

# **YOUNG RAVENS LITERARY REVIEW**



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# *Young Ravens Literary Review*

*Issue 16*  
*Summer 2022*

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## *Table of Contents*

Cover Art: 5-1	<i>Richard Hanus</i>	
<i>Introduction</i>		4
Ravens	<i>Cynthia Yatchman</i>	5
Astral Projection	<i>Sharon Wright Mitchell</i>	6
Epitaph	<i>Mitchell Untch</i>	7
Where the Stars Grow Blue	<i>Jared Rich</i>	8
Wishing and Hoping	<i>Lynn White</i>	9
In Their Element: All that Bright Dazzle	<i>Kate Falvey</i>	10
The Invention of Language	<i>Hamad Al-Rayes</i>	11
Dragons at Sunrise, Off Plum Island	<i>Daniel A. Rabuzzi</i>	12
Abstract Flower	<i>Carl Scharwath</i>	13
Compote	<i>Damon Hubbs</i>	14
Just in Case	<i>Tricia Lloyd Waller</i>	15
Doodlebug, doodlebug	<i>Johanna Haas</i>	16
Fly Away	<i>Meg Freer</i>	17
As Seasons Fade	<i>Jared Rich</i>	18
Coastal Collapse	<i>Ethan Blakley</i>	19
New Snow	<i>Cameron Morse</i>	20
Morning Trek	<i>Michael Keshigian</i>	21
Image 021	<i>Richard Hanus</i>	22
Bad Witch/Good Witch	<i>Anne Whitehouse</i>	23
Burnt Offering	<i>Johanna Haas</i>	25
No Such Thing as Away	<i>Marie-Elizabeth Mali</i>	26
Bobcat	<i>Allen Ashley</i>	28
Not Harry Houdini	<i>Kersten Christianson</i>	30
Greenhouse	<i>Meg Freer</i>	31
A New Fawn	<i>Kyle Singh</i>	32
Hope Deferred	<i>Shari Lawrence Pfleeger</i>	33
Raven Fluffed	<i>Kersten Christianson</i>	34
Under Stars	<i>GTimothy Gordon</i>	35

Lost and Found	<i>Anne Whitehouse</i>	36
The Toy Chest	<i>Damon Hubbs</i>	37
Ridiculous Rituals: Reasons, Rules, and a Rationale	<i>Wendy K. Mages</i>	38
Neon Orange Cat	<i>Meg Freer</i>	41
Magic Found	<i>Ursula O'Reilly</i>	42
The Night	<i>Meekha Roper</i>	43
Dancing in Water	<i>Anne Whitehouse</i>	44
Dreaming	<i>Carl Scharwath</i>	45
Communion	<i>Fabrice Poussin</i>	46
The Lay of the Fisherman	<i>Ethan Blakley</i>	47
The World & Mirror	<i>Peycho Kanev</i>	49
Panacea	<i>Carl Scharwath</i>	51
Skipping Stones	<i>Adrienne Stevenson &amp; Marie-Andree Auclair</i>	52
Raindrops	<i>Lynn White</i>	53
5-1	<i>Richard Hanus</i>	54
<i>Contributor Biographies</i>		55

## *Introduction*

In Issue 16, we explore the theme of Magic: Lost and Found. We confront our dreams and uneasy realities in the musing mirror of reflection—"I search my own face/wondering what I'd hoped to find" (Anne Whitehouse).

We seek after "dragons, more rare than whales" (Daniel A. Rabuzzi). We ask you to dive deep into moon shadows and mourning with us. Come, fly under the raven's wing, and count the splended slant of each feather! Revel in the "crystal spirit of summer," and the spells found in falling snowflakes (Michael Keshigian).

Say "hello" to your lost imaginary friends, and goodbye to those treasured, yet taken, by the cruel enchantments of time and chance. Break free of the stories that tried to bind you, bone and blood—reclaim your tale! Don't be afraid of despair, for hope and desire will always span that "bridge between starshine and clay" (Shari Lawrence Pfleeger).

Cast your pennies and skipping stones far, and never stop wondering if your wishes will land heart-deep, or sky high. Either way, magic both mundane and marvelous will find us in the least expected ways. "This much we know is true/ or so the story goes" (Damon Hubbs).

*Cynthia Yatchman*

**Ravens**



## *Sharon Wright Mitchell*

### **Astral Projection**

Sheer curtains breathe  
with the rhythm of night.  
I lie awake, imagine  
walking barefoot through  
dew-damp grass  
as the whippoorwill calls.

I picture myself rising,  
flying through the screen door  
like a sheet freed from the line,  
soaring over eaves, gown  
fluttering at my feet  
while I swim  
in cool moonlight.

I butterfly and backstroke  
watching my moon-shadow  
fly beneath me on the lawn.  
When I'm sleepy, I land  
and tiptoe to bed,  
sailing through my dreams.

For a moment, the morning sun  
challenges my sense  
of what was real and what was dream—

then I stretch, and my toes touch  
the damp edge of my gown.

## *Mitchell Untch*

### **Epitaph**

“Earth, isn’t that what you want: to arise within us invisible? Isn’t your dream to be wholly invisible someday?” –Rilke

When you moved, the swath of sheets wrapped around you became another piece of clothing still fortunate to wear you, to turn as your leaf-torn body turned, your torso, your hips, the scalloped bones of your chest, the clasped hands, the ear’s taut drum where words, my words, lingered and strayed sometimes singing the way birds sing their quiet happiness for having flight, singing for the earth that gives back what it takes, the eye’s bright oracle singing, the harpsichord of the heart singing until emptied of desire, if only I could see you in the shape I once saw you, carved from the brightest part of a stone, your shadow woven silk unraveling inside the doorway,

your shadow grown from your shoulders like wings after the sun’s fury, like water dripping down a window, the cloud’s departure leaving only your beauty to be seen, remembered, if only I could forget this apparition, this belief that still frightens me outside in the yard where you now reside inside the open mouths of flowers, inside trees that spin with your thoughts, inside leaves that fall to the ground like words unuttered, because I cannot go where you are, where your breath dries, where your bones root, because if I saw you now I could not move, could not steady my hand on the door, turn the knob with my fingers, could not feel it without feeling your

hand’s warmth, that flooding gesture, because if I remember the truth and I wake and move and allow myself to feel I will feel, because if I lie with my eyes closed and find that you are still here, still the wind’s song turning in the dark, still your mouth opening mine, opening me, the handle, the door, the ceiling, the wall, still looking each summer for your car to turn up the driveway, for the sun to make way for your body, to burn a bright hole in the air, then I will know that the world is wrong.

