

ISSUE
12

IMPOSSIBLE ARCHETYPE

A JOURNAL OF LGBTQ+ POETRY
EDITED BY MARK WARD

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EDITOR'S NOTE
MARK WARD

I

I reread the last two editor's notes and am astonished by what interspersing other people's words allows. I worry how long that will last. And how it will change, if it does.

II

The body adjusts to anything, as Pedone said. *It had no way / of knowing*, Velasco whispers. *You built something here*, something pretending to be Schneid says. *You are back having fun*, Harnedy says in your voice, laughing down the phonenumber.

III

It will adjust, over time. Some things however will remain: the stillness outside you, the *fire escape* Bondhus provides, the inescapable sense that a part of you is forever making a small, low but constant noise. Your tinnitus transformed. *The way I used to chase the world*, an older figure in place of Rockwell says.

IV

Ms Bowles on the verge, beyond it, almost something new, afraid of what comes after the song, the rest, to rest: *What good is sitting alone in your room / Come hear the music play*

V

Leave the bread / for the birds, Bradley offers. I want to. I want file the edges down, stand *tall and proud / like a statue* (Monaghans', naturally). *You mounted the years, / now they*

mount you, Mann says, a voice emanating somehow from a glossy magazine. *You'll feed multitudes*, Barnes says. You brace for the world to laugh. It doesn't. You're *forever having a go*, McKimm spits. There is quiet but here I mean make it dance, strings and all. *What Good Is Sitting Alone In Your Room*, eh?

VI

More than my greed, I say in Kline's words to the jury. *Not pitiful. Not horrific, not abhorrent*, as Piggott suggests. *A living tongue*, Norris imparts. *You were the one I trained for*, I say in Cohen's words, rising to a fever pitch. It's clear who it's directed at. *The mouth of the river*, Anson asks? Cannon takes them by their arm and shakes her head, and points at me, *an image set to view its own reflection*.

VII

Bullshit. An even keel tarted up in tulle. *I admit it*, as Shapiro wrote. It's an evening of standard issue heightened to pure *animal observation*, as Wakely – no, that's not, it's, uh, more a suggestion of an animal. *I am formed*, Kennedy asserts and am I scared to be? Is this Dieter's *Litany for Self-Pity*? Nabokovian knowing posturing? A hymnal?

VIII

We conspire a bridge, Bacht says, providing the tools. I am okay. I have been okay for a while. *Time-worn*, like Howdle is, perhaps, but I have not given up, my own not giving up much longer than Vianese's list. *We make joy how we can*, he says. And *lives go on*, as Wright says. *This room doesn't exist till we look at it*, he continues. I've looked too long and undone it. Time to go. *I venture into the blackness*, despite Stephenson suggestions against it.

IX

You don't listen to what 'Jafar' says. You move away from the poems, the voices. You pick up your phone – the light dies just outside its frame. *All signs of life had vanished long ago*, you say, like Azriel, but your voice, thick and heavy like a voiceover in a movie trailer. You laugh. I am alone here, unsure why I have

switched to the second person. To hear myself echo?

X

I listen to music beneath windows when they're open in the summer, as Luczak said. I fly like his owl. *Come Hear The Music Play.* The summer blistering. I unwittingly flirt in broken French. *The seductive habit,* as Gaskins says. The habit of what? Of *sunshine perforating a cool morning,* as Brems says in a different tense, of a different time. Of men that *stand at the bar,* as the other Barnes says, as I do, holding court, watch, the evening in my hand. Of *change for my crossing* as Larkin suggests. An endless road laid out in front of me, unfurling. All that time and I couldn't see it, couldn't see how *summer's tread is light,* as Freeborn sums up. But it's Meischen's habit of *because I could* that dangles in front of me; Larkin's Big Sky waiting. Shaw is *ready this time.* I am ready. Like them, *I do not sleepwalk.*

XI

What will I feel when I reread this one?

XII

She sings in the present tense. *What good / I think / Life is / Come hear.* But only for then, for now. The future, my dear, is unknowable, unprovable, a throw without its impact – I sit in that fact until its waterline goes over my head.

