

Young Ravens Literary Review



Issue 3



Young Ravens Literary Review

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Editorial Staff:

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Elizabeth Pinborough

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Table of Contents

Cover art "Space Monkey" by Zephren Turner

Raven artwork by Elizabeth Pinborough

<i>Introduction</i>		5
The Earth Within	<i>Michael Keshigian</i>	6
Moon and Sunrise on upper Kintla Lake	<i>Natalie Luehr</i>	7
A Window into the Past	<i>Fern G. Z. Carr</i>	8
Fractal Webs	<i>Elizabeth Perdomo</i>	10
Eiffel Tower	<i>Anandi Wilkinson</i>	11
Rochambeau and the Mystery of Racetrack Playa	<i>Terri Glass</i>	12
A Longing	<i>Brendan Walsh</i>	15
Cold Stream	<i>Heidi Morrell</i>	16
Yearning for Spring	<i>Marianne Szlyk</i>	17
Pollen seems Sticky	<i>Rachel Bownik</i>	18
Morse Code of the Stars	<i>Dennis Trujillo</i>	19
I should have been an astronaut	<i>Dani Dymond</i>	20
Motion Sickness	<i>Sylvia Ashby</i>	21
Up they went	<i>W. Jack Savage</i>	22
In the Stars	<i>Michael Keshigian</i>	23
Holding infinity in the palm of my hand or the parable of the plum trees	<i>Krisanne Hastings Knudsen</i>	24
Paradox	<i>Dayna Patterson</i>	26
Grafting	<i>Mary Buchinger</i>	27
Pollination	<i>Rachel Bownik</i>	28
Everything and Nothing	<i>Linda M. Crate</i>	29

The Garden	<i>Nels Hanson</i>	30
Singularity	<i>Steven L. Peck</i>	31
Wake	<i>Debbie Barr</i>	32
Future Fossils	<i>Joanne Esser</i>	33
After the Apocalypse	<i>Anne Whitehouse</i>	35
The Question Remains	<i>Emily Strauss</i>	36
<i>Contributor Biographies</i>		37

Introduction

Science is the stuff of fancy and fantasy. And poetry. Poetic and scientific modes evolved alongside one another as vital ways of understanding the cosmos.

Without the imaginative daring of scientists and poets alike, humanity would remain in the dark ages. In an age lit by the fires of technology, we may be tempted to imagine ourselves a little better than ancients huddled by fires in the shadows of their great temples. Scientific knowledge has supplanted the veneration of the gods. Poseidon no longer topples ships; fluid dynamics, meteorology, and climate change affect currents and the rise and fall of seas.

Yet, poetic descriptions of the world still abound, and necessarily so. Atomic numbers, formulae, and equations; atlases, telescopes, and spacecraft; Petri dishes, microscopes, and litmus strips are inadequate to do the job of poetry, and vice versa. These twin disciplines nurture each other, each urging descriptive precision, each requiring a posture of openness, inquiry, and wonder.

In the third issue of *Young Ravens Literary Review*, enjoy the chorus of poetic voices that sing of a universe worthy of infinite attention. Herein we find humans as observers of wonder and remarkable wonders themselves. Join with us in the discovery.

