

Young Ravens
Literary Review



Issue 13 Winter 2020



Young Ravens Literary Review

Issue 13
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Table of Contents

Cover art: "Agony" by Lauren Walke

<i>Introduction</i>	5
I've been looking for a tiny bit of comfort. I found enough to share. Take all you need.	<i>Page Turner</i> 6
Sun, Shadow, Moon	<i>Donna Pucciani</i> 7
What Agonistic Edge?	<i>Marie C Lecrivain</i> 8
Study the Clouds	<i>Meg Freer</i> 9
The Old Professor	<i>Anne Whitehouse</i> 10
Shadows on the Border	<i>George R. Kramer</i> 12
Bread of Mercy	<i>Vern Fein</i> 14
Checking In	<i>Cheryl Johnson</i> 15
Amid all this Light	<i>Terri Glass</i> 16
Tap, taptap, ttap, tappity, tap, tap of revolution	<i>Page Turner</i> 17
Therapy	<i>August Smith</i> 18
Tule Fog	<i>Don Thompson</i> 20
Carry those who can no longer stand strong	<i>Page Turner</i> 21
Sea Turtle	<i>John Raffetto</i> 22
Eschatology	<i>Don Thompson</i> 23
Naanaa tavi	<i>Cheryl Johnson</i> 24
to want and to have	<i>JBMulligan</i> 25
Beyond Repair	<i>August Smith</i> 26
Reading the Books of Extinction in an Outpost on Old National Road while Awaiting the Next Plague	<i>Michael Brockley</i> 27
Seers	<i>Lauren Walke</i> 28
The Dying Sometimes Smile	<i>Gordon Kippola</i> 29
Angel Wings 1	<i>Dayna Patterson</i> 30
Ambassador of Bastet	<i>Meg Smith</i> 31
Intimacy	<i>Jennifer Marie Brissett</i> 32
Angel Wings 2	<i>Dayna Patterson</i> 33
Today, as we lie in bed, it rains	<i>Theric Jepson</i> 34
Poet Understanding Water	<i>Gordon Kippola</i> 35

Bambruush	<i>Cheryl Johnson</i>	36
Waveanelle	<i>Melanie Cox</i>	37
Riversong	<i>Shannon Cuthbert</i>	38
Angel Wings 3	<i>Dayna Patterson</i>	39
George Carlin's Terrarium	<i>Marie C Lecrivain</i>	40
College Ecology	<i>August Smith</i>	42
Meditation	<i>Preeth Ganapathy</i>	43
K-I-S-S-I-N-G	<i>Charles J. March III</i>	44
The Space Between Earth and Sky	<i>Laurinda Lind</i>	45
Diminuendo	<i>Donna Pucciani</i>	46
Agony	<i>Lauren Walke</i>	47
<i>Contributor Biographies</i>		48

Introduction

In Issue 13 of *Young Ravens Literary Review*, we ask ourselves, how can we become new humans? 2020 has thrust the world into a reckoning of who we are as a society and a species. We are propelled to delve deep into our impact on the planet, and each other. Explore the multifaceted musings of author and artist as they dive into the dreams of humanity:

“An urgent solitude propels me ahead” (*Donna Puccianni*)

“How did I become less human than you anticipated?” (*Marie C Lecrivain*)

“The quivering echo of myself” (*Donna Pucciani*)

“My error was thinking I knew more than the whole.” (*Melanie Cox*)

“We take what we need, and fret over what’s left behind.” (*Marie C Lecrivain*)

“I quit believing in thunder gods and the patron saint of the impossible after the death of the last bee.” (*Michael Brockley*)

“These angels have no further input./ They’re done with us.” (*Don Thompson*)

“Everyone I have loved is a shadow now” (*George R. Kramer*)

“Our only hope is—phosphorescence.” (*Terri Glass*)

“To bake mercy into the staff of life” (*Vern Fein*)

“What becomes of a goddess/ and her children of hunger?” (*Meg Smith*)

“I keep looking in to wonder/ What anyone would make of me now.” (*Shannon Cuthbert*)

“We watch toward/what is up there as it searches down to us.” (*Laurinda Lind*)

“More than half the night I am questioning, sometimes singing—” (*August Smith*)

“When civilization was coral reefs and clouds” (*John Raffetto*)

“While whispering hey hey hey I’m a beautiful world” (*Theric Jepson*)

“We’re just beginning to learn so much about fungus” (*Dayna Patterson*)

“. . . We’re not alone. Hello.” (*Gordon Kippola*)

“This is why we need each other:/ too much world to taste for one flash of mouth” (*JBMulligan*)

“It occurred to me with the unlearned certainty of dream knowledge—
The world outside has changed!” (*August Smith*)

“The thrum of solutions, the slate of reforms,
Piggyback on fractals of realisation.” (*Preeth Ganapathy*)

“Drown & purify. Noun & verb.” (*Gordon Kippola*)

“Understand me with no need for words” (*Jennifer Marie Brissett*)

“This legacy I leave to someone else.” (*Anne Whitehouse*)

Page Turner

**I've been looking for a tiny bit of comfort. I found enough to share.
Take all you need.**



Donna Pucciani

Sun, Shadow, Moon

I follow my shadow,
one-dimensional sepia,
the sun behind me now.