[First Choral Ode]
Ann Pedone

It can take a long time
but the body adjusts to anything

In the morning, she looks out the small
window at the blue of the sea
and the slightly lighter blue of the sky

Layers and layers of blue and white
and inside the emptiness

Ceaseless flocks of birds
carried only by wind and sunlight

Ignorant of everything else
knowing and yet not knowing
that the music they make

Follows her like a body

And the waves are bright, the
day cold. She had a father and

Took his name at birth

White foam and then a splash

Or a catching rhythm
lunettes, positioning, the skin
around her eyes is no longer smooth

Stacks of yellow bills on the kitchen counter

An apricot pit lodged in the throat

When she was a child, her mother
warned her to always avoid
cold tiles, dying men, and peacocks

Back in the kitchen K must be
unwrapping the fish for dinner

What James was talking about
Heraclitus and Pound

She is *this* close:

Or that the man who lives across the
street has hands black as olives

Now I know

In Greek, *θάλασσα* means the sea

The Body Forgets
Victor Barnuevo Velasco

That afternoon, mother, you
gathered your loneliness
into a handful of broomsticks,
sharpened from the midrib
of palm fronds. By then, father's
shirt had already forgotten
his shape. The contour where
he used to rub his belly after dinner.
A hole in the armpit. Another
in the back where he scratched
an itch with the wall. The shirt
was limp. The shirt was lifeless.
The shirt made no promises to keep
as you struck again and again.
Each crack calling out the name
of your saints. Anthony for lost
objects. Jerome for the orphans
and abandoned. Jude for despair.
But the body forgot what it
inhabited, shedding skin every
minute, growing new bones,
becoming another person. Against
distance and time, the shirt
was defenseless. It had no way
of knowing who would return.

Romantic Comedy in a Two-Doored Closet

Rebecca Schneid

I.

You built something here.
I left a window open,
careless. Wind whistling in,
that's all I could hear, your hand
lying shaky in the holes
of my un-covered legs.
*Don't focus on the holes; focus
on me.* Eyes front; it's that easy.
I've been told I'm a drifter and
you've been told you're an acquired taste.
Skin-peeled and fleshy aromatics.
It was a talent, really,
the way you painted yourself
fresh each day, dripping
and staining the door handles.
You marked things, and me.

II.

We chase what we're obsessed with;
it's that easy. This is where we end:
in a car, straddling a line.
You on my front, metal on my back,
it seemed there was a way out.
Each night, I dreamt of you
as a shepherd and that's a metaphor
for the way the world works:
duplicitous and unforgiving but
for what we let ourselves
hold. I placed you in my mouth
gingerly. Here: speckled frames,

speckled eyes, speckled cheeks.
Nothing seems easier to touch than
that in abundance. *I've never known you,*
your mother said, and so that was that.
Miles away, we fall, inviolable.

Lucan – Late September
Denis Harnedy

It has been raining
and water flows over the weir
with greater force.
You change your profile pic
to something autumnal.

Children are back at school;
in the mornings
the traffic is heavier.
The leaves on the trees
close in on themselves.

And you continue
in the same way marking
gram after gram,
meet after meet,
stranger after stranger.

Loud greetings
hiding shyness,
rehearsed smiles.
timed dosings.
absent daylight.

Or so I imagine.
I am a stranger to you now.
You are back having fun –
your charnel network
persisting without season.

Runoff

Michael McKeown Bondhus

Fire hose
hookup
valves on
Mulberry Street
co-op. You
touch the rise and rivet,

moss circling the base
of the valve like a choker.

Cracks and slush below
the fire escape.
You raise
your hands, rinse them
in a brown trickle.

 The breeze
carries East River egg
salad sandwich smell,
making me think of the deli I loved
on 8th and 23rd
that closed.