*Jared Rich*

**Where the Stars Grow Blue**



*Lynn White*

### **Wishing and Hoping**

The pool was clear and deep.  
The children peered over the edge  
to see the coins glistening on the bottom.  
They wondered what wishes had been made  
and if any had come true  
but no one could know.  
No one would tell  
them their wish  
as they waited  
to watch the coin  
fall into the cascade  
down into the wild white spume  
and then into the clear pool below  
where it would stay glistening for ever  
feeling only the force of water.  
All those secret wishes  
revealing nothing  
lying there  
hoping.

*Kate Falvey*

**In Their Element: All That Bright Dazzle**

They really seemed to imagine that  
the new snow  
had been created,  
with deliberate accuracy,  
for all the glow and sparkle,  
all the delicious intensity  
of the cold shudder,  
the brisk west-wind  
flying bits of airy voices  
through all that bright dazzle,  
glimmering in drifts  
of unworldly early garden.

Found in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Snow-Image: A Childish Miracle" from *The Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales* (1852).

## *Hamad Al-Rayes*

### **The Invention of Language**

Hour of copper, and a gust outflanks the clustered horde, tumbling down the plunderer's door  
a grain—the signature of the sphere and sacrifice, baroque cartographies, the worm's almanac;

town of bones, and to the invaded skull the recollection that gives form to lightning, spellbinding  
the disbanded nerves—until the wind bears itself, swift on the butterfly's wing, and voices a  
name.

Hour of copper in the town of bones: sonorous this Spring, sonorous the spear-studded sun,  
sonorous the skin that swims in light!

*Daniel A. Rabuzzi*

**Dragons at Sunrise, Off Plum Island**

Dragons, more rare than whales,  
Swim in sun-rivers,  
Whorling rubescence,  
Light from afar.  
Offshore wings flashing with light  
From the morning,  
Long shadows all the way back to the beach.  
Light from the past  
Flecked with fire.

We may never see their kind again.

*Carl Scharwath*

**Abstract Flower**



## *Damon Hubbs*

### **Compote**

Blackberries  
vanilla, orange zest, cardamon  
arrowroot to thicken

before  
the transubstantiation  
is the blackberry aware of  
its reputation

the historical echoes  
of long-separate incidents.

Berrying the bramble wall,  
a summer ritual that cat claws  
children's hands in red-black drupelets,  
always reaching for the sun-fattened berries  
atop the briar, torn and tangled  
in the bramble-kite  
higher and higher  
until swept away.

Lucifer, when cast from heaven,  
fell from the sky  
onto a blackberry bush,  
and now the archfiend  
rides the hedges  
on Michaelmas Day,  
his face smeared  
with the last of summer's blood.

## *Tricia Lloyd Waller*

### **Just in Case**

Because they always kept a bowl of mints  
on the hall table between the Clarice Cliff  
and the sand filled lighthouse—  
“present from Alum Bay.”

Just in case the white horses came to call.  
The smoky white, timid wild horses,  
wave wet whose coats are fragranced  
with sea lavender and tamarisk.

The silky stallions who taste of crescent moonbeams.  
The pure bred semi-feral Camargue horses  
whose hooves tip tap on their polished wooden floor  
as they help themselves to the tiny polar white mints.

## *Johanna Haas*

### **Doodlebug, doodlebug**

As a child, my mother would take us to the Doodle Bug Caves.  
The story said that if you called  
“Doodlebug, doodlebug come and get your bread and butter,”  
the doodlebugs would emerge from the rocks.  
I never saw them,  
but I never completely did not see them either.  
Always, there remained the potential for doodlebugs  
and therein lay the magic.

## *Meg Freer*

### **Fly Away**

On our stroll around the block,  
you walk up to a house, return  
to me and announce in words  
that would sadden any mother,  
Parsley doesn't live there anymore.  
At your birth the doctor gave me  
a plush baby bird, told me to hold  
my girl gently but allow her to fly.  
Your imaginary friend for years—  
gone—and you, growing up.

*Jared Rich*

**As Seasons Fade**



*Ethan Blakley*

## **Coastal Collapse**

Rain-made obsidian of asphalt pathways  
Split by indecision and dotted yellow lines;  
Serpentine, sanguine, and slow.

There lies beside, wooded bounds of deep-set green;  
A million needle-skirted spires  
Watching, waiting, and wed

To the mournful mountainside;  
Seeped in a sullen cloud of low-hung humidity  
That hides not only sight, but time as well.

How many minutes lost?  
How many miles?

We carry on our wondering,  
perhaps hoping to be hidden in the selfsame way.

## *Cameron Morse*

### **New Snow**

The sparkle of new snow stops  
by mid morning. Sun  
frowns, and the crystals that snatched  
the light collapse into themselves.  
In my dream I'm back in the debate  
league with Zeuben, my best friend  
from childhood. I have a sentimental  
attachment to my old email account,  
but the spambots have long since  
discovered my secret garden. Alexey,  
who taught me about the sparkle,  
considers my fortune now  
from Moscow, my not-so-lucky numbers.  
Zeuben and I are psyched  
about the tournament. The children we were  
are no match for our genius.

## *Michael Keshigian*

### **Morning Trek**

He rarely has those nights  
when he can sleep  
deep beneath the comforter  
and curl himself back into childhood  
upon the twin bed next to his brother,  
a life he can barely remember.  
His parents have long departed  
for that permanent slumber  
in a room with no view,  
touching hands forever  
as they once did in the confines of privacy,  
now distant and deaf to the whimper  
of nightmares that occasionally  
still startle him awake and make him restless  
in the milk white light of dawn.  
The trembling rays of sun  
split the pines on a cool summer morn  
then splinter his shaded bedroom  
and on the days when calm abandons him,  
he rises to walk.  
It soothes him to see the giant pines  
still asleep in their bark,  
the dreamless vegetation, unscarred  
by human steps, swaying in the early breeze  
as the huge ball of fire ignites  
the watery horizon with flames  
that abruptly shatter the darkness  
about the sleeping lake homes.  
The loons have ceased lamenting.  
Silently, he thanks the crystal spirit of summer  
for the comforting yellow gift of morning.  
Soon houses blink their shades open,  
a motor roars across the lake and in the distance  
a chimney raises its smoky arms skyward.  
The forest absorbs night as light walks  
the mulch paths toward day.  
He turns homeward, listens to his own footsteps,  
no longer in search of himself.