An urgent solitude propels me ahead,
my gaunt form unrecognizable,
even to me. I step into the evening

with no thought of the past,
of backward roads, the illusory alleyways
of another life branching into night

like arteries, neurons, the properties
of cauliflower brains, the filaments of stars,
the rings of ancient trees,

the veined juices of leaves,
the astonishment of shapes
hidden in the hive of humanity.

I pound myself into flatness.
I exchange my corporeal flesh for something
in the play of light, a werewolf sans gleaming teeth,

as a planetary void calls me into the haven
of dead stars, to emerge as shapeshifter
under the rising moon.

Marie C Lecrivain

What Agonistic Edge?

Disconnect has become a way of life. –Alicia Winski

You ask me how it happened;
how did I become less human
than you anticipated?

It's not a question of DNA.
Ours are entangled as briars
overgrown for a century,
and I can't say I know what,
or when the precise moment occurred.

I can tell you what it feels like
to watch my soul unravel from yours,
a spiral of lazy smoke that meanders west
in search of who knows *what*,
and like you, I'd love to know *why*
because being emptied out
is a long and boring process.
Days go by where I lighten
micron by micron. I've found
I've limits where I once assumed
I contained an expanding universe
of cruelty and wonder.

You ask why?

It's all I have left.

Meg Freer

Study the Clouds



Anne Whitehouse

The Old Professor

I

Forty-five years ago, I showed up
at his office at the scheduled hour
for a makeup map quiz. The shapes
of the mountains and rivers and lakes
of Latin America lay like neural synapses
and pathways across the inner landscape
of my brain as, keyed up and nervous,
I knocked on the door, waited, knocked again.

At last he answered it, visibly startled,
while strains of Bach wafted around him.
He had forgotten our appointment,
and I had interrupted him.
Embarrassed, I apologized,
but no matter: he selected a test
from a stack and disappeared,
leaving me to take it on my own.

I remember the strangeness I felt
at my glimpse into his private life.
I had never thought about what
my teachers did when they were alone.
As I took his test, I wondered,
did I wake him from a nap? His hair
was mussed as if he had been sleeping,
though I might just as well have
summoned him from reading.

Now a professor emeritus,
with the leisure to revisit
his research of fifty years ago,
he finds threads still untied
and uncharted paths to follow.
He has written a new paper
about his old book. It bristles
with footnotes, raising questions
and suggestions. "It's work
I hope I won't live to complete,
or I'd be a hundred and ten.

This legacy I leave to someone else.”
His voice barely a whisper,
lost in his own minutiae, deploring:
“I have outlived my hearing,
like so much else.”

II

I think of those country people,
fierce and unsmiling,
equipped with rifle and sword,
their chests crisscrossed by bandeliers,
victors and victims in the armed struggles
whose causes he analyzed,
whose legacies he clarified.
Human violence is the constant,
history is told by the winners
or by the losers who keep
memories of their losses alive.

It is the historian’s work
to separate myth from reality,
to make meaning from the jumbled past,
to reveal our forebears as they were,
not as we would have them be.

George R. Kramer

Shadows on the Border

At dusk on a late winter day 1951
I am a ragged refugee hiding
On the express train to Paris,
Roaring past the Maginot Line.
Once as grim as the Iron Curtain
Now just a scar of empty bunkers
Across the damp Alsatian hills.
e damp Alsatian hills.
A tunnel comes and darkness amplifies
But fails to smother tenacious hope,
As faithful as a tunnel's end.
A train blasts by like a shot
And I see phantoms of people
In slivers of dim rushing lights
Passing like me from nothing to nothing.

Everyone I have loved is a shadow now,
Leaving an intimate illusion in my memory.
Their absence as tangible
As silhouettes in a doctored snapshot
As real as that shock
Of air pressure and speed.

Hiding between carriages
In my patchwork clothes
I am shapeless stolen bits of others,
Whose differences from me
Don't feel as far apart as the difference
I find between me and myself
When I let anger work its power over me.

Twenty nights ago I crawled under barbed wire
At the spot where a villager whispered
That there were no mines.
I had never worked the soil
But that night I loved mud and tall grass
And the earth's shadow over the guard towers.

Shadows are the ghosts of imagination.
All else leaves you between hearing the police knock
And crawling out the kitchen window with only

What you wear and the last gold coins
That your mother put in your hands
As shadow fell across her face.

*This poem is about my father, who escaped from communist Hungary and became a refugee in France. He is now 92 years old.

Vern Fein

Bread of Mercy

When Bishop Myriel blessed Jean Valjean,
gave him the silver candlesticks
of liberty, equality, fraternity,
it was the single loaf of bread
which cost nineteen years
in a wretched prison,
Valjean stealing it for his sister
and her seven starving children,
moved the Bishop's heart.

In France, the poor gnawed coarse
black bread, mixed with sawdust and bark
while the rich ate soft white bread,
and it was fancy cake that tumbled
the arrogant, pretty head of Marie.

Once, I discovered a law in Paris
allowed any indigent soul
to take a loaf of bread without penalty,
a tribute to Valjean and the Miserables.

Stark contrast to our country where our leader
tries to end school lunches and food stamps
as he devours the cake of greed and corruption.

Do we need another Hugo to pen this misery,
inspired by a man he saw dragged
away without ceremony for one stolen loaf?
We've not learned in three centuries
to bake mercy into the staff of life.