In the Beginning
Christopher Wellings

Coffee to prove
we are also friends

down Lover's Walk,
across the stepping stones

to the café where your mouth
mentions interest rates and airlines

but a fleck of milk settles
on the bow of your lip

and I think of your body,
shifting under mine, and how

after so many almos^ts and maybes,
you took a shortcut to intimacy:

a video clip of you with a stranger,
animating me till I could not tell

if the pulse I felt
was mine or yours,

rejoicing in this new motion
of our hips, and realising this

is as close as we get
to where we began –

nearly transcendent,
shedding all context

till even at our most animal moment,
we cry out, *O God!*

Reflection
Gretchen Rockwell

I dream of chasing a rabbit in my sleep
fleet-footed, never close enough to catch
just close enough to feel it slip through
my desperate hands. I dream of mahogany
floors and gilt-trimmed ceilings, an elegance
I know I lack. I've learned to stop tasting
that bitterness—turn it instead to
spearmint on my tongue, no longer ash but
a reckoning like roses, tender and fierce,
find a space where I learn to let go and be—

the way I used to chase the world—
everything inside it—with such joy,
my wide and open hands, my smiling mouth
rounding the corners of every mirror. polished
like glass, seeping through to remind me
things I never learned. the hourglass spills
light, drenching the hardwood. I can feel it
beckoning, becoming like candied violets,
where every petal blooms with possibility,
kept pure and perfect till the time is right.

Poor Monster
Ron Mohring

It wasn't breathing
on its own, so I forced my mouth over its mouth
or what I thought
might be its mouth and blew more of me into it.
Maybe I pushed
some pins into its soft middle. Maybe I cut
away some parts,
my favorites, the prettiest. I hated how easily
they surrendered.
More of it was leaking now, but I had tried so long,
not giving up,
inventing as hard as I could new reasons it might
latch onto. I coaxed.
I begged, and when that had no effect I punched it
in what might
have been its throat, its song-source, I could not
endure it,
it disgusted me, I hated how it lolled, crumpled
and devoid
of gratitude, it would not stand, there was no hope,
it made
a sickly rasp when I took hold and tore it clean in half.

Altoid Altar
Vanessa R. Bradley

Carry an altar that travels with you in an altoid tin
One tealight, crystals, the smallest
glass potion jars (empty, they are for dirt and mountain air
to capture the last place you saw her alive)

Rosemary for remembrance and bay leaves for glory
Don't forget a pinch of salt—

leave the bread
for the birds.

10 Months
Joseph Monaghan

a voice-note of our weird
sex talk the bottle
we shared on the second date

train ride tickets
to whitstable

a plant pot shaped like a hamster
you named tiffany

spare toothbrush still
in the cabinet standing tall
and proud like a statue
after a war

the underwear you left
on the radiator

the plot in the garden
overgrown, forgotten

politeness
ending

unlit matches

hairs on the carpet
we did snow angels on

Uruz 3
Jeff Mann

It's a decade of drizzle,
hoarded hay rotting in the fields,
and heaps of scoria and slag

after refining fires die down.
Grizzly priest, superannuated
Viking, you are shrinking

in bone and brain—the elbow
gristle chafing and paining,
pruning your strength, the glass

inside the eye frosting over,
the retina's tapestry tearing
loose. You mounted the years,

now they mount you, trimming
your bull with castrating shears.
The summit's far behind,

dull downslope's all
that's left, my angry, addled,
apathetic steer. Desire's

Kleenex and a kinky video,
two dimensions being
far easier, cleaner, less

complicated than three.
You've seen this same rain
melt and minimize

others, and now the slow

drowning's come to you,
as all that's petty

grows in magnitude
while all that's fierce
is fated to fail and fade.

GRINDR

Stuart Barnes

Modern-day ENTERPRISE TINNED MEAT CHOPPER (a cast-iron antique, dignified though its retainer squeals SCREW THIS RING UP TIGHT). Does my black-and-yellow mask appeal, the illusion of absolute freedom? [Edit Profile](#) > [Body Type](#) > [Do Not Show/Toned/Average/Large/Muscular/Slim/Stocky](#) (the prime cuts two and five). Are you marbled? Expect to be parboiled. Are you dark meat? Dredging is forecast. Are you white meat and lean? You'll feed multitudes! Stuff the forefinger. Knuckle down. Linger over a profile, the illusion of a cube, nose the illusion of Wagyu. Ham it up with the jerky, the meatball, the boar. So many bears in so many squares! One week Peter, one week Pierre. One a rack, the other a rack. Isn't this voicelessness bliss, this mincing air! **Terms of Service:** I am the only means of grazing in this Capital of Beef. My addictive crystals sautéed whorls yet leave no visible trace (I am never subcutaneous, intravenous, intramuscular). I twang your hock, I butterfly, I slice against your grain. I French extremities, I split your wishbone; I never cater love, you chump. [Settings](#) > [Privacy](#) > [Delete Profile](#) > Are you sure you want to delete—