*Richard Hanus*

**Image 021**



## *Anne Whitehouse*

### **Bad Witch/Good Witch**

*“that inward eye which is the bliss of solitude”*  
Wordsworth, “The Daffodils”

Like a cascade of silken water,  
my hair falls over the pool  
of the dressing table mirror.  
I search my own face,  
wondering what I’d hoped to find.

Into the green thicket of the past,  
I slip inside a fairy tale.  
How my grandmother  
pointed to the dying light  
twinkling in the trees,  
showing me the fairies  
I believed in because I wanted to.

The first witch was my mother,  
sowing dissension, hiding deceit,  
plotting ways to set her children  
against each other.  
It was more than a game,  
it was a compulsion.

We four sisters and a brother  
consumed her poisoned love.  
Every year she grew thinner,  
teetering on high heels,  
flapping her wings like a crow,  
her back curved like a question mark.

Her life force fed a fire of trash—  
igniting conflicts  
passed down to children  
like religious obligations.

I shriveled up and dug in,  
a hard seed of resistance.  
I never could relax my guard—  
when I tried, I came to grief—  
better not to be noticed,

best of all to leave.

I used to dream of the world  
at the back of a mirror,  
as if I could step into it, another Alice,  
and the glass would part to take me in,  
like dry water. There would be  
an interior like a Dutch painting,  
the light falling in one direction,  
a woman sitting quietly, waiting.  
She would look up and nod  
when I passed, and let me go.

## *Johanna Haas*

### **Burnt Offering**

My cup of smoke spills, flowing over my hands,  
over my arms, over my body, over my legs,  
until it hits the ground forming a gray pool,  
slithering around my feet like an ancient snake.

Does this make me a heroine in the mists of a dark, reaching mere,  
or an unearthly creature forged in the heart of a gas-giant planet,  
a goddess emerging from the Other realm across the hedge divide,  
or just an aging woman communing with a cup of smoke?

## *Marie-Elizabeth Mali*

### **No Such Thing as Away**

My ex-husband remarried within a year.

\*

For him love meant trust-falling backwards  
into his beloved's arms. For me it meant leaping  
hand-in hand face-forward off a cliff into the sea.

I kept dropping him, thinking he wanted  
to swim. He kept breaking my leap,  
thinking I wanted to be caught.

\*

Some days the skins I've shed  
call to me from the darkness  
where they writhe like dug-up worms.  
No such thing as away on this circled earth.

\*

"Why love what you will lose?  
There is nothing else to love."

\*

I am tumbled sea-glass. I am a footprint  
at the water's edge. I am the erasing  
wave. I am a collage of broken shells.  
I am dunes in a high wind. I am the wind.

\*

Born with a half-rolled map for skin  
and a museum for a heart,  
I thought I got to the end, but found  
a door and kept going. Each wall,  
a window with a broken lock.

\*

My heart is made of water.  
My heart dances to salsa by itself.  
My heart curls like a book left out  
in the rain. My heart lies  
on the bridge at night to watch  
the stars. My heart forgets  
to make the bed. My heart  
built its nest on a cracked branch.

\*

Standing in the water, toes wedged  
between rocks, body swaying, I cry.  
My paltry contribution of salt.  
I swim under the full moon at high tide,  
clatter of beach stones rolled by waves.

\*

Some days my mind is like  
a gull hanging onto  
a sandwich too big  
to swallow, beak clamped  
on the monstrous bite  
as it runs from other gulls  
so as not to share.

\*

Maybe we make our own luck.

\*

My mouth is an empty birdcage, a tunnel  
of hunger. My mouth does its own  
dirty work. My mouth has a hard time  
wrapping itself around No. My mouth  
is a repository for memory. My mouth can  
take down your mouth. It makes its own  
weather. My mouth is a cave of joy.

\*Couplet from the poem "From the Japanese" by Louise Gluck.

## *Allen Ashley*

### **Bobcat**

You had the magic early on  
taking the baton from King Woody  
as he lay in his hospital bed,  
then marching with Martin  
and cooing and crooning  
with Joanie.

Thousands of miles from home  
you turned electric  
and they called you “Judas”.  
You drowned them with your majestic  
words and cross-cultural  
sounds. Again and again.

Genius, innovator, inspiration –  
many others echoed  
or paid homage to your call.  
Jimi turned your Biblical words  
into a rage against the killing machine  
of the Vietnam War.

You lost your magic  
at some point when  
the endless touring  
fractured your voice  
into little more than  
speech patterns like spat  
out cuss words.

Refusing the guitar,  
standing behind a keyboard  
as if you’re just another member  
of the band.

Rearranging your love ballads  
and your calls to arms  
so that even the devotees  
take half a song to recognise  
the song they sort of recognise.

But you’re not just another member

of the band.

The burden of history becomes,  
in another light,  
a mountain of creativity.  
Answers carried on the wind  
if only we continue  
to listen.

## *Kersten Christianson*

### **Not Harry Houdini**

but my Washington forester father could alter  
ecology, topple grandmother forests to soil,  
boil down the bones of old growth stands  
to dust, forge lumber, plywood and pulp.

In tin pants, hard hat and calks, he could trek  
into the weald, spot a cull in a stand, sense  
its heartwood beat before the cut. He taught me  
to count tree rings, to assign an age to living.

He couldn't revert milled Wahkiakum County  
lumber back into natural timberland (Doug  
fir, red cedar, Sitka spruce, western hemlock),  
but he knew the value of a wildwood's marrow,

its cycle of growth, mortality, and cultivation.  
He once showed me the magic trick of chasing  
ground pepper on a water's surface into a pie  
plate's rim with a dab of dish soap on the tip

of a wooden toothpick, tiny lumber. Sometimes  
a star, others a mandala. He showed me the parlor  
trick of education, the difference between a logger  
and a forester. He showed me how to escape north.

*Meg Freer*

**Greenhouse**



## *Kyle Singh*

### **A New Fawn**

In its first year, it was laid to rest  
The earth blessed it with its final ritual

Rights granted by the angels of the underground—  
millipede, woodlice, fungi, all ready to greet her  
to return her into dust borrowed from the sky,  
a trail of light, and the arched valley of water.