Cheryl Johnson

Checking In



Terri Glass

Amid all this Light

Our only hope is—
phosphorescence
as night descends over the ocean.
Plankton glow like little lanterns
strung over a patio.
They blink on and off
a wavelength of
forgiveness.

I long to drift on the sea
with pulsating stars above
bioluminescence below
and be cream filling
amid all this light.

The ocean, a high vibration—
phytoplankton, lantern fish,
comb jelly, giant inky squid.
Each form infinitely
radiating genius.

I want the world to phosphoresce,
bubble up with light amid the ravaging
of nations, the unrest of a pandemic,
the injustice of politics.

Can we learn from these creatures
or do we drown in depths of separateness?
Can we rise to the surface and hold fast
emitting our own little beam of light?

Page Turner

Tap, taptap, ttap, tappity, tap, tap of revolution



August Smith

Therapy

Exordium: open Dell-to-page dialogue—
tell Virginia this is her opening
cue, she will come through the door

gently ask her

Dell-ear-ious, doesn't she act
the role?

Her clean page read
and tread by the boys who came
to play with her brother—now they are walking back from her house,
just the three of them. They have other stories to tell;
they do not talk of what just happened.

She pastes her wet pages on the inside of her locked door
to bolster the strength of wood behind them,

No one will get to my book again!

protecting private passages
of her diary from intrusive meddling.
Now she is unfraying the pages in aftermath:
crumpled and smeared, but recoverable.

How surprised the boys were to find her alone at the house—
It started with them leaping on the table and chairs,
surging and jumping, screaming like cockatiels;
at some instinct-coordinate they switched to gorilla speech—
they who know when a certain time has come,
they who smell changes in the air,
perhaps not even a scent, maybe just pheromones:
Dell-ear-ious deluge seeping from her skin.
and rising as a hues in a mist from her body, canary yellow...

Virginia, you have known opening cues all your life—
you grew up in that type of neighborhood.
When I tell you there is an opening
door, you shed their violence, wordless, like molted skin,
walk out into the gardens, and do not stop when you reach the woods.
You walk along the bends of a river,
unheeding the bruising
of body and sky,
heedful of the nightingales
soaring limb to limb, singing—

voices unexpected, but just what is needed.

Can the songs of a nightingale be transcribed?

*Philomena singing in a forest alone,
no one near—
heard, felt or fled is her music?*

I ask via Dell-to-page questions I have asked myself:
 Could I ever take them back,
those opening cues heard again and yet again?
 Could I? And how?
More than half the night I am questioning, sometimes singing—
 and sometimes Virginia, O sometimes...

Don Thompson

Tule Fog

Angels in camouflage keep low
and still, wearing fog
robes with tumbleweed woven in.

Air holds their breath for them.

What happened to seraphim and cherubim—
shouts and trumpets blasting,
long incandescent hair?

These angels have no further input.
They're done with us.

If you watch long enough,
one will rise above the field,
just slightly—
no more than a shrug.

Page Turner

Carry those who can no longer stand strong



John Raffetto

Sea Turtle

The sea turtle is thinking
by the soft algae
as he crawls his slow
breath
under water
his fin kicking away the salt
a scaled eye closes
on sea lava
he speaks a language
of another eon
under waves
when civilization was
coral reefs and clouds.

Now he spots daily
the fleshy legs and arms
taking pictures
knowing his long life
may be shortened due to
the fleshy intruders
as civilization encases
its carapace
over the islands.

Don Thompson

Eschatology

We've had a night visitor now and then
since last winter. Unseen,
except for prints
pressed into mud or dust.

A paw so much larger than your hand

could only be Pleistocene—
a dire wolf's ghost
slowly coming alive once more
to be here in time for the End.

Ten thousand years hungry.

Cheryl Johnson

Naanaa Tavi



JBMulligan

to want and to have

I want a life to love you,
and a life to listen to music,
and a life to read,

and a life for my children,
and a life to write.

I want a life
to understand
football, baseball,
soccer, hockey,
all their intricate
collisions and escapes.

I want one life
for each of those sports.

Every wine that is or was
has to fit into this one
cracked and tarnished cup....

and I find that I want
the life I have:
all of these segments
of the world I'll leave,
sweet and savory,
salt and bitter,
in wild blossom
on an aging tongue.

This is why we need each other:
too much world to taste
for one flash of mouth,
flare and crackle
in a darkening sky.

August Smith

Beyond Repair

Engine-tattooed, head aching
with waspish buzz of motors,
I drove endless staccato tar roads,
indelibly grimy from every oil change.
I have breathed oil smoke for so long,
I olfactorize smog among magnolias,
the scent of mufflers in florists,
chemical run-off in museums
and a boiler room in the Vatican.

Nowadays, the deer and rabbits seem no more than oddly
fluid machines; the tulip blossom lacks the precision of pistons.
I look at the clock face of the moon
arcing and re-cresting—I see 0s and 1s
coded in moon craters and mountains, binaries
in a chipmunk's eyes and/or snake's undulations.
I often dream that I have sprouted wheels
and my lungs and heart have turned into a manifold and engine.
I am haunted by the mechanizations of musical instruments—
melody approximates the power of a revving motor or jet turbine.

This morning I daydreamed my fingers were burned
down to the bone by my computer keyboard, high-velocity
shards from the monitor shrapneled my face, and
poison seeped from USB ports. I got up to get a cup of coffee
and the coffee machine brooded:
coiled, as if to spring on its prey.