Elizabeth Pinborough, Co-editor

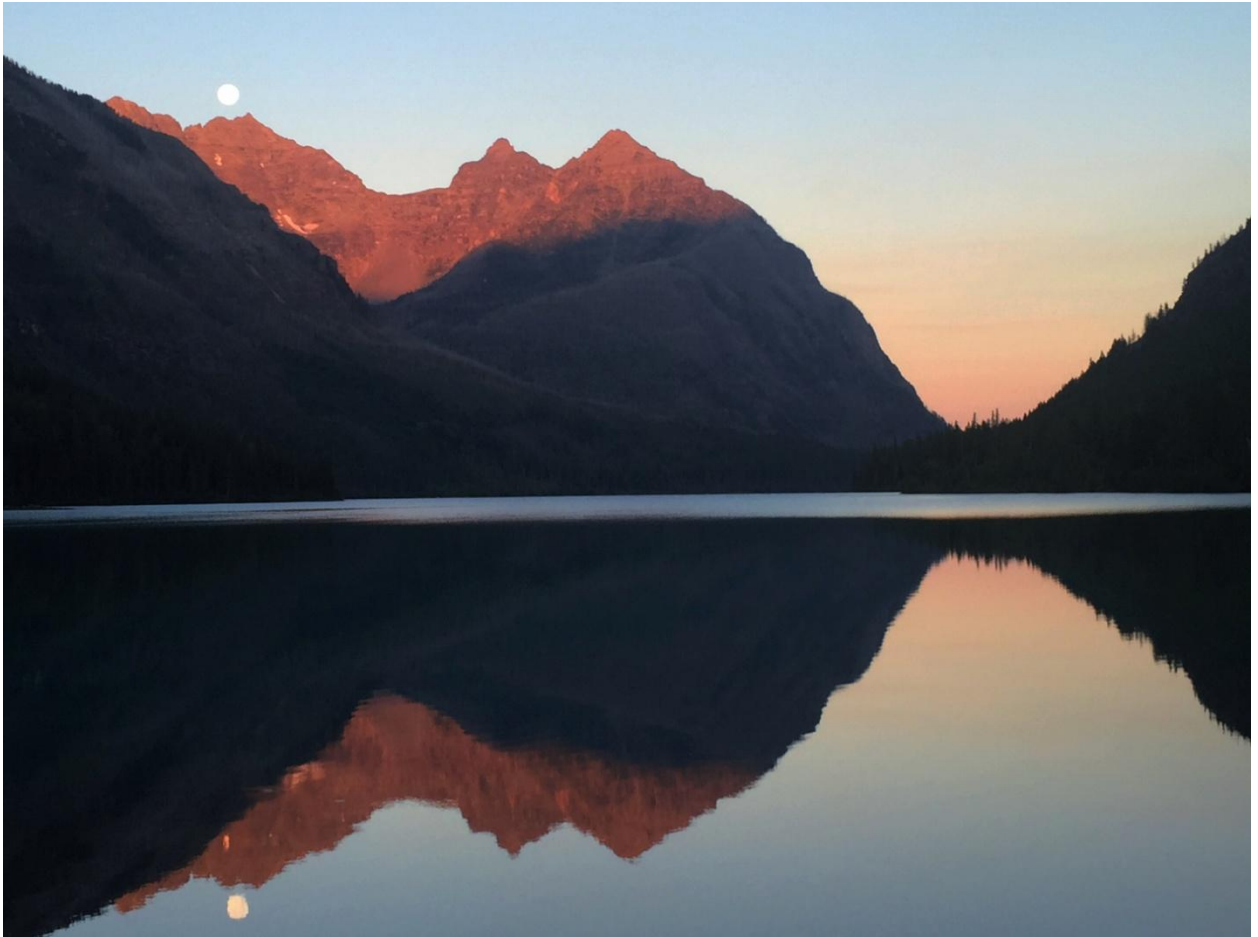
Michael Keshigian

The Earth Within

We awoke in light,
wriggling in the palm
of a muddy hand,
divided into portions
under a stone,
we were the life
that delighted the sun
as we edged toward an empty cave.
Heaven rinsed us with a sigh
and set afloat
the Earth in our veins.
Behind our eyes
loomed the ocean,
beneath our fingernails
vegetables slept,
between our toes
hovered the path of discovery,
a model universe floated
undiscovered in our brain.
The great plates trembled
and the chatter of teeth
shattered the ensuing silence,
glacial ice masses cracked
and the capillaries of vision
slid into a sea of fascination,
a body born
under sunlight, in sand,
saturated with rain,
blossomed skyward
to propagate the world.

Natalie Luehr

Moon and Sunrise on upper Kintla Lake



Fern G. Z. Carr

A Window into the Past

The universe suckles
nascent galaxies

and cradles dying stars
in its bosom

reflecting history
in its radiance –

limited
by the speed of light

celestial bodies are observed
as they appeared in the past,

their images time-delayed –
beheld as they were,

not as they are:
the Sun as it appeared

eight minutes ago,
a four-year-old portrait

of Proxima Centauri
and a snapshot

of the Andromeda Galaxy
two and a half million years ago.

The cosmos is reluctant
to reveal her innermost secrets –

light from distant galaxies

not having yet reached the Earth

despite its 13.7 billion-year
trek across space.

Elizabeth Perdomo

Fractal Webs

"This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being."

– Isaac Newton, The Principia: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy

Spider webs
Engage in precise
Fractal mathematics spun
Perfectly
By instinctive
Arachnid skill, implanted
Hidden wonders hung,
Tied between
Unsuspecting branches,
Particular self-similar repetitions
Iterated, innate stories told in
Increasing
Small
Or larger scales,
Mathematical formulas
Creating infinite artform equations,
Snowflakes, clouds, far galaxies,
Shells, ferns & hurricanes, webs
Selecting algorithm rules,
Calculating infinite detail,
Magnified without limit
In micro or macro expression,
The Thumbprint of God,
His hidden wisdom revealed
In plain sight,
In long silver strands
Blown right onto
Our unwary
Faces.

Anandi Wilkinson

Eiffel Tower



Rochambeau and the Mystery of Racetrack Playa

By

Terri Glass

Something strange is happening on Racetrack Playa, a dry and extraordinarily flat lakebed in Death Valley California. Large singular rocks sail over the clay surface of the lakebed, creating a trail that is sometimes linear, but sometimes veers off in other directions as if Zeus has been playing shufflepuck. Some of their tracks are over hundreds of feet long, and the rocks can weigh up to several hundred pounds. No one has seen the rocks in motion. Once the rocks slide in to the middle of the lakebed, they look like randomly placed chess pieces. There is no rhyme to it.

Scientists speculate that after a rain and/or a thin layer of ice develops, the surface is slippery enough for gusty winds to actually push these rocks across the desert. Rain and wind. Water and Stone. Scissor and Rock. Rock and Paper. What trumps the other? Can wind and water really move a 400-pound rock?

When I think about getting anything heavy to move like my sleep-laden body out of bed in the morning, like my mind before coffee, like asking my father for the keys to the family car when I was in high school, we are talking about a force to reckon with. We are talking about some magic formula that breaks inertia like a lightning bolt. That cracks some kind of code like when the Muse enters a writer. Words spill out on the page similar to a sliding rock that skids across a lakebed, changes direction and then abruptly stops in the middle of nowhere.