Note: Arial text from the ENTERPRISE TINNED MEAT CHOPPER and GRINDR

Dear Simon
Michael McKimm

is it too late now to say sorry, for the time
in the cowshed I made you cry?
Over what I don't remember
but I think I called you stupid
or at any rate I made you feel
I thought you were stupid.
We were boys
and forever having a go
but whatever it was you exploded
why are you always picking on me
and ran off up the hill to home.
I stood against the feed trough
frozen, knowing what I'd done
and the only way to fix it
but when I came eventually up to your house
found you red eyed in your room
we set to immediately in silence
with your toys and I did not speak.
Simon, it is now too late to say sorry
and I don't know how you died.
I don't know how you died and it's
too late, so when I think of you
it's in that cool stone shed, straw
and muck, bleached beams,
the rusted cropper, and dust
floating like angels in the doorway.
Angels! You're laughing now
at my own conceit, that big
smile of yours: weren't we friends
for years after that hot day?
I remember when we were twelve
you took me snorkelling off the rocks
at Runkerry. You wanted to show me

abandoned pots and hidden caves.
Your fingers clicked slow motion
underwater, warning me of jellyfish.
It was mad cold and on the beach
my hands shook blue. You quickly held them,
Simon, pressed between your own. You were
the least stupid person I ever knew.

On The Nature Of Or Relating To
Tobias Wray

White-throated swifts
climb the air to this
seventh-floor lookout,
my temporary office.

I recognize their
balletic assaults.
Truly, hunger is
everywhere and often.

I study the swifts
hungering over the parking.

Face to the glass,
I forget the ancients,
their mountains.
I imagine falling, guess
where I would land.

From here, the city
is a clever organism.
The streets like feathers, like
the pads of a thumb.
That filial want under my palm.

If You're Reading This Poem, I Might Be Dead
Ben Kline

Meaning I can admit I loved you
and by loved I mean we fucked
alternating Thursdays at your duplex

and by fucked I mean your back
against your cerulean shower tiles
and my husband's explicit wishes.

Our agreed-upon permissions
made a fool of you the Wednesday
you waited for me at the Hilton,

draped in sheets like a Fuseli.
My husband pretended polyamory
was more than my greed, meaning

I saw his face every morning
and by his face I mean my choice
and I chose a life with him. My aunts

said never trust a man who leaves
another for you and I always left you
by midnight. You said you understood,

that it worked for your busy life
and by worked it sounded hopeful
and hope means faith. But I was bad

religion. Stunningly ex-Catholic,
a rosary knotting your knuckles,
hot wax down your arm at Mass

on Holy Saturday, which means

resurrection through suffering,
which means a god forsaking us

for everyone else, the original
trickle down. On the balcony
you called me a heathen, not

a hedonist, though I returned
every second of pleasure you
gave, meaning it worked for us

when we needed it to, my ring
next to the tissues and poppers,
the photo of you and your mom

at the beach, hair in nine directions,
your arm all the way around her
meaning you know how love differs

from lust, how love maintains shape
and place. How it takes the picture
and finishes the thought.

Playground
Cyril Wong

Rain chastises the slides and monkey bars
and the heads of our phantom children,
girls and boys we could have adopted
in a parallel country, on a different earth.
They should be wearing masks, maybe
caps and plastic raincoats, but we
let them run around anyway. The rain
stops within minutes, this being Singapore.
And other little ones join in, but rain
pours and keeps pouring from the holes
of our youngsters' eyes, spilling
and splashing on everyone. Another parent
storms over to tell us our kids are
being a nuisance and to take them away.
This older woman also warns that we can't
make our offspring bear the torrent
of our damage and incompleteness. My partner
reminds her, *But people like you do this
to your children all the time—*
I awaken to the sound of our neighbours'
kids laughing and playing on the playground
downstairs. You're still asleep
and in the sky outside, dark clouds gather.
When you do get up and ask me
what I'm searching for, standing there so long
at the window, I honestly can't begin to say.