Michael Brockley

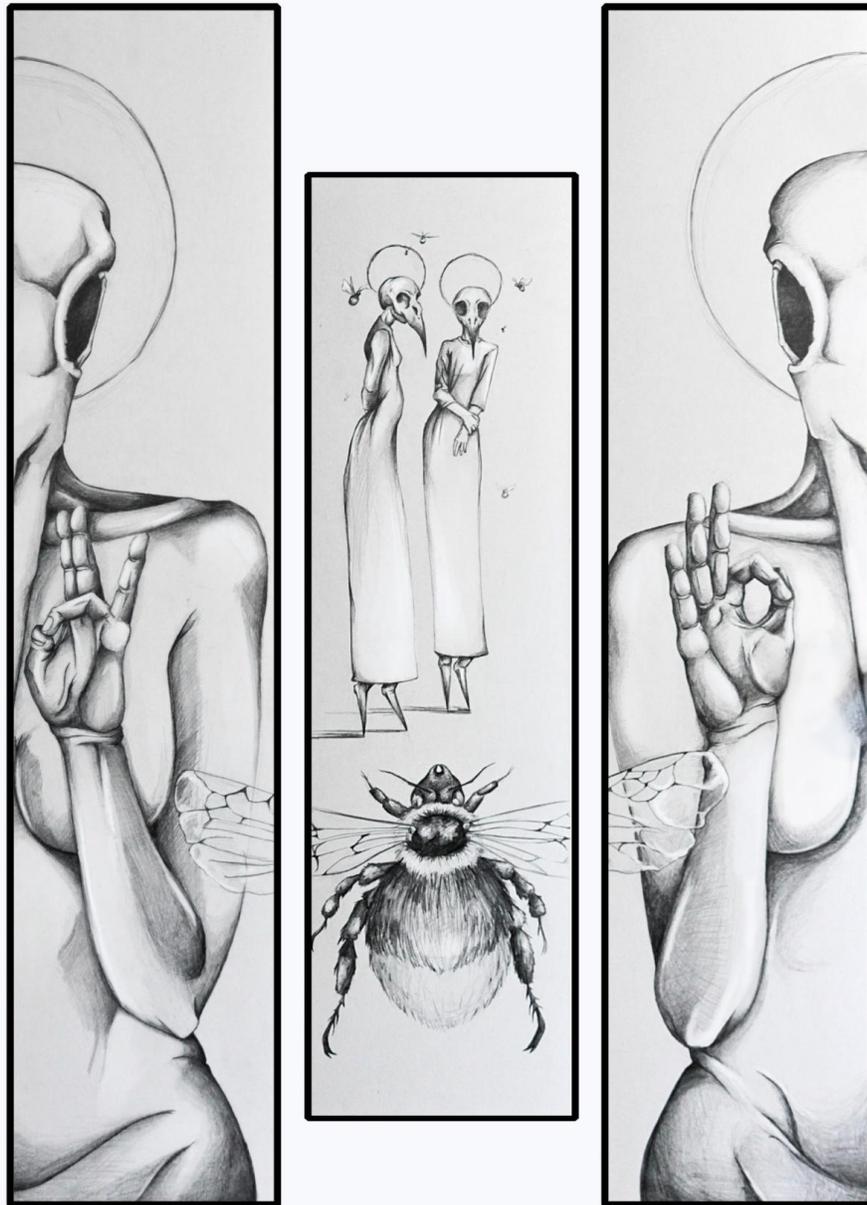
**Reading the Books of Extinction in an Outpost
on Old National Road While Awaiting the Next Plague**

For N. B

I hide behind the thick walls that shelter us from seasons that alternate between arid heat and havoc storms. The dust from this month's sirocco drifts midway up the outer doors, but the escape hatches on the roof are usually free of debris. All I have left to read are the last jaguar's memoir and the biographies of fireflies, the trilogy with the quote about the creator's inordinate fondness for beetles at the beginning of every volume. I quit believing in thunder gods and the patron saint of the impossible after the death of the last bee. On those rare evenings when I remind my grandchildren of how bluejays and redwing blackbirds quarreled over the sunflower seeds they ate, they doubt my reminisces. The youngest no longer believe in flowers. In seeds. Or animals that flew. "What is blue?" they ask while chewing on their hair. My mother once celebrated the return of spring by asking the saints of her faith to intercede for blessings on her behalf. Spring arrived so that the Earth could heal itself. Saints were holy men and women who wore crowns of yellow light above their heads. What use did we ever have then for a patron saint of unattractive people? Or a patron saint of passwords? When the wind abates, I recite my own litany, asking forgiveness from elephants and butterflies. From the night fireflies of my youth, the lightning bugs that did not eat during their adulthood. The next time I teach my grandchildren about feasting, they will worry that I have succumbed to an isolate's dementia. "Sugar?" they will ask. "Comfort food? What were you grateful for at Thanksgiving?"

Lauren Walke

Seers



Gordon Kippola

The Dying Sometimes Smile

An alien browses the canned food aisles
at Walmart, that one near the hospital.
When the alien is feeling hungry
to be known, it paces hospital halls
instead. When humans die, just as they pass,
their vision can expand to see a ghost,
a wider spectrum of the colors green,
love and orange, or a small visitor
who comes to say: We're not alone. Hello.