On her spots still filled with heat were patterns of shadow—  
The mystery of loss

I walked to her to place one hand on her mane  
Where the foxes had laid their prey around her  
My other hand on the fallen trunk of an oak  
That took some 400 years to fall  
I felt the pulse on my hand still alive

Small white flowers rose tall in the grove ahead—  
A new fawn

In its first year, it was lifted from slumber  
The earth blessed it with its final ritual

## *Shari Lawrence Pfleeger*

### **Hope Deferred**

“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.”  
Proverbs 13:12

**Hope**, that thing with feathers, doesn't stop. Our **deferred** dreams may dry like raisins, but hope **makes** aspiration and yearning moist. In **the** mystical night air, the lopsided **heart**, thick clutch of muscle, is mute, silent, **sick** and does not call out, “I want, I want.” **But** then a stranger's voice echoes, rising **when** close. It is your own tongue. Unlatch from **the** hurricane, turn toward your dreams, unlock **desire**. Never independent, desire **comes** from who you are. who you want to be. **It is** on this bridge between starshine and clay, **A tree** explodes with fruit every new spring **of life**: Come taste what the world has to offer.

\*With gratitude to Langston Hughes, Walt Whitman, Rita Dove, Lucille Clifton and Camille Dungy.

*Kersten Christianson*

**Raven Fluffed**



## *GTimothy Gordon*

### **Under Stars**

I keep forgetting how it is under stars,  
except on off-nights standing beneath pitch-black  
long before dawn, forgetting how to know them,  
just hoarding memory, child wonder, unlettered joy,  
their faint candlelit canopy comforting bobcat,  
coyote, foxfire desert, Grace Village deathbed infirm,  
homebound and homeless, convict and freeman,  
even me, how I felt as a kid on peppery-hot,  
starlit summer nights when a cool fresh breath  
flowed through me before I deserved its care  
or comfort, before feeling uncommon light  
in darkness, what's left to deathless Daystar  
to dream by.

## *Anne Whitehouse*

### **Lost and Found**

The lost jewelry turned up  
cradled in a seashell  
on my dresser  
along with paper clips,  
a state quarter,  
and a push pin.

At first I thought  
its delicate silver dangles  
were the mangled ends  
of a paper clip  
and I almost tossed it.

When I realized  
I held my earring's  
missing twin  
that twice, months apart,  
I'd turned the blue case  
inside out for  
and never found,  
I felt a surge  
of pure happiness  
for the restored set:  
no burden at all  
on fragile earlobes,  
my lovely, loopy,  
frail fronds of silver  
swinging between  
soft hair, smooth skin.

## *Damon Hubbs*

### **The Toy Chest**

This much we know is true

or so the story goes  
that when the fairy-wand turned up  
it wasn't cloaked in the watchful eye of an owl-faced tree  
deep in the Hercynian forest,  
or hidden in the heart of a fox-earth  
scattered with five-petaled lilacs  
and freshly churned butter.

It hadn't been lost like a set of spare keys  
under the doormat of a Highland brownie stone,  
beside an offering of milk and bread

nor did the woman on the Red Line  
mistake it for an umbrella and tuck it under her wing  
on a rainy day in Boston.

It wasn't discovered in a bouquet of Arum lilies  
by a local nurseryman fearful of harbingers,  
or threaded into a garland of milkmaid flowers  
or traded for a bracelet with a silver bird clasp.

When it was found, at last, the fairy-wand  
had been cast aside, waywardly  
buried at the bottom of an old toy chest  
amongst a bestiary of once-familiar animals,  
wooden blocks, broken teacups, an old rag doll  
with red thread tied around its throat,  
and a white horse, its mane unfurling like a gilded tapestry,  
searching for its spiral horn.

# **Ridiculous Rituals: Reasons, Rules, and a Rationale**

**By**

*Wendy K. Mages*

I look up. My niece, Nora, is coming down the stairs wearing her pajamas inside-out and backwards. Nora's in middle school. I'm staying with her while her parents are out of town.

“What's with the pajamas?” I ask.

“If we wear our pajamas inside out and backwards, it'll snow and, when we wake up the next morning, we'll have a snow day.”

“Really?” I ask with more than a bit of sarcasm.

“All my friends are doing it.”

It seems, according to her friends, and the Internet, you can also increase the probability of a snow day if you sleep with a spoon under your pillow, run around the dining room table five times before you go to sleep, or flush an ice cube down the toilet. Who knew? Nora and her friends diligently perform these ridiculous rituals (typically the night before a big test). Perhaps I'm a skeptic, but I'm not surprised that they have yet to see a snow day.

A few days later, I'm on campus sitting in my office preparing for the two grad school classes I have to teach that evening, when the phone rings. The nurse at Nora's school tells me Nora's sick and needs to be picked up. I feel a rising sense of panic, unsure if I will have time to get Nora home and return to campus to teach my classes.

I do a quick calculation and, if all goes well, I can pick her up at school, drop her off at home, and still make it back in time to teach, which means I don't have to cancel class. I'm a recent hire. As a new faculty member, I'm not sure about all of the protocols and forms for canceling a class and notifying students. I do know, however, that my boss will not be pleased if I have to cancel class at the last minute and he'll be particularly peeved if students complain about the lack of advanced notice. Everyone is always giving lip service to the myth of work-life balance, but the “requests” of a demanding boss—and the unspoken threat of losing your job—put a thumb on that mythological scale. Typically, I work long hours and take on projects that leave little time for the “life” part of the equation. But this is different. Nora needs me and I need to be there for her.

Once I get her home, I can count on a friend to come over and take care of her until I get back from class. Nonetheless, I'm conflicted. It just doesn't feel right to abandon Nora and leave her with someone else when she's sick and may need me. And what if her condition worsens while I'm heading back to work or while I'm in class? I realize if I want this “rescue mission” to succeed, I have no time to contemplate all of the “what ifs”; I have to get on the road as quickly as possible.

Although I'm in a hurry, skipping a pit stop before hitting the road is not an option. I dash down the hall to the ladies room. As luck would have it, the toilet won't flush! Then the water in the sink barely dribbles out. It's clear something's broken, but I have a sick kid to worry about. I use a paper towel to remove the soap residue still on my hands and run back to my office, grab my coat, and head for the elevator.

Suddenly, a loud alarm squawks twice. Then, over an intercom I didn't even know we had, a disembodied voice announces, "There has been a water main break. There has been a water main break."

As the voice on the intercom reverberates down the hall, the alarm squawks again and the message repeats. I understand the words echoing in the halls, but what exactly does the message mean? We all know what to do when there's a fire, but what are you supposed to do when there's a water main break?

As I pass security on my way to the front door, I mention the problem with the bathroom (which I'm now starting to realize is probably related to the water main break), and ask, "What are we supposed to do about the water main break? Do we need to evacuate the building, like when there's a fire alarm?"

"At this point, we just sit tight. If they can fix the break, we do nothing. If they can't fix it, we may have to close the building and cancel evening classes."

"What are the chances classes will be canceled?"

"Don't know yet. We're waiting to hear how long it'll take to fix the water main. I guess it depends on how bad the break is."

