facilitating poetry workshops; her latest ones include "The Power of Code-Switching: Poems Don't Have to Be 'English Only'" at the National Split This Rock Poetry Festival in Washington, DC, and "Ekphrasis: Writing Poems in Response to Local Art" in Monson, Massachusetts. María Luisa also enjoys performing her work nationally, including in Puerto Rico and in the Palabra Pura Series hosted by The Guild Complex in Chicago.
Don Barkin has published poems in *Poetry*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Poetry Northwest*, *North American Review*, *Harvard Magazine*, *The Louisville Review*, and other journals. A collection of his poems, *That Dark Lake*, was published by Antrim House in 2009. He is also the author of two poetry chapbooks and has twice been awarded artist grants by the State of Connecticut. He lives with his wife, Maggie, and his daughter, Eve, in New Haven, Connecticut.

Barbara Batt has a Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Special Education, and is retired from the Connecticut Department of Mental Retardation. Her poetry has been published in *Whatever Literary Journal*. She has received awards from the Connecticut Authors and Publishers Association, and the Connecticut Poetry Society.

Ruth Bavetta is a lifelong resident of Southern California whose poetry has been published in many journals, including *Nimrod*, *Tar River Review*, *RATTLE*, *North American Review*, *Spillway*, *Hanging Loose*, *Rhino*, *Poetry East*, and *Poetry New Zealand*. Her work is included in the anthologies *Twelve Los Angeles Poets* and *Wait a Minute I Have to Take off My Bra*. She loves the light on November afternoons, the smell of the ocean, a warm back to curl against in bed. She hates pretense, fundamentalism, and sauerkraut.

Ace Boggess currently is incarcerated in the West Virginia correctional system. His poetry has appeared in *Harvard Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Poetry East*, *RATTLE*, *Atlanta Review*, *Santa Fe Literary Review*, *New Mexico Poetry Review*, and other journals. His books include *The Beautiful Girl Whose Wish Was Not Fulfilled* (Highwire Press, 2003) and, as editor, *Wild Sweet Notes II*, an anthology of West Virginia poetry (Publishers Place, 2004).

Melissa Carl is a teacher of history and Gifted Program instructor, whose poems have been published in *Off the Coast Magazine*, *Amoskeag: The Journal of Southern New*
Hampshire University, Third Wednesday, The Writer’s Eye, cellpoems, CircleShow, In Posse Review, Melusine, and The Fledgling Rag. She has published additional poems in a number of anthology collections, and she has read her work on public television and at various venues in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina. Melissa is also a member of MENSA. She shares her admittedly messy existence with her husband, son, dingo, goldfish, and hermit crabs, but not necessarily in that order.

Darren C. Demaree is living in Columbus, Ohio, with his wife and daughter. His poems have appeared in numerous magazines, reviews, and so forth. Twice he has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Edward A. Dougherty is author of Pilgrimage to a Gingko Tree and Part Darkness, Part Breath, as well as five chapbooks of poetry, the latest of which is Backyard Passages from FootHills Publishing (2012). Granted the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Scholarship and Creative Activities, he lives in Corning, New York, a small city defined by hills, the convergence of three rivers, and a glass company you may have heard of.

James Doyle has written five books of poetry. The most recent is Bending Under the Yellow Police Tapes (Steel Toe Books). His poetry has appeared in many journals, has been featured on Verse Daily, Poetry Daily, The Writer's Almanac (Garrison Keillor), and American Life in Poetry (Ted Kooser), and has been reprinted in many anthologies, including Prentice Hall's Literature: An Introduction to Critical Reading, used in universities across the country.

Jean Esteve lives on the Oregon coast with spaniel-sorts, walks, swims, writes. Her poems have appeared twice before in Freshwater, and she has new work coming out in Mudfish and Pearl as well.
Sylvia Forges-Ryan has published her poetry in *Americas Review, Caduceus, Colere, Dogwood Review, Inquiring Mind, Insight, Journal of Italian Americana, Sensations Magazine, Shambala Sun, Tricycle, The Merton Seasonal,* and the *Yale Anglers’ Journal,* as well as in numerous anthologies. She is internationally known for poems written in Japanese forms, and many have been translated into other languages. Editor of *Frogpond* from 1991-1993, she has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a fellowship to study poetry in St. Petersburg, Russia. She is co-author of *Take a Deep Breath: The Haiku Way to Inner Peace.*

Amanda Francis is a sixteen year old junior at East Windsor High School. She has a passion for writing poetry and short stories, with hopes to pursue this art in the future.