Dayna Patterson

Angel Wings 1



I believe what is required of the New Human, for us to move towards healing our planet and our relationships, we will have to slow down and pay close attention to each other and our environment. I only learned about angel wing mushrooms (*Pleurocybella porrigens*) over the past few months from extensive sanity hikes with my husband and kids. I love the way these mushrooms seem to capture the light and magnify it through their gills—they glow, don't they? And at the same time, they're saprobes, meaning they break down dead wood so it can be recycled into soil. Fungi exist underground in fibrous networks of mycelium, but we only notice their fruiting bodies during the short time mushrooms become apparent. Through mycelium, the well-documented "wood-wide web," trees communicate with one another and share nutrients. We are just beginning to learn so much about fungus, and we have a lot more learning to do about ecology, the way environmental systems coexist and cooperate, and how we can be better ancestors to our descendants.

Meg Smith

Ambassador of Bastet

Egyptian Museum, Cairo, November 2015

She leads me,
a sentinel, in her stride—
green eyes, gray stripes,
all diplomacy,
but true to her direction.

All around, visitors gaze
at Tutankhamun's gold.

But, she beckons me
to her purpose—
a glass case, filled
with figures in her image,
each a temple in itself.

What becomes of a goddess
and her children of hunger?

I know the answer
awaits outside.
With soft feet, and straight tails,
These emissaries
gather around a guard.
He is sharing his lunch with them.

They form a circle, like rays,
around him.
They, and he, look up
to a single, sacred sun.

Jennifer Marie Brissett

Intimacy

Come next to me and purr
Sense my need for affection
Understand me with no need for words
See me vulnerable
Curl yourself into my arms and rest
your head along the crevice of my neck
Make everything better
 with a single soft touch
Be that friend
The one who loves without judgment
Sleep calmly on my breast
A heartbeat next to mine

Dayna Patterson

Angel Wings 2



Theric Jepson

Today, as we lie in bed, it rains

“If I ever get over the bodies of women, I am going to think of the rain”
from “Rain on Tin” by Rodney Jones

Double-panes keep out the cold but also the noise
and so we left them cracked last night as we listened
to thunder and worshipped each other. Now the sun
has lightened the sky but water still patters
across the pavement, chasing rills down kids’ bikes
to anoint the next generation of dandelions
while whispering hey hey hey I’m a beautiful world—
I too merit your attention—and so, in symbolic
agreement, we kiss. And heaven’s orchestra swells
with a sudden burst across the roof. Then it’s over,
and a single drop of water forms along the screen and
passes inside, sliding down the paint to the oaken floor.

Gordon Kippola

Poet Understanding Water

Agua, vand, wasser, ujë, su,
vesi, eau, amanzi, biyah:
all water; but not all waters.

Steam, ice, salt wave, demarcation,
rain's salvation, land-erasing
flood, rising mist, settled body.

Transparent droplet; or white, black,
grey, brown, red, green. Blue spectrum
distilled to mapmaker's shorthand.

Rust, revive, clean, corrode, absorb,
reflect, swamp. Torture & relieve.
Drown & purify. Noun & verb.

Ancient source. Broken water
precedes birth. Journey through
moon's irresistible attraction.

Conserve and store in starred dippers,
pour on earth in fiery stones, pool
under deep earth stone. Bubble up.

There are more water molecules
in a single human body than all
the world's sand grains: wet and dry.

An evaporated river
in Afghanistan reappears
on cheeks of scorned lovers.

A single drop of H₂O
streaming in my body's water
once ran through the veins of poet Li Po.

Cheryl Johnson

Bambruush



Melanie Cox

Waveanelle

Waves made by friction still ebb and flow.
The moon in her power maintains all control.
The trick is in learning to breathe and let go.

A fine plan for calm days, but when worries grow,
Surely it's better to coax and cajole.
Waves made by friction still ebb and flow.

I've practiced coercion, it's something I know.
I crouch down to the water, the waves my patrol—
The trick is in learning to breathe and let go.

I'm knocked over, surprised, pulled under by tow.
Yet, unaffected, the waves rise and unroll.
Waves made by friction still ebb and flow.

Spun in the waves, I feel deep vertigo.
I've lost all my bearings. What was my goal?
The trick is in learning to breathe and let go.

Spat back on the beach, the water will show
My error was thinking I knew more than the whole.
Waves made by friction still ebb and flow.
The trick is in learning to breathe and let go.

Shannon Cuthbert

Riversong

Everything in this land is gray.
Sometimes I wish it was a trick of the light.
Instead, a silver river blurs through me,
Dissolves my colors in its wake,
Turns birds shadow-things,
Their inverse twins tucked underwater.
I keep looking in to wonder
What anyone would make of me now.
Only the geese, hard-hearted wrens and rodents
Have managed, thrived,
Pressed these trees into pleasing civilizations.

Once I forgot this river was wild.
It called to me in disparate voices.
Pockets of sound catch hold
And won't let go.
They shake loose,
Carry me snippets from untouched worlds.
Which ones? I want them all.
Turn each bend and
Discover the long loose back you ride
Is not stillness as it seems.
A woman downstream
Sings of November and its velvet dust.
A small desire blooms undisturbed.
Trees shapeshift in my twilight
As I paddle to a new home.

Dayna Patterson

Angel Wings 3



Marie C Lecrivain

George Carlin's Terrarium

1.

Tonite, it's raining again,
a sound that's become
a sluggish flow of liquid
pushing through
a half clogged drain.