This reminds me of the game, Rochambeau, another name for "Rock paper scissors." Rock breaks scissors. Scissors cut paper. Paper covers rock. Rock slides in desert. No one there sees the event. Rock slides in the desert. We catch the aftermath. Van Gogh paints the picture *Starry Starry Night* and it sells for millions after his death. The glowing stars still mesmerize us. The rocks still bewilder us, the secret remains hidden until....

Movement begins. Something is pulled from the universe that rearranges water, air, earth and fire. A volcano erupts, spewing debris and a large rock lands in the middle of a flat field. Or glacier pushes large chunks of granite and deposits them at the end of a valley floor. Or an asteroid crashes into earth causing climate change and mass extinction of brontosaurus and pterodactyls and other unwieldy creatures.

Perhaps a stone has a life after all. Something glacial inside my mind begins to push ideas horizontally across the contours of my brain, and the Corpus callosum connects intuition with logic, and a poem mysteriously appears. Or the Muse enters my atmosphere like a meteorite and shatters any preconception of what I was planning to say. Rochambeau. Go ahead, Muse. Shatter my plans, surprise me with something as strange as those large stone heads of Easter Island.

I read *Aku, Aku, the Secret of Easter Island* when I was in high school. The author, Thor Heyerdahl, tried to explain the mystery of 887 large stone heads carved between 1250-1500 that stood upright like mini skyscrapers on this Chilean Polynesian island. These stone figures called moai were huge, some tall as 33 feet and weighing up to 86 tons. They are thought to represent living faces of deified ancestors. How were these massive stones positioned strategically along the coastline?

Heyerdahl theorized the moai were moved from the original quarry to the coastline by swiveling the statue on its corners, rocking it side to side in a walking fashion. However, when Heyerdahl attempted this experiment, it broke the edges off the statues. An archeologist named Charles Love experimented with a ten ton replica and found by placing the statue upright on two sled runners, atop log rollers, 25 men were able to move the statue 150 feet in two minutes.

The latter theory could explain why the natives stopped creating the moai. The island was almost entirely deforested by 1650, indicated by records of the disappearance of tree pollen. It took massive amounts of lumber to transport these statues. The islanders devastated the ecosystem of Easter Island and their civilization by consuming all their timber for fire, shelter and perhaps their desire to carve these monoliths and move them.

What remains on Easter Island is stone, not trees, not animals nor the original natives. Rock overrode paper and scissor here. A game that ended all games. A dead end to evolution, like the demise of the dinosaurs from a crashing asteroid.

Some rocks fly, some sail, some are carried across the land with the help of human intervention. But how *do* the rocks really move on Racetrack Playa and why do we want to know? These rocks may hold the secret to our continuation as a species, something that stretches our imaginations in a new way. "Think outside the box," these stones are telling us, which humankind must learn quickly if we are to adapt to the forces of climate change and overpopulation. Meanwhile the universe keeps throwing us clues. Whether any of us can crack the code is unpredictable as the Muse herself.

Right now I'd welcome a 90-mile an hour wind and some slippery mud to sail me into the uncharted territory of the blank page. I could use a moonscape such as Racetrack Playa to heighten my senses, implode my neural pathways just as stars implode to create supernovas. Then maybe a little genius of Van Gogh could slip in and I could embody those bold brushstrokes that halo the stars.

Brendan Walsh

A Longing

the concrete crust of cities, oblivion,
cracks and brittle-breaks outside office
windows; think of departing, think
of journeys and sky-emptiness, beaches

tip-toed by fiddler crabs dragging fist-claws
at the precipice of sand and sea, think
thunder and days dripping down corrugated
tin roofs when nothing was thought.

think

fruit trees—banana, tamarind in an Indian
village where sugar cane caramelizes,
heat-sweetens breath, apple in cool Autumn
Connecticut, cider doughnuts frying out

steel food-truck walls with wine-tasting
down the orange-leafed roadway, avocado
fenced in a Lao woman's backyard and beyond
an expanse of simmering rice paddies.

freedom

feels weightless all through the bones;
when the fish are caught, fruit foraged,
land's all a vastness unintelligible
and unimportant—a million departures.

Heidi Morrell

Cold Stream

Boulders sit in minute erosion,
knowing and unknowing,
there like the sun
without morality
but dictating behavior anyway,
season after season.

Briefly my moss intellect
hovers about these big rocks,
earnest with a
green hued nobility,
a quaint perception by my
brain
that thought it mattered
what I thought.

Different, but of the same world
these river boulders,
at best we go wading out
to sit on that big rock,
to think about not thinking.

Marianne Szlyk

Yearning for Spring

I count bright green leaves
but find their waxy shade
impossible to bear in cold.

I seek snowdrops and crocus
but only see drowned camellias
closed to weak, winter sun.

Even in Savannah it's not time
for magnolias or cherry trees.
Flowers wait in vases, inside.

Today I circle the fountain
its edges trimmed with ice,
its trim painful to touch.