Perhaps he reads the concern on my face, because he hands me his direct dial number on a sticky note. "Feel free to call for updates," he says, offering a sympathetic smile. I take the sticky note and head out to my car.

When I arrive at Nora's school, I'm told I have to wait for the nurse to bring her downstairs. I quickly pull out my phone and call the number on the sticky note.

"We're still waiting," he tells me.

When Nora arrives, pale and a looking a bit green, we get into my car and head home. On the way, I tell her about the water main break and that I'm hoping classes will be cancelled, so I can stay home to make sure she's okay. We realize at this moment, we don't need a snow day; we need a water-main-break day. Unfortunately, we don't know any water-main-break rituals. But we're resourceful.

We begin to review the snow-day rituals. Most involve doing something before you go to sleep, wearing something to sleep, or sleeping with something under your pillow. We have no time for

sleep. But the “ice-cube-in-the-toilet” ritual seems strangely apropos. After all, the water main break prevented the toilet from flushing. But I’m a practical person, and a bit of a skeptic. So, when we get home, I don’t head to the freezer for an ice cube. Instead, I call the security desk for an update.

“Still waiting,” he tells me.

Despite or perhaps because of her queasiness, Nora wants to try the ritual.

“Why not?” I say smiling wryly. “What do we have to lose?”

Nora, with a sudden burst of energy, rushes to get the ice cube from the freezer and we head upstairs to the bathroom giggling as we go. It seems less than ceremonial to simply drop the ice cube in the toilet and flush. We decide we need a few magic words, just to make sure there’s no confusion about whether we want a snow day or a water-main-break day. We come up with some impromptu abracadabra wishing-words, solemnly drop the ice cube into the toilet, and flush. For a brief moment we believe in the magic of incantations, in frog princes, unicorns, and fairy queens. We look at each other, standing like sentries gazing into the depths of an enchanted cistern. Again we giggle. The sound resonates on the hard surfaces. The glossy ceramic tile and porcelain toilet bowl amplify our laughter, the vibrations magnifying our hopes, apprehensions, and wildly fanciful expectations. We head back downstairs.

Even before I reach the bottom of the staircase, I catch sight of the clock. Like Cinderella at the ball, the late hour abruptly heralds of the constraints of my circumstances. With each strike of the clock, hope fades, just as Cinderella’s enchanted coach and all of her finery vanish at the stroke of midnight. I take a deep breath to calm my worries and again begin to calculate. To make it back to campus in late-afternoon traffic, I’ll have to leave within the next 3 minutes. As I place my coat and purse by the door, so I can leave as soon as our friend arrives to care for Nora, I notice the sticky note stuck to the cuff of my coat. I pull it off and decide to call the security desk one last time before heading out.

Much to the dismay of many school children, it turns out that the ice-cube-in-the-toilet ritual may not pass the tried-and-true test, if you need a snow day. But, if someday you happen to have a health emergency and a water-main break on the same afternoon, Nora and I can attest, it works like a charm.

*Meg Freer*

**Neon Orange Cat**



## *Ursula O'Reilly*

### **Magic Found**

I found a golden coin one day,  
Where no one ever goes.  
Down in the wood, the fairy wood,  
Beneath a silver moon.  
I gazed upon my treasure,  
Foretold of good luck.  
Turned for home enchanted,  
At magic I had found.

That night I dreamed of fairy folk,  
Of goblins, and of elves.  
Down in the wood, the fairy wood,  
all dancing in a round.  
They sang of magic found and lost,  
Lost and found again.  
I held onto my golden coin,  
And danced along with them.

## *Meekha Roper*

### **The Night**

The night has deep undertones; layers of satin; velvety dark-chocolatey lushness that calls for a devouring. A deep yearning stirs within her; the night beckons the deepest shadows of unbidden desires. An echoless silence fills her lungs, as breathless she waits. Her heart no longer a functional organ, instead a mosaic of butterflies; she is poised. On the brink of an illusory, momentous moment of profound, irrevocable change. The night was decadent tonight, deeper than the ocean black; but then, so was she. Unfurled, she was endless petals of a fragrant rose.

*Anne Whitehouse*

**Dancing in Water**

*for Eiko and Koma*

A frame of driftwood  
in the current's ebb and flow—  
clinging to the frame,  
the dancers, stiff as driftwood,  
curve slowly into stones  
while water runs over  
their stilled forms.

In time they come alive,  
are rippling reeds,  
swaying stem and buried root,  
variously wind, tree,  
flower, naked breath  
that swells behind  
the push to give birth.

The dancers are in the river,  
the dance is in the river,  
the dance is the river.

From outside in I found this story:  
she almost died,  
and he brought her back to life.

Dried leaves, discarded and scattered—  
let them go; new ones will grow.  
A cricket perched on a twig,  
graceful and humorous  
at the close.

*Carl Scharwath*

**Dreaming**



## *Fabrice Poussin*

### **Communion**

Silence of winter skies upon a furnace  
alone on the edge of ultimate danger  
the universe their only companion  
invades their pores to the depth of souls.

The old crater spreads to the horizon  
infamous caldera with the power of meteors  
all is quiet within the brisk air  
eyes closed they extend their arms in an embrace.

They may be destroyed in this moment  
as they commune with the infinite  
free from the crowds' expected images  
all burdens of a world below vanished.

It is a peaceful hour long as eternity  
inside this imagined timeless realm  
tomorrow they too will be gone  
smiling among the snowy peaks.

## *Ethan Blakley*

### **The Lay of the Fisherman**

An image: a house above the sea.  
Not so grand as anything, but in  
it lived a fisherman  
who had only two possessions: a boat,  
and a finely cared for violin  
passed down from his father;

as it had been for generations, father  
to son, again and again, in cottage above the sea.  
And at each new handler of the violin,  
a story of ancient magics that lied within  
the music— designed to calm the sea; a boat  
to reach its heart; and the skills of a fisherman

to play. So the life of a fisherman  
was taught to each son by his father:  
to master the craft of boat  
and water; become master of the sea,  
“For she is a wily one”. And in  
each lesson, a bit about the violin.

As it is, to play the violin,  
one must have a gentle touch that fishermen  
so rarely ever own. For in  
all the years of learning from his father  
how to tame the sea,  
his hands became roughened, more fitting for boat,

and rope, and sail. But as it were, the boat  
became his craft, as well as violin,  
and he, a rare musician who played upon the sea  
the music of the fisherman.  
It was a lively tune his father  
used to play. Of course, in

Nature, storms arise in

time. And seeing roiling sea below, he took his boat  
out on the waves, prepared, as his father  
was before, with only a violin  
against the raging storm. Fisherman,  
he plays his song; attempts to calm the sea.