I open my window to listen
to water rushing through
the concrete confines
of Ballona Creek.

There's still movement
among those of us
brought to a standstill.
I wish I were a drop
moving with others
into the womb of the ocean
or the earth.

2.

George Carlin once joked
about the trouble,
while traveling,
of finding a place
to put your stuff.

From house to suitcase,
backpack to back pocket,
the space starts to shrink.
We take what we need,
and fret over what's left behind.

3.

I woke from a dream
of holding the planet
in the palm of my hand,
a blue green marvel

sealed in a globe of glass.

I'd nowhere to put it,
so I let it roll out of my hand
and back into the universe.

I wonder if this is
what it's like to be
more than human,
but not yet a god?

August Smith

College Ecology

The hippocampus
and the thalamus
are connected by a bridge:—

In my dreams,
my old Ecology professor
Dr. Culler
lectured for hours and hours.
Only three students remained
at that marathon of epistemics,
a truly epic ordeal.
I typed notes till my wrists were sore;
my hands fell off, and rolled under
an adjacent desk. My English professor
sitting in that chair
gave me back my hands
without a word. This happened three times,
but on the third time, my English professor was gone
and I sat there like Noah
with two olive tree branches in his lap
and now the dove had not returned.
It occurred to me with the unlearned certainty of dream knowledge—
The world outside has changed!
Ecosystematically, the biota,
our Mother Earth, like Penelope,
was finally reunited with Odysseus—
the warty suitors had been put
in their rightful places—
ashes to the wind.
And I thought to myself,
*Now, Telemachus, the journey
through adulthood begins.*
Looking at my two stalwart classmates,
I saw the same realization in their eyes.

Preeth Ganapathy

Meditation

Cross-legged on the damask mat
I sit in lotus pose,
Spine erect, fingers curled
In the stencilled image of a yogi
Attempting to still a loping mind
To escape the crunch of chafed feelings
Under the wheels of fatuous thoughts

*A traveler hitches her backpack
Ties her shoelaces
at the start of a journey.*

My stomach bulges into the swell
Of a sine wave with each inhale
And transubstantiates into a deflated balloon
With each exhale.

*She hikes along ineffable pathways
absorbing flutings of a hundred panoramas*

The matted seaweed of reports are like plaintive pigeons
To be released into the blue sky,
Scaling treacherous mountain peaks cluttering the desk,
Errors that raise hackles of suspicion
Nestle against the comfort of found satisfaction,
And vie with sapid headspace reserved for creativity.

*She watches the brushed exteriors of delirious reality,
But does not judge, only watches.*

The thrum of solutions, the slate of reforms,
Piggyback on fractals of realisation.
“Talk to them,” a soft voice soothes the mind,
“No problem is too big
When dealt with a little kindness,
A little love,” the voice says.

*She corrals the visions and threads them into
Pigtailed pleats of experience
On the roseate palette of her mind
Until she finds the intimation of that footstep,
A missive, to her real self.*

Charles J. March III

K-I-S-S-I-N-G



Laurinda Lind

The Space Between Earth and Sky

On R. Paul Saphier painting
Monistic Mist, 1997

In the steep hush where the future folds
itself down to us and we feel for how we
will walk into it, it is as if ropes hang
like rays of love spun from sky between
stars and stones, the world as
you look somewhere else,

the insides of things threaded
through the gauze. We watch toward
what is up there as it searches down to us.

But it's best not to look too long, in fact

facedown to the ground you may see more:
the otherness reflects itself into soil,
as alive as a chiming aftersound. Light

leaches everything and the great dark
at the heart of the earth, which at its core
is just as bright, holds us for a time,
then sends us on into the mystery.

Donna Pucciani

Diminuendo

Diminuendo means “diminishing.”

As a child, I learned this word
from my piano teacher, Sister Paul,

who taught me that the music must soften,
but not all at once: a gradual lessening,
like waves at the beach, the ebb tide
leaving behind an assortment of broken shells.

My body at the time was delicate, agile,
unaware of its gradual death even from birth,
my hands holding a future wide as a world
and tall as the trees I scaled by inches,
rising into a rustling green heaven.

When not climbing, I practiced arpeggios,
studied Latin, read Shakespeare, wrote,
worked for food, and from an airplane’s
belted seat viewed the earth below.

The trees are blooming now,
same as always, leafing out into May.
Sister Paul must be long dead, laid to rest
in her black habit, hands bound with rosaries.

She went before me
in the ethereal fragility of age,
the wrinkling of skin, the pains in the joints,
the mind forgetful, she who taught me

the music of diminishment,
eighth notes on a page spooling out
the quivering echo of myself.

Lauren Walke

Agony



Contributor Biographies

Jennifer Marie Brissett

Jennifer Marie Brissett is an author who once was insane enough to own an indie bookstore. She's been an artist, an engineer, and sometimes a poet. Her upcoming novel *Destroyer of Light* will be published by Tor Books in Fall 2021. She lives in NYC with her husband and cat. Find her website at www.jennbrissett.com

Michael Brockley

Michael Brockley is a retired school psychologist who lives in Muncie, Indiana. His poems have appeared in *The Thieving Magpie*, *Last Stanza Poetry Journal*, and *The Twin Bill*. Poems are forthcoming in *Flying Island*, *Scissortail Quarterly*, and the *Indianapolis Anthology*.