Hymn to St. Wilgefortis

Kelly Piggott

Liberata, “blessed art thou,”
 upon your feast day in the heat of mid-summer
 I leave grains and oats by your feet, one slipper gold.
 The other, left bare and limp, the color of eggshell.
 The fiddler rested by your stone body.
 You smiled as he played for you, the beard braided
 against your bosom, unafraid.
 He looked up at you and said you were beautiful
 Not pitiful. Not horrific, not abhorrent.
 A beard cannot un-woman make.
 I stand where he played his fiddle for you,
 a worshipper never confirmed, I weep at your feet.
 Princess, you gave the fiddler-pilgrim your gold shoe
 because you more than your sisters,
 their names forgotten, more than your silent mother,
 knew the cruelty of fathers who think
 themselves a god and king.
 Did your mother feel anything at all
 when he drove the nails through the bones
 of your palms?

Kümmernis, “blessed art thou,”
 nails through palms into the cross, blood
 sticking to haphazard wood: Roman perfection.
 A warning to the slaves who dreamed
 to run, this was you— you, for the crows.
 Their beaks don’t rip my chin, but the razor
 nicks the curves in a growl of metal: to and fro,
 be slow, slide from the chin up to the sideburns:
 I have to keep my skin clear so they can’t know.
 I can’t let lips or fingers touch my jaw, my face.
 Your jaw is not slack with despair or agony,
 Iberian brown eyes half-lidded, your smile wan—

Your father found no joy in your pain
 because you did not scream or beg
 for forgiveness, salvation—you needed none.
 You titled your chin to the sky, the sun searing.
 The beard you prayed for shines gold in god's light
 and your olive skin healthy and bright as the blood
 sticking in scattered drips to your palms.
 The beard, *barbe, a barba*— a punishment?
 A slight from god to make you un-woman?
 Only to the most foolish of men,
 who cannot face their reflection.

Frasobliwa, “blessed art thou,”
 the Spaniards say it was the Moorish king,
 the Portuguese, the pagan king of Sicily,
 heathens and heretics against god,
 that made you beg to be deplorable ,
 to make you ‘un-woman,’ but not even
 the Vatican itself would accept you.
 It was not the Pagan, not the Moor
 you would not marry— it was the cruelty
 of your father in the older man he'd have
 you lay quietly in bed for, legs spread, eyes
 closed. I want no man: I fear them all the same.
 Wives bruised not only in body offer
 their libations, pray for armor, for liberation
 from husbands who speak sweet promises
 but break their vows with their hands.
 Un-encumber the wife before she dies
 by his hand, liberate the lesbian
 who is sick at the thought of him inside her,
 give voice to the voiceless on your bristles.

Uncumber, “blessed art thou,”
 the bearded lady worships at your altar.
 Helena Antonia, Josephine Clofullia, Annie jones,
 Julia Pastrana, returned to Sinaloa, reclaimed—
 my chin bristled red, thighs knotted with hair,
 my beard shaven and hidden, I worship at your altar.
 At fifteen, I was your devotee without your name.
 “Saint Solicitus—“ The Brothers Grimm called you,

found at age twenty-four in my hunt for inspiration.

Solicitus, the feminine restless.

Why do I not see you in glass-stained windows?

They say you prayed for repulsion but it is the men
who hold the book who are repulsed.

The wives who pray for release, the lesbians
who don't want to be a vessel, the trans men and trans women
screaming to be heard, those who will not abide
by these false binaries: they see themselves
in your visage.

The church couldn't hide your breasts, your cinched waist
furls of your dress shaped like wings; your devotees
know who you are—we have always been here.

Wilgefortis, “blessed art thou,”

in Prague, your veil is blue and your eyes stoic,
your mouth is not hanging in woe or agony,
your beard grows long and without shame.

By the divine intervention of god? Or cysts
growing along the walls of where the womb would be?

The church destroyed art built in your honor
and we continue to shave our beards,
our legs, our arms, chests, the areola, thighs,
even our vaginas, because a human's eye
sears far more hotly and cuts more deeply
than any god that sits on the sun.

Did your mother ask you, *do you think
you are a man?* when she found the bristles,
as mine did? You found power in your beard,
you found salvation, liberation, freedom.