## *Psycho Kanev*

### **The World & Mirror**

They say that before entering a river  
to bathe, the poet Ikkyu collected  
all the lice from his head and put them on  
a rock on the shore so that they do not drown.

\* \* \*

The sun shines angrily, the tit sings,  
in the distance blue clouds glide  
over the green mountain.  
The world happens in spite of the world.

\* \* \*

The clouds rise in a cloudless sky.  
Calmness and clarity,  
time is barely audible  
on the edge of the horizon.  
Who winds the clock of the world?  
There are things you shouldn't think about,  
nor to speak of.  
Light has never been a metaphor.

\* \* \*

The agony of the devoured animal,  
Shopenhauer said, is always far greater  
than the pleasure of the devourer.

\* \* \*

Novel—

A cigarette which, once lit,  
sighs

\* \* \*

Between the heart of a newborn  
and the heart of a dying man,  
there is a huge empty space

that must be filled with a pulse.

\* \* \*

At the end of the day  
the unused hours go to the trash bin  
and someone whose time is coming  
to an end  
finds them and uses them to survive  
until the next day.

*Carl Scharwath*

**Panacea**



*Adrienne Stevenson and Marie-Andree Auclair*

**Skipping Stones**

You lie on a sandy beach: the sand is sun-warm  
pricks your skin with finely ground glass specks  
that the lake has not yet licked smooth  
while worn-flat pebbles remember the granite mountain  
that looms over your lonely shore.

Our smooth stones, each fitting the heart of our palms  
trace low arcs above the water  
touch and rebound until their energy is spent.  
Then one of us sacrifices the next stone  
to the god of placid waters.

You sit, arms akimbo, fingers idle, attentive  
to clouds and birds, the patterns of flight  
and wind, the peaceful motion of branches and leaves  
that draws you to its breath, to yours  
and you feel yourself taking root like grass and trees.

That is what we do, throw our poems on the page  
of a common lake, what sinks quickly is culled  
what uncoils its energy in many rebounds stays,  
a blended poem for our venture, another bird in the sky.

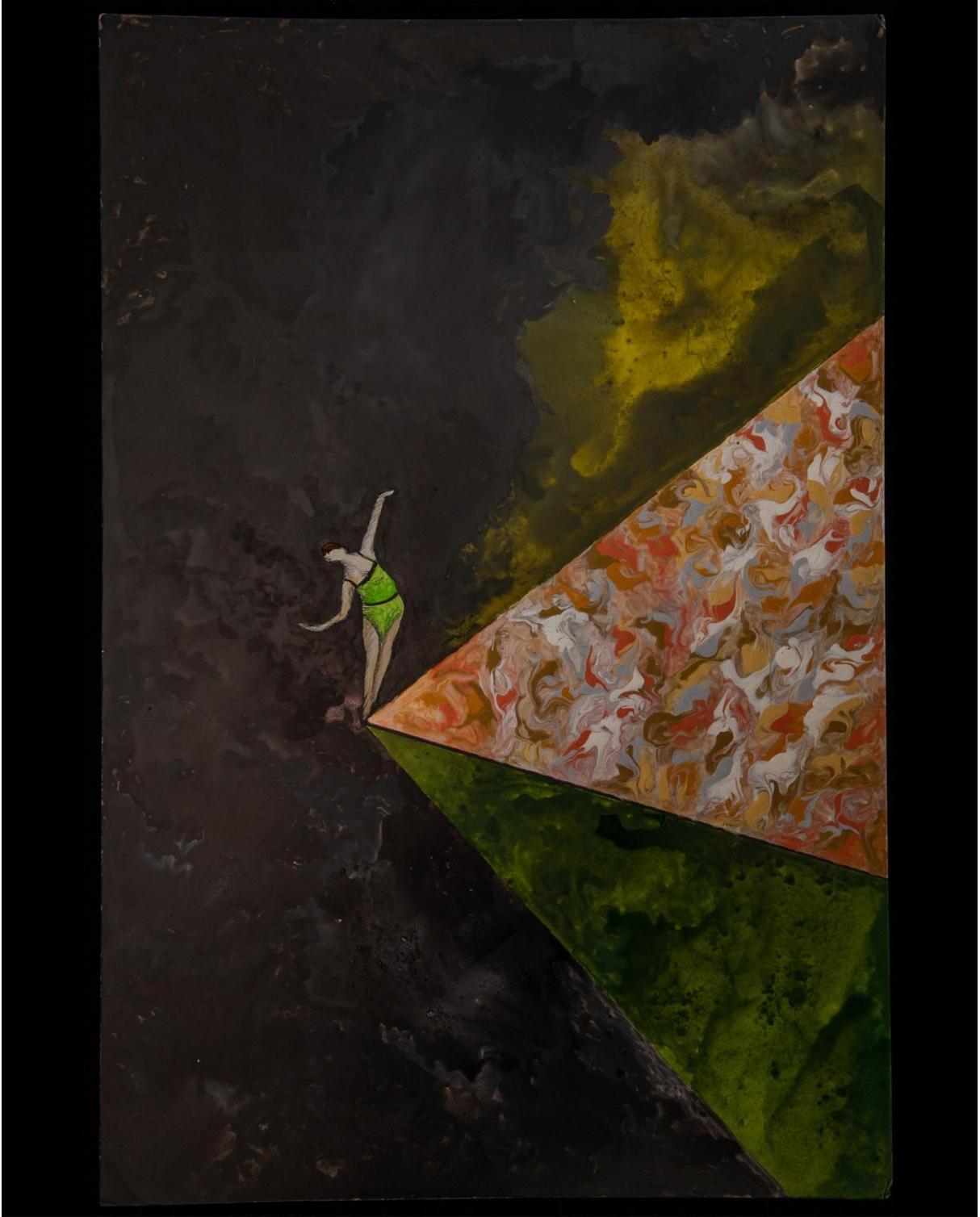
*Lynn White*

**Raindrops**

Just a raindrop  
falling,  
falling,  
falling into wetness.  
You see it falling,  
a silvery teardrop  
splatters  
into a defusing circle  
then disappears  
into wetness,  
becomes invisible  
as if by magic.

**Richard Hanus**

**5-1**



## ***Contributor Biographies***

### **Allen Ashley**

Allen Ashley is the founder of the advanced science fiction and fantasy group Clockhouse London Writers. His work has recently been published in the anthologies “No More Heroes” (PS Publishing, 2021), “Infectious Hope” (IFWG, 2021) and “Vital Signals” (NewCon Press, 2022) as well as online at “Sein und Werden,” “Mono,” and “the World of Myth.”