Carmen Germain’s work, *These Things I Will Take with Me,* has been published by Cherry Grove, and poems have appeared in *Natural Bridge, The Madison Review,* and *Freshwater,* among others, including a Google Earth project of Washington state poets, *A Sense of Place.* Carmen lives part-time in the Kispiox River Valley of Northern British Columbia, which inspired “Evensong, Mosquitoes.”

Nancy Goodrich was born in September, 1946, became a photographer in September, 2007, and became a poet in September, 2011. She lives in Portland and is a student at Manchester Community College.

Janet Greenberg is an adjunct professor of Literature and Composition who was awarded the Susan Saniel Elkind Prize for Poetry. Her sonnet “Relative Truth” was published in *Kalliope: A Journal of Women’s Literature & Art.* Janet wrote her first verses in the second grade and, decades later, studied poetry with Edwina Trentham in the MALS Program at Wesleyan University. “My writing process involves walking,” Janet explains. “I become my own metronome, and on a good day, meet the words I need along the way.”
Jonathan Greenhause is the author of the chapbook *Sebastian’s Relativity* from Chicago’s Anobium Books (available at www.anobiumlit.com) and is a Pushcart Prize nominee. His poetry has appeared or will soon be appearing in *The Believer, Cream City Review, New Delta Review, The South Carolina Review*, and *Water~Stone Review*, among others. He works as a Spanish interpreter and lives in lawfully wedded bliss.

Joan Hofmann is a Professor of Education at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford, Connecticut, where she is a faculty member in undergraduate and graduate programs in the School of Education. She teaches courses such as *Creativity, Writing, and Nature* and teaching writing to students with disabilities, and has directed the Academy for Young Writers for over fifteen years. Her work has been published in *WordArt 2009* and *WordArt 2011* at the Canton Gallery on the Green (Connecticut), in *Interpretations*, the literary magazine of Saint Joseph College, and in *Where Flowers Bloom*, an anthology published by Grayson Press (2011). She is in love with the natural world, and is often sky watching or river walking.

Lindsay Illich is an Assistant Professor of English at Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts. Her work has appeared in *Gulf Coast, Coachella Review, Rio Grande Review, Clare Literary Journal, Boxcar Poetry Review*, and, most recently, *Improbable Worlds: An Anthology of Texas and Louisiana Poets*, published by Mutabilis Press. Email: lindsay_illich@hotmail.com.

Susan Johnson has her M.F.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts Amherst where she currently teaches writing in the Isenberg School of Management. Her poems have recently appeared in *Comstock Review, Off The Coast, Pinyon Poetry Review, Third Wednesday, Bluestem, Karamu*, and others. Her first book *Impossible is Nothing* was published this past spring from Finishing Line Press. She lives in South Hadley, Massachusetts, with her husband and two cats.
Elizabeth Kudlacz is a full-time scientist and part-time poet. Born and raised in the suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio, she currently lives, works, and writes in Groton, Connecticut. Some of her haiku and poems have appeared in journals, including *Cicada, Aurorean, Connecticut River Review, Caduceus, Bellowing Ark*, and *Freshwater*, as well as in various literary anthologies.

Rachel Larensen is currently a student, attending Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield, Connecticut. She has been a professional chef for thirty-five years and only recently discovered her love of writing poetry. She was born in the town of Warsaw in Western New York, to a family full of artists. She credits her grandmother, Ruth Mandeville Robinson, for instilling a love of poetry in her from an early age. This is the first time she has been published, and she is thrilled. Rachel resides with her husband, Steven, and their two cats in Enfield. She has two adult sons and three grandchildren, with whom she will share her love of words.

Jack Lindeman has published two chapbooks of poetry, *Twenty-One Poems* and *As If*, which was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. He also edited *The Conflict of Convictions* (Civil War writings) and published *Appleseed Hollow* (a book about living on a farm). His new book, *Lincoln: The Black Man's Advocate*, is scheduled to appear soon. His poems have appeared in many magazines (most recently in *Blue Unicorn, Commonweal, RiverSedge, Kerf*, and *White Pelican Review*).

Katharyn Howd Machan was born in Woodbury, Connecticut, in 1952. Her poems have appeared in numerous magazines, anthologies, and textbooks, including *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, and in thirty collections, most recently *Belly Words: Poems of Dance* (Split Oak Press, 2009) and *When She’s Asked to Think of Colors* (Palettes & Quills Press, 2009). A professor in the Department of Writing at Ithaca College in Central New York, she was named Tompkins County’s first Poet Laureate in 2002. “Stark Awake at 4 a.m.” is part of a chapbook-in-progress titled *H*. 
Gaynell Meij has been a geologist, became a naturalist, and was impacted along the way by deep ecologists and mystics. She has travelled the path of rational-analytic mind to sensuous matter and is now immersed in the blending of these ways, learning what it can be to give voice out of “deep presence.” She is blessed to have a daily life that includes stillness and opportunities to observe and wander.