Yearning for spring, I return
north to wait through winter's
snows and winds to come.

Rachel Bownik

Pollen seems Sticky



Dennis Trujillo

Morse Code of the Stars

Stars have a Morse code with which
they chronicle their existence.
Dashes and dots leap across space

with gossip of the galaxies.
They love to relate anecdotes
about their planets the way Earth parents

talk about their kids: "My third one
just started supporting life,"
or, "The one a hundred million miles

away is so stressed—I'm afraid
she's going to blow herself up."
Mostly though, they use Morse code

To recite poems of universal wisdom—
like how eternity lasts only a moment
and a moment lasts for all eternity

and how there is only one moment.

Dani Dymond

I Should Have Been an Astronaut

My freckles.
A scattered map of solar flares.
Constellations against skin,
inherited from my father's side.
Spots born into me, no doubt floating
in my veins, through my blood –
asteroids in the Milky Way.

When the world was big, I'd imagine
that gravity kept them so static,
positioned in a universal harmony.
Strong, with a dotted power
to outshine any cosmos, we thrive –
a lightened dusting of dark matter.

Sylvia Ashby

Motion Sickness

In this restless, hyperactive universe
galaxies rush to embrace, or
 keeping their distance--aloof, antisocial--
flee to some cosmic manifest destiny.

As our dizzy terrestrial top speeds non-stop
 locked in a convenient choreography,
flaring meteors expire above--
 one last theatrical gasp on a farewell tour--

while impatient magma burbles below
 waiting in the wings for a cue.
Yet deep inside, cells realign
with hectic neurons texting

their thousand Facebook friends,
all transmitting in wild abandon.
Meanwhile--way down south
 on my porch in Patagonia--

I sit, admiring this green square of garden
 neatly tucked behind a white picket fence.
I sit gently swinging to and fro
 wondering why I don't drop off-- head first--

tumbling into a vertigo void,
 spinning Pavlova-like in endless pirouettes,
 reeling, racing through space
enroute to a lonelier infinity:

marathon dancing with an elusive partner
and no impresario.

W. Jack Savage

Up They Went



Michael Keshigian

In the Stars

They suspend
like handfuls of confetti
thrown from the windows
that surround Times Square
on New Year's Eve,
clusters that never seem to move,
just shock the sky
when they suddenly appear.
Like dazed fireflies,
they twist in darkness
and blink
when their momentum abates
so we might glance
a fading streak
before their lights go out,
which is why
we lean against buildings
and always look up,
why we sneak a peek
through the moon roof
when traffic stalls our progress,
why the affluent
and the homeless stare at the sky,
because solace and hope
line the dark ceiling
and the lamps
that bring the night to life,
hide answers to the dreams
that evaporate on our pillows.

*Holding infinity in the palm of my hand
or the parable of the plum trees*

By

Krisanne Hastings Knudsen

"To see a World in a Grain of Sand,
And a Heaven in a Wildflower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour."

—William Blake

"She took of the fruit, thereof, and did eat."

—Genesis 3:6

We have two stout plum trees growing near our driveway. In the late days of summer, the heavy branches drop their fat, purple orbs onto the ground below, only to be squashed by our heedless feet or two-ton tires.

"Like tossing pearls before swine," the trees sigh.

The inelegant deaths of these plums are honored, at least, by the beautiful, blooming rorschach stains they leave behind.

And then there is that rare plum fortunate enough to avoid such a fate, plucked straight from the branch and admired.

"See," I say to Jacob, "it looks like a tiny purple globe with veins that curl along the borders of Africa and Europe."

I cradle the plum in my hand, look closely at its freckled, wine soaked skin, hold its curve in the middle of my tongue, and bite down into its bittersweet flesh. We find joy in this exchange, the plum and I. Together we have fulfilled the measure of our creations.

Here is a truth I have learned:

Every moment of our lives is a road diverging. With each breath, the universe gives us two choices: to engage with the holiness of that moment or to ignore it. Every slipping second we have on earth gifts us with beauty, truth, and transcendence if we will only choose to embrace the holy.

I don't often remember this. Actually, I rarely remember this. But when I do look toward the plum trees and hold their orchid hued offerings in my hand (instead of unceremoniously squishing them beneath my distracted feet), I am blessed with the most poignant and precious remembrance of God, an entity so merciful and full of good graces that He would embed Heaven in every mundane moment of our lives, in every mottled plum, in every poet's wildflower.

Fruit in hand, I am blessed with the knowledge that we need only to choose, and Eternity is ours.

Dayna Patterson

Paradox

How can we truly love this world —
Love it right to its iron core —
And be always preparing to leave it
At the same time?

How can we, like Maurice Sendak,
Be in love with the tree
Outside the office window
With its silver sunlit leaves
All the while letting it go,
Making space by millimeters to allow
Release?

How do we collide atoms of joy
With atoms of sorrow
To make a new beast?

There is only this — that we must.
Drink tall glasses of mirth.
Love the world,
Love it fully,
While learning slowness, decay,
Flowing into earth.