[www.allenashley.com](http://www.allenashley.com)

### **Hamad Al-Rayes**

Hamad Al-Rayes is a writer and translator from Bahrain, currently residing in New Orleans. His research, short stories, and poems have been published in a number of Arabic and English imprints, including *ANTIGRAVITY* (forthcoming), *Mizna*, *Translation Review*, and *Michigan Quarterly Review*. He is currently co-editing a special issue of *Middle East Literatures*, focused on modern Arabic poetry.

### **Marie-Andree Auclair and Adrienne Stevenson**

Marie-Andree Auclair and Adrienne Stevenson are Ottawa, Canada poets/writers who met ten years ago at workshops run by the Ottawa Public Library. Since then, they are been supporting each other’s writing and meeting regularly other poets. Both are extensively published, in Canada, the USA, UK, Europe and Australia. Adrienne won first and third place in the *Poets’ Pathway: Lampman Challenge* in 2018. *In/Words* published Marie-Andree’s first chapbook “Contrails.” Besides their active interest in gardening (Adrienne) and traveling (Marie-Andree), they have been procrastinating playing the flute and the piano. Writing collaboratively was a great experience.

### **Ethan Blakley**

Ethan Blakley is a fourth-year student at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Oklahoma. He is undertaking a B.A in Interdisciplinary Studies with focuses on English, Education, and History and expects to graduate this May. Afterwards, he intends to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing—but not before taking some time for himself. His work has previously been published in the *Westview Journal* of Western Oklahoma.

### **Kersten Christianson**

Kersten Christianson is a poet and English teacher from Sitka, Alaska. She is the author of *Curating the House of Nostalgia* (Sheila-Na-Gig, 2020), *What Caught Raven’s Eye* (Petroglyph Press, 2018), and *Something Yet to Be Named* (Kelsay Books, 2017). She is also the poetry editor for *Alaska Women Speak*. Kersten enjoys road trips, bookstores, and smooth ink pens.

### **Kate Falvey**

Kate Falvey's work has been published in many journals and anthologies; in a full-length collection, *The Language of Little Girls* (David Robert Books); and in two chapbooks, *What the*

*Sea Washes Up* (Dancing Girl Press) and *Morning Constitutional in Sunhat and Bolero* (Green Fuse Poetic Arts). She co-founded (with Monique Ferrell) and edited the *2 Bridges Review*, published through City Tech (City University of New York) where she teaches, and is an associate editor for the *Bellevue Literary Review*.

### **Michael Keshigian**

Michael Keshigian is the author of 14 poetry collections his latest, *What To Do With Intangibles*, published by Cyberwit.net. Most recent poems have appeared in *Muddy River Review*, *Bluepepper*, *Smoky Quartz*, *San Pedro River Review*, and *Tipton Poetry Journal*. Published in numerous national and international journals, he has appeared as feature writer in twenty publications with 7 Pushcart Prize and 2 Best Of The Net nominations.

### **Meg Freer**

Meg Freer grew up in Montana and lives in Ontario, where she works as an editor and teaches piano. She has co-authored a chapbook, *Serve the Sorrowing World with Joy* (Woodpecker Lane Press, 2020). Her photos, poetry and prose have been published in anthologies and journals such as *The Sunlight Press*, *Young Ravens Literary Review*, *Eastern Iowa Review*, *Sequestrum* and *Ruminate*.

### **GTimothy Gordon**

*DREAM WIND* was published 2020 (Spirit-of-the-Ram P), while *EVERYTHING SPEAKING CHINESE* received RIVERSTONE P (AZ) Poetry Prize. Work has appeared in *AGNI*, *American Literary R*, *Cincinnati PR*, *Kansas Q*, *Louisville R*, *Mississippi R*, *New York Q*, *Phoebe*, *RHINO*, *Sonora R*, *Texas Observer*, among others. Recognitions include NEA & NEH Fellowships, residencies, & three Pushcart nominations. *EMPTY HEAVEN/EMPTY EARTH*, will be published 2022. Gordon divides lives between Eurasia and the deep shadows of the Desert Southwest Organ Mountains.

### **Johanna Haas**

Johanna Haas lives in a small cottage somewhere in the sweaty middle of the United States. Three lazy lions guard her. A garden of verdant weeds, that she attempts to control, surrounds the home. She used to be a university professor who taught environmental studies. But she broke, and now writes from home. She has had fiction published in *Bewildering Stories*, and has short work to be anthologized in *42 Words* and *Where the Wind Blows*.

### **Richard Hanus**

Had four kids but now just three. Zen and Love.

### **Damon Hubbs**

Damon Hubbs lives in a small town in Massachusetts. He graduated with a BA in World Literature from Bradford College. When not writing, Damon can be found growing microgreens, divining the flight pattern of birds, and ambling the beaches and forests of New England with his

wife and two children. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Book of Matches*, *The Chamber Magazine*, and *Eunoia Review*.

### **Peycho Kanev**

Peycho Kanev is the author of 10 poetry collections and three chapbooks, published in the USA and Europe. His poems have appeared in many literary magazines, such as: *Rattle*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Evergreen Review*, *Front Porch Review*, *Hawaii Review*, *Barrow Street*, *Sheepshead Review*, *Off the Coast*, *The Adirondack Review*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *The Cleveland Review* and many others. His new book of poetry titled *A Fake Memoir* was published in 2022 by Cyberwit.

### **Wendy K. Mages**

Wendy K. Mages, a Professor at Mercy College, is a storyteller and educator who earned a master's and a doctoral degree in Human Development and Psychology at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a master's degree in Theatre at Northwestern University. Her research focuses on the effect of the arts on learning and development. As a compliment to her research, she performs original stories at storytelling events and festivals in the United States and abroad. Some of her stories appear in *The Journal of Stories in Science* and *Potato Soup Journal*. A triptych of her poems appears in *Scenario*.

### **Marie-Elizabeth Mali**

As a Relationship Alchemist and TEDx Speaker, Marie-Elizabeth Mali shows individuals and couples how to deepen love and connection in their relationships. Drawing on her Master's degree in Chinese Medicine and over 20 years of client work, she teaches people how to be authentic instead of shrinking themselves to fit in. She also has an MFA in poetry from Sarah Lawrence College and is the author of one book of poetry, *Steady, My Gaze* (Tebot Bach, 2011) and co-editor with Annie Finch of the anthology, *Villanelles* (Everyman's Library Pocket Poets, 2012). Her relationship work has been featured in Thrive Global, SWAAY, and *Forbes* and her poems have appeared in *Poet Lore*, *RATTLE*, and *Tiferet*.