Melanie Cox

Melanie Cox works professionally as a child and family therapist (Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist) and unprofessionally as a houseplant growing and pastry baking hobbyist (Great British Baking Show). She loves rock climbing and hiking throughout Utah and maybe this will be the winter she tries to learn to ski. Raised in North Dakota, she still forgets people don't smile and wave at strangers in The West. She adores used copies of Steinbeck novels and is in a book group that weekly discusses J.R.R. Tolkien's writings. Her creativity shows up in little bursts of painting or writing, usually when she's working through big emotions. Her biggest tear triggers are dogs, her 23 nieces and nephews, and an emotionally packed song, probably by Mumford and Sons.

Shannon Cuthbert

Shannon Cuthbert is a writer and artist living in Brooklyn. Her poems have been nominated for three Pushcarts, and have appeared in journals including *Dodging the Rain*, *Hamilton Stone Review*, and *The Oddville Press*. Her work is forthcoming in *Sparks of Calliope* and *Lowestoft Chronicle*.

Vern Fein

A retired special education teacher, Vern Fein has published over one hundred poems on over sixty sites, a few being: **82 Review*, *Bindweed Magazine*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Courtship of Winds*, *Broadkill Review*, *Monterey Poetry Review*, and *Corvus Review*.

Meg Freer

Meg Freer grew up in Montana and studied musicology in Minnesota and New Jersey, where she also worked in scholarly book publishing. She now teaches piano and theory, takes photos, enjoys the outdoors year-round in Ontario, and wishes she had more time to write poetry. Her photos, poems and prose have been published in journals such as *Ruminare*, *Vallum*, *Poetry South*, *Eastern Iowa Review*, and *Rat's Ass Review*. In 2017 she attended the Summer Literary Seminars in Tbilisi. Her poems have been shortlisted and have won awards in several contests in both the U.S. and Canada.

Preeth Ganapathy

Preeth Ganapathy's writings have appeared before in a number of online magazines including *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Visual Verse*, *Willawaw Journal*, *Buddhist Poetry Review* and *Mothers Always Write*. She is also the winner of Wilda Morris's July 2020 Poetry Challenge. Currently she works as Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax in Bangalore, India.

Terri Glass

Terri Glass is a writer of the natural world. She is the author of three books of poetry, most recent, *Being Animal* by Kelsay Books. Her work has appeared in *Birdland Journal*, *Fourth River*, *Young Raven's Literary Review*, *About Place*, *California Quarterly* and many anthologies including *Fire and Rain; Eco-poetry of California*, *Earth Blessings* and upcoming in *Wild Gods*. She teaches with California Poets in the Schools and has a MFA in creative writing from USM.

Gordon Kippola

Following a career as a U.S. Army musician, Gordon Kippola earned an MFA in Creative Writing at the University of Tampa, and calls Bremerton, Washington home. His poetry has appeared, or is forthcoming, in *Post Road Magazine*, *District Lit*, *The Road Not Taken*, *The Main Street Rag*, *Young Ravens Literary Review*, *Southeast Missouri State University Press*, and other splendid publications. One of his poems was selected for the *World Enough Writers Coffee Poems Anthology*, one was a 2020 Rattle Poetry Prize finalist.

George R. Kramer

George R. Kramer hails from Canada, Colorado, Kenya, New York and Alabama, but is a long-time Virginia transplant. The child of European refugees from Nazism and Communism, his parents' legacy and his peripatetic childhood leave a trace in much of his writing. He makes his living as an attorney. His recent published poems are on his website:

<https://blueguitar58.wixsite.com/website-1>.

Theric Jepson

Theric Jepson's poetry has most recently been published in *Wine Cellar Press*, *Bristlecone Firesides*, *Briefly Write*, and *Freshwater*. His novel *Just Julie's Fine* is forthcoming from BCC Press, who does not mind that he has not had a haircut in over ten months. No ravens live on his block so he has been forced to befriend the crows.

Cheryl Johnson

Cheryl Johnson is an east coaster living in the mountain west who loves drawing, painting, photography, and design. She does all of those things out of compulsion and sometimes for money. In addition to being creative, she loves to travel, specifically to Mongolia, over and over again.

Marie C Lecrivain

Marie C Lecrivain is a poet, publisher of *poeticdiversity: the litzine of Los Angeles*, and an ordained priestess in the Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica, the ecclesiastical arm of Ordo Templi Orientis. Her work has appeared in the *Chiron Review* *Nonbinary Review*, *Orbis*, *Pirene's*

Fountain, and other journals. She's an associate editor for *The Good Works Review*, an author of several books of poetry and fiction, and editor of *Gondal Heights: A Bronte Tribute Anthology* (copyright 2019 Sybaritic Press, www.sybpress.com).

Laurinda Lind

Laurinda Lind lives in New York's North Country. Some publications/ acceptances are in *Common Ground Review*, *Please See Me*, *Presence*, *Reckoning*, and *Samsara*; also in anthologies *Civilization in Crisis* (FootHills Publishing), *AFTERMATH: Explorations of Loss and Grief* (Radix Media), and *Hometown* (Exeter Publishing).