Mary Buchinger

Grafting

When I look down the rows of tiny peach trees,
six thousand slender saplings, and then back
to my pile of multicolored strips we'd scissored
from plastic bags, and the tender bud stems
wrapped in damp towels, I do not think immediately
of how this happens to me. I score the bark
to expose an oval of white woody flesh ringed
with brilliant green, knife a fresh clean gouge
from a four-inch bud branch, and smush together
the two patches like a sloppy kiss. The slashed
sap lines wrapped with thin bands against rain
and rot, held in place for the exchange of nourishment,
for the bolstering of the other, each for each,
for something greater, say an orchard—part
of a mountainside held in place against gravity,
drought, downpours, and poverty—or, just a single
hardy tree in a yard, a tree bearing edible fruit.

Rachel Bownik

Pollination



Linda M. Crate

Everything and Nothing

I am the bones
of coyotes
the howls of distant wolves
I am the silver
of the moon and the birdsong
nesting in your ears,
I am the laughter of your friends
and your foes
we're all connected by star dust
a cosmic map of veins
that cannot be severed no matter how
hard we try,
scars we try to forget
but never do
I am the fury of the ocean
the kindness of
butterflies
I am everything and nothing all at once —
so when I walk in your presence
under the conference of stars
maybe next time you
won't be so quick to dismiss me.

Nels Hanson

The Garden

What felt a continent diminishes, a dwindling
atoll as human wave crests and you remember
who sailed to that other island years ago, its portal

hinged one way, wreathed with shells, whorled
and murmuring open sea waits down a passage
dared by voyagers more numerous than living

few whose names you know. Good friends take
ship for farthest lands until your days resemble
an orphanage you share with a frightening specter

become familiar, singing alluring lullabies. Time
dissolves, blossoming pure green, and the lost seem
fortunate, finding the garden's wicket gate, your

garden's bounty glowing dust. In sleep they call
to you, palms pressing windowpane and breath
misting glass you mark with dreaming fingertip,

scrawl a pledge to citizens no longer exiles there,
fabled isle you feared above all harbors. A trace
of roses wafts leeward shore and evening hints

at morning when dusk subsides. Stars mirrored
by ocean black as sky suggest a new sun rising
on a horizon your compass won't discover here.

Steven L. Peck

Singularity

When did love first enter this physical embedding?

Which creature first lust, longing, caring	felt that mixture of that went to the
---	--

heart of being? or protoplasm	Which collection of cells first looked upon its
----------------------------------	--

beloved and felt and yearn for that	its flesh lean toward other who held its
--	---

gaze? What thing stolen as it looked	first had its breath upon another and
---	--

found something that all else faded	within so powerful away in a passion
--	---

so inward and only describes	compelling that <i>love</i> what happened in that
---------------------------------	--

fleshy breast (or on earth? In some	tentacle)? Was it <i>here</i> hominin perhaps? Or
--	--

in some ancestor of Or in some rat? Or	elephant or dolphin? parrot or raven?
---	--

Or was it first found from this galaxy	in some star far away that we call home? In some
---	---

slime-pool dweller perhaps shining into their	under a different star skin and out again in
--	---

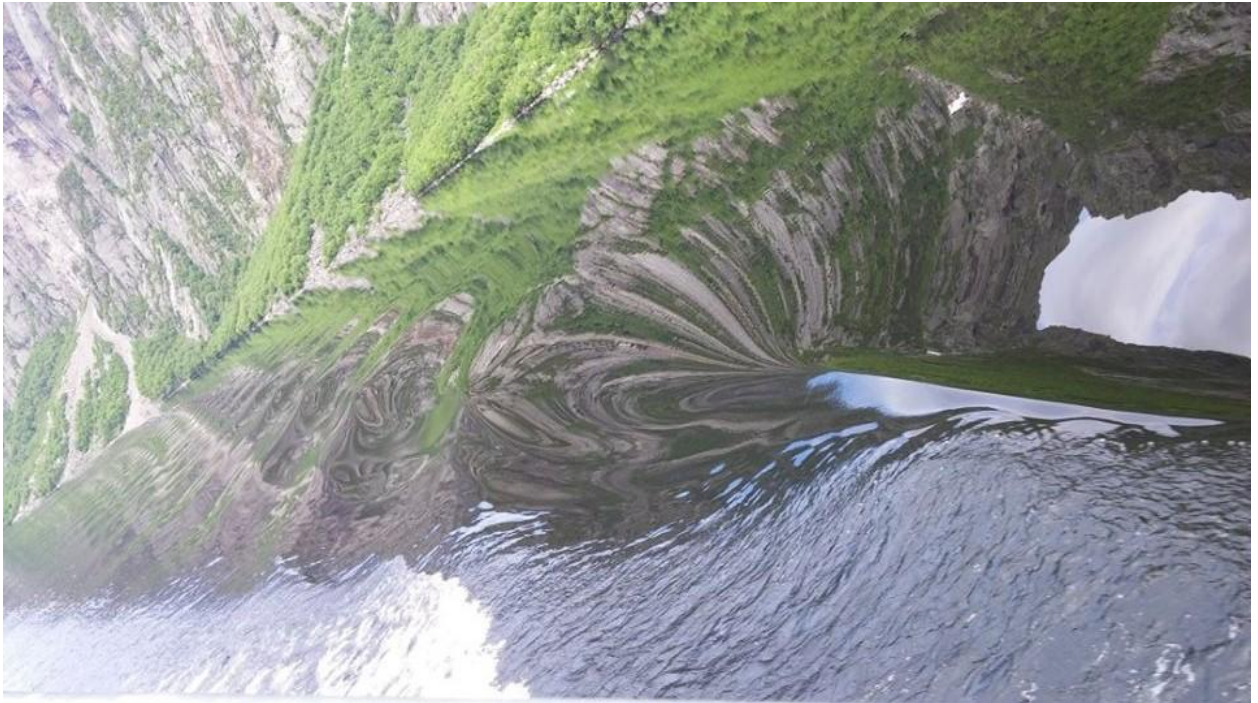
expressions of the same but in that moment	love we know? It is hard to say in that instant, everything
---	--