Joseph Murphy is a professional editor and writer who lives in Michigan. He has had poetry published in a number of journals, including The Tower Journal, Poetry Quarterly and The Sugar House Review. Murphy is also a poetry editor for an online literary publication, Halfway Down the Stairs.

Patricia O'Brien is a member of the Guilford Poetry Guild and the Connecticut River Poets. She's facilitated poetry workshops, including at York Correctional Institution hospice program. Pat's been published in various periodicals, including CT River Review, Embers, Pulp Smith, Fairfield County Magazine, Poet Lore, Caduceus, Red Fox Review, Native West Press, Connecticut Review. Pat’s in the process of completing a book of her poetry, In the Middle of Things, which will be published by Antrim House. She's won several prizes, among them from the Trumbull Arts Council, Embers, and the Acton Public Library. She resides in old Saybrook with her husband, John, and not too far from their three sons, their lively families, and loved ones.

Lana Orphanides has been published in A Letter Among Friends, Southeaster Gale, and Freshwater. Her work is also included in a book of poets and painters, Spring: Rebirth and Renewal, and in a chapbook, Sea and the Sound of Wind. She has done many readings throughout Connecticut, notably at The Mystic Arts Café, The Hygienic, and as a poet and artist at the Hoxsie Gallery exhibition, “Poets and Painters.”

Steve Parlato, a writer, illustrator and college writing teacher, has been published in journals including MARGIE,
Borderlands, Freshwater, Connecticut River Review, Peregrine, and Pirene's Fountain. Parlato’s young adult manuscript won the 2011 Tassy Walden Award for New Voices in Children's Literature; he is represented for fiction by Victoria Marini of The Gelfman-Schneider Literary Agency. Steve is blessed to have a wonderful wife, Janet, and two amazing children, Ben and Jillian, who have taught him the important truths of love and family.

Simon Perchik is an attorney whose poems have appeared in Partisan Review, The New Yorker, and elsewhere. For more information, including his essay “Magic, Illusion and Other Realities” and a complete bibliography, please visit his website at www.simonperchik.com.

John Popielaski’s poems have recently appeared or are forthcoming in Post Road, Redivider, and THEODATE. His chapbook Isn’t It Romantic? won the 2011 Robert Phillips Poetry Chapbook Prize and is forthcoming from Texas Review Press.

Donna Pucciani’s poetry has been published on four continents in such diverse journals as International Poetry Review, Spoon River Poetry Review, The Pedestal, nebulab, Italian Americana, Journal of the American Medical Association, Poetry Salzburg, Shichao Poetry, Istanbul Literary Review, and Christianity and Literature. Her poetry has been translated into Chinese and Italian, and has won awards from the Illinois Arts Council and The National Federation of State Poetry Societies, among others. She has been nominated three times for the Pushcart Prize and currently serves as Vice-President of the Poets’ Club of Chicago. Her books of poetry include The Other Side of Thunder, Jumping Off the Train, Chasing the Saints, and To Sip Darjeeling at Dawn.

Brie Quartin is in the midst of a midlife crisis and has recently taken up poetry as an outlet for her angst. She will continue to
update her bucket list to include passions long forgotten. In keeping with the spirit of this list, she took a cooking class in Tuscany, signed up for harp lessons, and enrolled in a poetry course with Edwina Trentham this past September. She is anxious to discover who she will be when she grows up.

Jim Richards completed a Ph.D. in creative writing and literature at the University of Houston and now teaches at Brigham Young University–Idaho. His poems have appeared recently in *Prairie Schooner, Poet Lore, Texas Review, The Fertile Source*, and *Contemporary American Voices*. He serves as poetry editor for *Irreantum*, and lives in Idaho’s upper Snake River valley with his wife and five sons.


Rosanne Singer is a Maryland poet-in-the-schools, traveling the state to work with elementary through middle school students. She is also a poetry therapist who uses creative expression for healing wounded warriors and their families at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, and with pediatric patients at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC. Her work appears in *Atlanta Review, Dominion Review, Baltimore Review, The MacGuffin, Slant,* and *Asphodel,* among other journals. She received an Individual Artist Grant from the Maryland State Arts Council and a fellowship for Literature, Language and Linguistics from the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County.