You, who promise liberation from abuse and unkind
fathers, husbands, oppressors who think themselves justified—
I wish I could be so brave with my red beard.

*kyrie eleison,
amen.*

After Cavafy
Eric Norris

I close your book and then I close my eyes.
The many faces of anonymous
Men visit in my sleep: thick scents, accents—
Phoenician, Greek, Latin, Spanish, English—

The sweaty tang of strange piers licked by seas
Far from home. Antiquity. I am
Translated from a living tongue into
A lost language no one understands.

My grip will slip from everything apart
From a few dead friends. A cold current below—
Black as oblivion—rinses all
The night holds in its hands. Poetry

Brought me discoveries, like you. Only
My ecstasies became cruel memories.

the taste
Brad Beau Cohen

you were one I trained for
before school each morning
with hairspray chemicals cast

as budget smoke
rolled into the living room
I unsnapped a toothless VHS case

prized open its mouth
jagged gums warning
& bit my lip at the clash

of eighties plastic
as the tape slid in
The Lost Boys flickered on

given skin warmth
by the screen cracked
leather & blood

-soaked crop tops
parenthesised lean abs
for ten minutes each morning

I'd wait for a horror
that never came
mum was too busy with her hair

to catch me maturing
a palate fermented
by those dangerous boys

tonight we lie on your bed

film uninterrupted
for the first time

except for wild tastes
when our teeth crash
& necks snap

toward the door
your mum haunts
but this sequel huntress

doesn't find us
our hands off-screen
cropped by the duvet

fingers alive
& biting
in leukocyte light

trespassing
Philip Kobylarz

At the gate, bottles with cut lips. Crypts of grass cuttings. Moth wings. Stationary
weather front. Still
a front. At the gate, a trail worn thick. Strands of birch. Playing cards wet
and mangled in
alleys, no jokers. At the gate, a gate. Handles, pulled. Insouciant. Towards
a line of people bent
on waiting. At the gate, a passage to. Through the gate: a changeling of fences.

Where The River Meets The Sea

Beck Anson

after Gustavo Hernandez

What else could you be but
 the mouth of the river: tracing
 my thumb over your edges
 like it was my duty to bring heaven down to earth.
 What if you were here, in the space between
 a sun-soaked May afternoon
 and a dark river rising? It is a question
 I keep asking myself when I see you.
 Where the river meets
 the sea is where the salinity
 becomes too much to breathe,
 my lungs taking you in like a dog-eared page I keep
 returning to over and over,
 until you begin to mean something
 more than a pigment in my vocabulary.
 For you, I'd throw a stone into waters
 unknown. Another day passes by
 and still I lose my way,
 trouble always finding me a bed of rocks.
 But in you, I see a mouth I could swim in.
 In you, there is ease in the way
 I live, somehow.
 Not today but some days I am set free on
 the edge of a horizon because
 you bring the sky down
 to earth,
 each cloud settling
 like a grain of sand in my open palm.
 Here, take this leaf of an old life,
 and wash me away
 on the back of your current, beginning
 once more for a better one.

In Parmagianno's Mirror
Melissa Cannon

“The words are only speculations”
 –John Ashbery, “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror”

This girl-faced boy, painting his likeness, planned
 to win a king's commission. At nineteen, half
 his life already gone, he watched shapes bend
 on the surface he'd contrived to show himself:
 below a high warped window, he peers out,
 but since the bulging fish-eye will distort
 proportion, it's the arm that claims command
 of the foreground, draped across the tilted shelf,
 predicting how a cosmos will expand
 from his ruffled wrist, the oversized stretched hand.

*

The round room's claustrophobic—just a small
 cramped cell suspended under glass: the “I,”
 fixed like a bee in amber, waits in thrall
 and may or may not rouse to wonder why
 the universe concludes as it begins
 within the limits of this little lens.
 What's real? What's solid? What's ephemeral,
 a mirage where rays seep from a honeyed sky?
 Opaque, between the scene and the glazed ball
 that seems to gaze, the very light's a caul.

*

Forever musing *I'm an image set to view*
its own reflection oh how dazzling the way
shadow and sun will merge then split in two
define destroy each other in their play

Perhaps he'll capture the duality of things
 in an Eros of plump buttocks and cocked wings.
 The cloudy future leaves a residue
 of longing, and outside, behind him, the day,
 grown thinner, fades. If they had once been blue,
 the heavens now have given up their hue.