changed and the cold tick through the cosmos	dark things that tick tick to the rhythms of
---	---

fixed clocks yielded forever to things that slide
gracefully between the spaces of force and fixture

Debbie Barr

Wake



Joanne Esser

Future Fossils

The shape of paper, calcified
like a snail shell into rock
that they'll unearth after centuries
could be anything:
candy wrapper, marriage license,
magazine ad for a perfume or a car,
teenage song lyrics filled with angst,
Shakespeare's own notes.
They'll all be the same
in time. Our marks on the planet
just a blink in the universe's eye,
the I of it gone.

What will be the evidence of us?
When what we've made turns to stone,
when our words fade to smudges,
then to blank sheets of pulp?
What now seems indelible
will disappear, our desperate
pleas to our children, "Listen! Listen!
Remember this!" carried off
like birdsong in a windy woods.

Yet how we love it, all
this world, and how fervid
we are to tell of it
with undeniable fire,
enough to light up the sky
before it all goes black.

Even knowing of the inevitable
erasure, we can't stop
our hands from making the marks.
I will name it all

and write it again and again
even as sunset, infant, lilac and want,
purple, sour, mountain and mother
erode to alphabet fragments,
then to bits of nothing,
our fossils imprinted with
none of its beautiful heat.

Anne Whitehouse

After the Apocalypse

Back then they thought
that if the human race was doomed,
at least they'd be preserving
an archive of earthly sounds
on a gold-plated record
aboard the Voyager spacecraft,
like a message in a bottle
tossed into outer space
for extraterrestrials to discover
on the far shores of the universe
on a happier planet than ours,
these last traces of our lives:
beatings of a heart,
soft *mwah* of a mother's kiss,
sounds of wind, crashing surf
and falling rain,
footsteps and laughter,
the cry of a chimpanzee,
Bach's harmonies
and Mozart's melodies
and Chuck Berry singing
"Johnny B. Goode:"
Go go go Johnny go—
unfaded echoes
of our lost existence.

Berry, Chuck. "Go go go Johnny go." *Chuck Berry is on Top*. Chess Records, 1959. Album.

Emily Strauss

The Question Remains

The question remains:
what happened to the sky

when space was as hot as a sun
in the last moments of the Big Bang

its microwave radiation swirling,
those first faint fluctuations leading

to galaxies, with dark energy blowing
space apart, expanding the universe—

and dark matter, not atomic at all
but gravitational scaffolding—

only these parameters to describe
the Whole, and ghostly neutrinos

the accumulated mass of time-
space ripples now gravity waves

visible in faint corkscrew swirls
interstellar dust floating in cold

permanent night, the heat lost
and silence expanding at light

speed, white points the sole heirs
faint eyes glowing after midnight.

Contributor Biographies

Sylvia Ashby

Sylvia Ashby's background is in theatre, acting and writing; she's published 15 plays for family audiences--with thousands of productions. Since she started sending out poetry two years ago, dozens of her pieces have appeared in various journals: *Mezzo Cammin*, *Rhino '15*, *Constellations*, *Muddy River*, etc. Plus several anthologies.

Debbie Barr

Debbie Barr is a former children's bookseller and currently works at her local library. She loves creative pursuits of any kind, especially embroidery and baking. She is an amateur photographer and caught this photograph on a recent trip to Newfoundland she took with her husband.

Rachel Bownik

Rachel Bownik is a writer and filmmaker, currently studying screenwriting and cramming for finals. When she's not taking pictures of bugs and flowers she is making short films about artists, relationships, and ghosts. Many of these videos have had screenings in film festivals. She resides in Minnesota, writing and reading.

Mary Buchinger

Mary Buchinger is the author of *Aerialist* (Gold Wake, 2015) and *Roomful of Sparrows*, (Finishing Line, 2008). Her poems have appeared in *AGNI*, *Nimrod*, *Salamander*, *The Cortland Review*, *The Massachusetts Review*, and elsewhere. She is Associate Professor of English and Communication Studies at MCPHS University in Boston, Massachusetts.

Fern G. Z. Carr

Fern G. Z. Carr is a Director of Project Literacy, lawyer, teacher and past President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. A Full Member of and former Poet-in-Residence for the League of Canadian Poets, this 2013 Pushcart Prize nominee composes and translates poetry in six languages. Carr has been published extensively from Finland to Mauritius. She's been cited as a contributor to the Prakashana Literary Movement in India as well as having had her work recognized by the Parliamentary Poet Laureate. One of her poems is currently orbiting the planet Mars aboard NASA'S MAVEN spacecraft. www.ferngzcarr.com.