### **Sharon Wright Mitchell**

Sharon Wright Mitchell is a neurodivergent teacher, and poet. She has been published in *Independent Variable*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, and *The Wild Word*, among others. She is a Georgia native, where she enjoys hiking the Appalachian foothills. For poetry and adventures, follow her on Instagram: @apoetseyeview

### **Cameron Morse**

Cameron Morse is Senior Reviews editor at *Harbor Review* and the author of eight collections of poetry. His first collection, *Fall Risk*, won Glass Lyre Press's 2018 Best Book Award. His latest is *The Thing Is* (Briar Creek Press, 2021). He holds an MFA from the University of Kansas City-Missouri and lives in Independence, Missouri, with his wife Lili and (soon, three) children. For more information, check out his [Facebook page](#) or [website](#).

### **Ursula O'Reilly**

Ursula O'Reilly lives in County Cavan, Ireland, and enjoys writing poetry and fiction. Her other interests include painting, and reading. Ursula has had her work published online and in numerous magazines including *Poetry Plus magazine*, *Lothlorien Poetry Journal*, *Otherwise Engaged Literature and Arts Journal*, *Woman's Way magazine*, *Vita Brevis Poetry Press*, and by *Earlyworks Press*.

### **Shari Lawrence Pfleeger**

Shari Lawrence Pfleeger's poems reflect both natural and constructed worlds, often describing interactions with family and friends. Her essays on poetry appear regularly in *Blue House Journal*, and her poems have been published in *District Lines*, *Thimble Literary*, *Blue House Journal*, *Green Light* and *Paper Dragon*, and in four anthologies of Yorkshire poetry. Her prize-winning collection of Yorkshire sonnets was launched in Britain 2021 at the Fourth Ripon Poetry Festival. Shari is on the board of Alice James Books ([alicejamesbooks.org](http://alicejamesbooks.org)), a press committed to producing, promoting, and distributing poetry that engages the public on important social issues. She lives, writes and rides her bicycle in Washington, DC.

### **Fabrice Poussin**

Fabrice Poussin teaches French and English at Shorter University. Author of novels and poetry, his work has appeared in *Kestrel*, *Symposium*, *The Chimes*, and many other magazines. His photography has been published in *The Front Porch Review*, the *San Pedro River Review* as well as other publications.

### **Daniel A. Rabuzzi**

Daniel A. Rabuzzi has had two novels, five short stories and ten poems published since 2006 (see [www.danielarabuzzi.com](http://www.danielarabuzzi.com)). He lived eight years in Norway, Germany and France. He has degrees in the study of folklore and mythology, international relations, and modern European history. He lives in New York City with his artistic partner & spouse, the woodcarver Deborah A. Mills (<http://www.deborahmillswoodcarving.com>), and the requisite cat.

### **Jared Rich**

Jared Rich is an amateur poet and landscape photographer with a minimal and moody style, he's had works featured in the *Eunoia Review*, *Free Lit Magazine*, the *Covidiums Haiku Collection*, as well as a collaborative anthology titled *Offerings* with co-authors Beth Greene and Jack Freedman.

### **Meekha Roper**

Meekha is an amateur poet, a new wife and step mother to three beautiful girls. She thrives in chaos, loves deeply and uses writing as her one and only lifeline and escape. She works as a business analyst and takes pride in her 9 to 5 desk job. Despite her outward show of confidence, it has taken a lot for her to submit one of her poems to an external publication. Fearful of rejection; doubtful of acceptance this submission is an act of courage.

### **Carl Scharwath**

Carl Scharwath has appeared globally with 70+ journals selecting his photography or art. Carl has published three poetry books and his latest book *Playground of Destiny* features poetry, short stories and photography (Impspired Press) He also has two photography books published by Praxis in Africa. His photography was exhibited in the Mount Dora Center for The Arts and The Leesburg Center for the Arts galleries. Carl was the art editor for *Minute Magazine* (4 years). He is a competitive runner, and a 2nd degree black-belt in Taekwondo.

### **Kyle Singh**

Kyle Singh is a graduate student at Dartmouth College studying creative writing. He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and currently resides in Hanover, New Hampshire.

### **Mitchell Untch**

Mitchell Untch is an emerging writer. Partial publications include *Beloit Poetry Journal; Poet Lore; North American Review; Confrontation; Nimrod Intl; Natural Bridge; Owen Wister; Solo Novo; Knockout: Baltimore Review; Lake Effect; The Catamaran Reader; Grey Sparrow; Illuminations; Tusculum Review; Telluride Institute, West Trade Review, among others.* Two Time Pushcart Nominee.

### **Tricia Lloyd Waller**

Tricia Lloyd Waller loves story and volunteers with early years readers at her local library. She has recently had work published in *The World of Myth, Little Lilac Press* and *The Poet*.

### **Lynn White**

Lynn White lives in north Wales. Her work is influenced by issues of social justice and events, places and people she has known or imagined. She is especially interested in exploring the boundaries of dream, fantasy and reality. She was shortlisted in the Theatre Cloud 'War Poetry for Today' competition and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and a Rhysling Award. Her poetry has appeared in many publications including: Apogee, Firewords, Capsule Stories, Gyroscope Review and So It Goes. Find Lynn at:

<https://lynnwhitepoetry.blogspot.com> <https://www.facebook.com/Lynn-White-Poetry-1603675983213077/>

### **Anne Whitehouse**

Anne Whitehouse's poetry collections include [\*Blessings and Curses\*](#), [\*The Refrain\*](#), [\*Meteor Shower\*](#), and, most recently, [\*Outside from the Inside\*](#) (Dos Madres Press, 2020). Ethel Zine and Micro Press published [\*Surrealist Muse\*](#), her poem about Leonora Carrington, last year, and, recently, her poem, [\*Escaping Lee Miller\*](#), as hand-stitched chapbooks. She is also the author of a novel, *Fall Love*, and has been publishing essays about [\*Edgar Allan Poe\*](#).

**Cynthia Yatchman**

Cynthia Yatchman is a Seattle based artist and art instructor, she works primarily on paintings, prints and collages. Her art is housed in numerous public and private collections and has been shown national and extensively in the Northwest, including shows at Seattle University, Seattle Pacific University, Shoreline Community College, the Tacoma and Seattle Convention Centers and the Pacific Science Center. She is a member of the Seattle Print Art Association and COCA (Center of Contemporary Art).