Charles J. March III

Charles J. March III is an asexual, neurodivergent Navy hospital corpsman veteran who is currently trying to live an eclectic life with an interesting array of recovering creatures in Orange County, CA. His various works have appeared in or are forthcoming from the *Evergreen Review*, *Atlas Obscura*, *Litro*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *L.A. Times*, *Lalitamba*, *3:AM Magazine*, *Fleas on the Dog*, *Queen Mob's Teahouse*, *BlazeVOX*, *Blood Tree Literature* (prize), *Bareknuckle Poet*, *Anti-Heroic Chic*, *The Beatnik Cowboy*, *Points in Case*, *Stinkwaves*, *The Writing Disorder*, *Literary Orphans*, *Otoliths*, et al. Links to his pieces can be found on [LinkedIn](#) and [SoundCloud](#).

JBMulligan

JBMulligan has published more than 1100 poems and stories in various magazines over the past 45 years, and has had two chapbooks: *The Stations of the Cross* and *THIS WAY TO THE EGRESS*, as well as 2 e-books: *The City of Now and Then*, and *A Book of Psalms* (a loose translation). He has appeared in more than a dozen anthologies, and was recently nominated for the Pushcart Prize anthology.

Dayna Patterson

Dayna Patterson is a photographer, textile artist, and mycophile living in the Pacific Northwest. She is the author of *Titania in Yellow* (Porkbelly Press, 2019) and *If Mother Braids a Waterfall* (Signature Books, 2020). Her writing and poembroideries have appeared recently in *AGNI*, *Irreantum*, *The Maynard*, and *Thrush*. She is the founding editor-in-chief of *Psalter & Lyre* and a co-editor of *Dove Song: Heavenly Mother in Mormon Poetry*. She was a co-winner of the 2019 #DignityNotDetention Poetry Prize judged by Ilya Kaminsky. daynapatterson.com

Donna Pucciani

Donna Pucciani, a Chicago-based writer, has published poetry worldwide in *Shi Chao Poetry*, *Poetry Salzburg*, *Journal of Italian Translation*, *Young Ravens Review*, and others. Her seventh and most recent book of poems is *EDGES*.

John Raffetto

A lifelong resident of Chicago. Some of his poetry has been published in print and various online magazine such as *Gloom Cupboard*, *Wilderness House*, *BlazeVox*, *Literary Orphans*, *Arial Chart*, *Olentangy Review & Exact Change*. Nominated for Pushcart Prize 2017. His book *Human Botany* was recently released in 2020. Holds degrees from the University of Illinois and Northeastern Illinois University. Worked as a horticulturalist and landscape designer for many

years at the Chicago Park District which was a rich environment for drawing inspiration for poems concerning nature, people and the city. Formally an adjunct professor.

August Smith

August Smith received his BA from Loyola University/New Orleans and MFA in Creative Writing from Cornell University. His poems have appeared in *Wide Open*, *The Great American Poetry Anthology*, and *Down in the Dirt*, and are forthcoming in *Bending Genres* and the *Writer's Egg*. He resides in Alpine, TX.

Meg Smith

Meg Smith is a writer, journalist, dancer and events producer living in Lowell, Mass. Her poetry has recently appeared in *The Cafe Review*, *Poetry Bay*, *Polarity*, *Raven Cage*, *Beliveau Review*, and many more. She is the author of five poetry books. Her first short fiction collection, *The Plague Confessor*, is due out in fall 2020 from Emu Books.

She welcomes visits to megsmithwriter.com.

Don Thompson

Don Thompson has been writing about the San Joaquin Valley for over fifty years, including a dozen or so books and chapbooks. For more info and links to publishers, visit his website at www.don-e-thompson.com.

Page Turner

Page Turner is an assemblage artist who collects items of deep personal meaning to create delicate sculptural pieces infused with a new feminist aesthetic and a soulful reverence for her heritage. Recently featured in *50 Contemporary Women Artists: Groundbreaking Contemporary Art from 1960 to Now*, her work is grounded in the Appalachian region of Virginia. Turner has exhibited widely in Virginia, North Carolina, Washington DC, and Los Angeles. Her recent exhibitions include *FemiNest* at Equity Gallery in New York; a joint exhibit with her husband, *Contemporary Appalachia: Zephren & Page Turner*, at Artists & Makers Studios Gallery in Maryland; and a solo exhibition *Power & Restraint: A Feminist Perspective on Mormon Sisterhood* at the Eleanor D. Wilson Museum at Hollins University in Roanoke. Turner was the cover artist for *Exponent II Magazine—Publishing the Experiences of Mormon Women since 1974* and *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. Her sculptures have been featured in *Immediate Present*, *Artemis Journal: Artist and Writers of the Blue Ridge*, and in multiple issues of *Studio Visit Magazine* and *Exponent II Magazine*. Turner attended Virginia Western Community College and Brigham Young University. pageturnerstudios.com

Lauren Walke

Lauren Walke, living in Roanoke, Virginia, is often inspired by local lore and dreams. Her work is created to live, breathe on its own, to tell its story boldly, and to entice the viewer to be a witness to the unexpected and fantastical. Lauren's work is amplified and enhanced by her daily rituals of seeking for moments of magic in her life. When she isn't working on illustration and story projects she can usually be found outside with her children and cat either looking for bees, bones, or other wild treasures to add to her magpie collection.

Anne Whitehouse

Whitehouse's poetry collections include *Blessings and Curses*, *The Refrain*, *Meteor Shower*, and, most recently, *Outside from the Inside* (Dos Madres Press, 2020). *Surrealist Muse*, her poem about Leonora Carrington, was published by Ethelzine. She is also the author of a novel, *Fall Love*.