Linda M. Crate

Linda M. Crate is a Pennsylvanian native born in Pittsburgh yet raised in the rural town of Conneautville. Her poetry, short stories, articles, and reviews have been published in a myriad of magazines both online and in print. Recently her two chapbooks *A Mermaid Crashing Into Dawn* (Fowlpox Press - June 2013) and *Less Than A Man* (The Camel Saloon - January 2014) were published. Her fantasy novel *Blood & Magic* was published in March 2015.

Dani Dymond

Dani Dymond is a senior at Southern Connecticut State University, where the twenty-two-year-old is finishing up her undergraduate degree in English with a concentration in Creative Writing. She plans on reverting back to her home state of California next year to complete her MFA degree, a goal she has always dreamed of accomplishing. Her short fiction and poetry have been published at Santiago Canyon College as well as at SCSU and Asnuntuck Community College, all of whom print quite prestigious collections of student work. She hopes to someday be able to publish her creative writing while pursuing a career in editing.

Joanne Esser

Joanne Esser lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota and write poetry and nonfiction. She has also been a teacher of young children for over thirty years. She earned an MFA in Creative Writing from Hamline University and published a chapbook of poems, "I Have Always Wanted Lightning," with Finishing Line Press in 2012. Her work appears in *Water-Stone*, *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, *Slant*, and *Under the Sun*, among other places.

Terri Glass

Terri Glass has been active teaching poetry writing to both children and adults in the Bay area for over 20 years with workshops in schools, colleges, hospitals, wildlife and senior centers. She served as Program Director for California Poets in the Schools from 2008-2011. Her poems have recently appeared in *About Place*, *ViVace*, *Adventum*, *San Diego Poetry Annual*, *Fault Lines*, *California Quarterly*, *Fourth River*, in the anthologies, *Back to Joy*, *Trees: Marin Poetry center anthology*, *Shadow and Light*, *What the World Hears*, *Mountains & In Between* and *Drumvoices*. Her book of nature poetry, *The Song of Yes*, came out in 2011 and a book of haiku, *Birds, Bees, Trees, Love, Hee Hee* came out in 2015.. She holds a MFA in creative writing from USM.

Krisanne Hastings Knudsen

Krisanne has a BA in Art History and Curatorial Studies from Brigham Young University and an MA in the History of Art from the University of York, England. She has worked in the education departments of several art museums including the Portland Art Museum and The Brigham Young University Museum of Art. Krisanne writes for the Mormon Women Project, runs an arts education blog called The Making Table, and writes to clarify her own thoughts at eventhebeetle.com. Krisanne lives in American Fork, Utah, with her design savvy husband and two delicious baby boys.

Nels Hanson

Nels Hanson's fiction received the San Francisco Foundation's James D. Phelan Award and Pushcart nominations in 2010, 12, and 2014. Poems appeared in *Word Riot*, *Oklahoma Review*, *Pacific Review* and other magazines and received a 2014 Pushcart nomination, *Sharkpack Review's* 2014 Prospero Prize and a 2015 Best of the Net nomination.

Michael Keshigian

Michael Keshigian's tenth poetry collection, *Beyond* was released in May, 2015 by Black Poppy. Other published books and chapbooks: *Dark Edges*, *Eagle's Perch*, *Wildflowers*, *Jazz Face*, *Warm Summer Memories*, *Silent Poems*, *Seeking Solace*, *Dwindling Knight*, *Translucent View*. Published in numerous national and international journals, he is a 5-time Pushcart Prize and 2-time Best Of The Net nominee. His poetry cycle, *Lunar Images*, set for Clarinet, Piano, Narrator, was premiered at Del Mar College in Texas. Subsequent performances occurred in Boston (Berklee College) and Moletto, Italy. *Winter Moon*, a poem set for Soprano and Piano, premiered in the Fall of 2013 in Boston. (michaelkeshigian.com).

Natalie Luehr

Natalie Luehr is a landscape painter and loves to explore. She currently works in the fraud prevention software industry, helping to stop bad guys. She lives in Montana, which is her favorite place ever, and she took this photograph on a backpacking trip through Glacier Park when she got up early on the last morning.

Heidi Morrell

Heidi lives and writes in Los Angeles, is married and lives in an old house with her two kids, patient husband. Heidi's work has appeared in magazines, anthologies, & more, among many: *East Coast literary Review*; *Poised in Flight*, Hurricane Press; *Emerge Literary*

Journal; Poetry Pacific; Rotary Dial, Canadian; Outside In Lit Magazine; Mothers Always Write; Tomato Anthology and a poetry Chapbook from Finishing Line Press.

Dayna Patterson

Dayna Patterson's chapbooks, *Loose Threads* and *Mothering*, are available from Flutter Press. Her creative work has appeared or is forthcoming in *North American Review*, *REAL*, and *Weave*, among others. She is the mother of two and editor for *Psaltery & Lyre*.