Steve Straight is Professor of English and director of the poetry program at Manchester Community College. His first book, *The Water Carrier*, was published by Curbstone Press, and his next book, *The Almanac*, is forthcoming from Northwestern University Press. For many years Straight directed the Connecticut Poetry Circuit, and for many summers he directed the Seminar Series for the Sunken Garden Poetry Festival. He has given workshops on writing and teaching throughout the Eastern United States and in Ireland. In 1998 he was named a Distinguished Advocate for the Arts by the Connecticut Commission on the Arts.

J. Tarwood has lived in East Africa, South America, and the Middle East. He has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and has published two books, *The Cats in Zanzibar* and *Grand Detour*.

Eilish Thompson is the type of woman to first imagine through imagery, the kind who pictures a better future through art, pun intended. She holds a firm belief in the awe-worthy ability of the arts to unite communities, nations, ethnicities, and egos. Eilish is currently a student at Asnuntuck Community College. She is a Springfield Public School 2010 Graduate, a proud member of the theatre group Teatro V!da, and has been told her answering machine message is very bubbly.
Chuck Tripi, a retired airline pilot, is founding partner of The Paulinskill Poetry Project, a boutique small press and resource dedicated to poetry of the Upper Delaware River Region. His poems have appeared in California Quarterly, Confrontation, Hayden’s Ferry Review, Natural Bridge, and Poet Lore, among other journals and anthologies. He is an avid member of the Writers’ Roundtable of Sussex County, New Jersey.

Barrett Warner lives and works on a farm in the Gunpowder watershed north of Baltimore. His poems have been published in Nahant Bay, Northeast Corridor, Berkeley Poetry Review, California Quarterly, Nude Beach, Gargoyle, Comstock Review, Natural Bridge, and others. His chapbook, Til I’m Blue in the Face, was published by Tropos Press.

Hannah Watkins is a sophomore at Saint Joseph College, where she is majoring in English and Psychology. Eventually she hopes to use poetry in Creative Writing Therapy for adolescents. Her poems have been published in Connecticut Review, Fresh Ink, and previously in Freshwater, as well as several college literary publications. She was selected as a Connecticut Student Poet for 2010-2011 and read her works around the state of Connecticut, including at the beautiful Sunken Garden Poetry Festival. Currently, she is editing Saint Joseph College’s literary journal, Interpretations, and working to increase interest in the arts and humanities at Saint Joseph’s.

Rhett Watts has had poems appear in Spoon River Review, Sow's Ear Poetry Review, Ekphrasis, The Cape Rock, Defined Providence, Yankee, Peregrine, online in Slapering Hol (newsletter), and other journals. She has been a finalist in a few contests, and her chapbook No Innocent Eye is currently seeking a publisher. She has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize in Poetry. Her work has been included in the books, Knitting into the Mystery and The Best Spiritual Writing 2000. Rhett is an online bookseller and leads writing workshops in Connecticut, where she lives with her husband and cat. She received her M.F.A. in Writing from Vermont.
College of Fine Arts. She is also a visual artist who works in pastel and oil.

**Sarah Brown Weitzman** has had work in numerous journals including *North American Review, American Writing, Potomac Review, America, Mid-American Review*, and *The Bellingham Review*. Her second chapbook, *The Forbidden* (2003, Pudding House), was followed by *Never Far From Flesh*, a full-length volume of poems (Pure Heart/Main Street Rag, 2005). In 1984 Weitzman received a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship. She was a finalist in the Academy of American Poets’ Walt Whitman Award twice, and was a finalist for The Foley Prize in 2003. Her most recent book, a children’s novel entitled *Herman and The Ice Witch*, was published in 2011. A former New York academic, Weitzman is retired and lives in Florida.

**Allison Zaczynski** is a graduate of Asnuntuck Community College and currently attends Central Connecticut State University. She was the third place winner of Asnuntuck’s Nineteenth Annual Student Poetry Contest and winner of the 2011 Asnuntuck Excellence in Poetry Award. She has always loved writing and is very excited with all the places that poetry has taken her.

**Jonas Zdanys**, a bilingual poet and translator, is the author of thirty-nine books, thirty-six of them collections of poetry written in English and in Lithuanian and of translations from the Lithuanian, most recently *The Thin Light of Winter: New and Selected Poems* (2009) and *Artistic Cloning: Poems by Agne Zagrakalyte* (2010). He has received a number of prizes and book awards for his own poetry and for his translations of Lithuanian poetry into English and was the subject of an exhibit about his life and literary work at the National Library of Lithuania (http://www.lnb.lt/parodos/2/). He has taught at Yale University and the State University of New York, served for more than a decade as the state of Connecticut’s Chief Academic Officer, and is currently Professor of English at Sacred Heart University, where he teaches creative writing.