Steven L. Peck

Steven L. Peck is a biology professor at Brigham Young University. His poetry book, *Incorrect Astronomy*, was published last year by Aldrich Press (with cover blurbs by poet Pattiann Rogers and Utah Poet Laureate Lance Larson). His poetry has appeared in *Abyss & Apex*, *Bellowing Ark*, *Dialogue*, *Glyphs III*, *Irreantum*, *Pedestal Magazine*, *Red Rock Review*, *Tales of the Talisman* (Nominated for the Rhysling Award), *Victorian Violet Press*, and *Wilderness Interface Zone*. Other creative works include three novels such as his magical realism novel, *The Scholar of Moab*, published by Torrey House Press—named AML's best novel of 2011 and a Montaigne Medal Finalist—and *A Short Stay in Hell*. He has published numerous short stories, many reprinted in his collection, *Wandering Realities*, published by Zarahemla Books. More about his work can be found at <http://www.stevenlpeck.com/>.

Elizabeth Perdomo

Elizabeth Perdomo has lived and written in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas these past fourteen years, moving to the region from the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico. Born in Kansas, and raised both there and in Colorado, she has written poetry works since a young teen. Perdomo also lived in the Southeastern USA for a number of years. Her written pieces reflect on local place and culture, cooking, gardening, ecology and nature, traditions, spirituality and much more.

W. Jack Savage

W. Jack Savage is a retired broadcaster and educator. He is the author of seven books including *Imagination: The Art of W. Jack Savage* (wjacksavage.com). To date, more than fifty of Jack's short stories and over four-hundred of his paintings and drawings have been published worldwide. Jack and his wife Kathy live in Monrovia, California.

Emily Strauss

Emily Strauss has an M.A. in English, but is self-taught in poetry, which she has written since college. Nearly 300 of her poems appear in a wide variety of online venues and in anthologies, in the U.S. and abroad. The natural world is generally her framework; she also considers the stories of people and places around her and personal histories. She is a semi-retired teacher living in California.

Marianne Szlyk

Marianne Szlyk is the editor of *The Song Is...* and a professor of English at Montgomery College. Last fall she published her first chapbook with Kind of a Hurricane Press: <http://barometricpressures.blogspot.com/2014/10/listening-to-electric-cambodia-looking.html>. Her poems have appeared in a variety of online and print venues, including one of Silver Birch Press's contests, *Long Exposure*, *Bottlec[r]ap*, *ken*again*, *Of/with*, *bird's thumb*, *Carcinogenic Poetry*, *Flutter Poetry Journal*, and *Black Poppy Review* as well as Kind of a Hurricane Press' anthologies from *Of Sun and Sand on*. She hopes that you will consider sending work to *The Song Is....* To explore this blog-zine, see <http://thesongis.blogspot.com/>

Dennis Trujillo

Dennis Trujillo was born and raised in Pueblo, Colorado. He had a twenty year career in the US Army followed by a fifteen year career as a middle/high school math teacher. He now resides in Korea and is employed at Shinhan University in the city of Dongducheon. He runs and does yoga each morning for grounding and focus and for the sheer joy of it.

Zephren Turner

Zephren attended Minneapolis College of Art and Design from 1998 to 2000 and graduated from Savannah College of Art and Design with a Bachelor Degree of Fine Arts, Magna Cum Laude in 2004. At the 48th Annual Sidewalk Arts Show of the Taubman Museum of Art, Zephren was awarded 1st Place in the category of Printmaking/Drawing by Juror, Brooks Johnson, Curator of Photography & 21st Century Art of The Chrysler Museum of Art. He exhibited annually at The Human Rights Campaign National Dinner Gallery from 2007 thru 2013 in Washington, DC. In September, The William King Museum of Art in Abingdon, Virginia exhibited, Zephren Turner: A Curious Anthropology in their Panoramic Gallery. Zephren's fine art has been rented to be used as part of three major television and film sets. Zephren works in Roanoke, Virginia as head of Print and Production Departments at Blue Ridge Sign

& Stamp.

Brendan Walsh

Brendan Walsh has been published in *Connecticut Review*, *Off the Coast*, *Mason's Road*, *Lines + Stars*, *Noctua Review*, *Drunk Monkeys*, and other journals. His first collection, *Make Anything Whole*, was published by Five Oaks Press in 2015. Walsh has taught English on a Fulbright Grant in Vientiane, Laos and has also taught in South Korea. He currently lives in Connecticut and serves as Assistant Director of International Education at Southern Connecticut State University. His work has been awarded the Anna Sonder Prize of the Academy of American Poets, the Leslie Leeds Poetry Prize, and a Freedman Prize for poetry in performance.

Anne Whitehouse

Anne Whitehouse is the author of five poetry collections, *The Surveyor's Hand*, *Blessings and Curses*, *Bear in Mind*, *One Sunday Morning*, and *The Refrain*. Her novel, *Fall Love*, will be appearing in Spanish as *Amigos y Amantes* later this year. She was born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama, and lives in New York City.

www.annewhitehouse.com

Anandi Wilkinson

Anandi graduated from Southern Utah University with a Bachelor of Science with a social science composite and a secondary teaching license. She has taught a variety of high school subjects including world history, geography, social studies, creative writing and debate. She has a special interest in French art and culture.