*

One more self-portrait. Still, we can only make
 these versions, mirroring identity.
 Imprinted on the gene, in the merest flake
 of brush-strokes layering pigment, there will be
 this signature; we recognize a style:
 some observer gasps, "I know that furtive smile!
 yes, he's the guy Giovanni posed for nak-
 ed, after the bugger propositioned me!"
 Costume and gesture, shed skins we forsake
 are remembered by each shifting stance we take.

*

The oval frames me as I adjust trimmed tress,
 ear-cuff and choker; my full breasts disappear
 beneath starched shirt, gold brocade vest. To dress
 well for this tryst where I show through what I wear
 requires a deft touch, the practiced master's skill:
 while feverish lovers labor to unveil
 their passions, stripping for a bare caress,
 we slip our raiment on and, adorned with sheer
 chiffon or leather coverall, express
 the essence of ourselves through artifice.

*In Life the Woman Sitting Next to Me on the Plane Asks What
Happens if a Big Wave Hits New York City?*

Stephen S. Mills

She has spent the trip
 reading her Bible
 open faced on the tray table
 which has now been stored
 in its upright position
 for our descent into New York City
 which we can see from above
 in all its glistening winter glory.
 She doesn't begin with the wave
 but other simpler questions
 which I try to answer quickly
 going back to my own book
 which is a bible of sorts—
 a bible of some queer
 man's boyfriends—his hookups—
 his affairs. I wonder if she's seen
 all the *fucks* and *holes*
 on the pages as I've flipped them.
 I'm guessing no since she's now
 engaging me in mindless conversation.
Is Central Park really that great?
 Yes, I say. *It is.*
 She's just passing through.
 Heading farther south.
 Worries she'll miss her connection
 and get stuck in this city
 where she's never been—
just over it—through it—
never fully in it.
 I say she should come sometime
 though I don't mean it.
 Then I attempt to open my book again
 but that's when she spots

the Statue of Liberty
as if she's surprised to find it
there in the water.
It's so small, she says.
And I wonder if she understands
perspective. Our relationship
to land. But I just nod
and that's when the wave
comes into mind
and the question—
so strange: *what happens*
if a big wave hits New York City?
She almost whispers it against
the window—her lips away
from me—so I pretend
not to hear
as we get closer and closer
to the earth—the landing
gear opening
and then that moment
of contact.
That return.

Sound of Sunshine **Scott Wiggerman**

Don't call me *Sunshine*. I'm someone who needs to ease into light.
Less like God, more like Mephistopheles—against light.

Shades drawn. Lighting candle-dim. No cream in my coffee.
My father mocks, *Good morning, Sunshine*, teases me with light.

No one left to ask about my name, my elders all dead,
all but my father, who can't remember how to wheeze out light.

Sunshine Superman, Sunshine of My Love, Let the Sunshine In—
my adolescent soundtrack was frozen in a frieze of light.

Scott means one from Scotland, a speaker of Gaelic. My background:
Swedish, German, Irish, English. No help, no vortices of light.

My father's nearly ninety, still with the *Sunshine* moniker.
I'm almost seventy, goading darkness to appease his light.

Jung claims enlightenment comes when we make our darkness conscious.
Find room for sunshine, Scott, in your basement. Please, test the light.

The Confession

Gregg Shapiro

All right, I admit it. The salted cashews missing from the three-pound can of mixed nuts are in my mouth, lodged in my molars, dancing down my gullet. My impatient tongue savoring

the subtle sweetness, salty smack of such a fruity nut. There's no need to pay a visit to the customer service window, to raise a fuss with the bored staff at the warehouse club. They have better things to do; hand out coupon booklets, provide refunds to more

deserving clients. Resistance was futile, every single time I passed the purple-labeled tub of nutty goodness. But you already knew that, recognizing the familiar pop of the blue plastic lid. Heard me digging with

freshly washed fingers. Turning the container like a cement mixer, as if rotation would bring the golden commas to the surface, rising above the almonds, pecans, whole and half peanuts and dreaded hazelnuts. The harvest complete, squirrel cheeks loaded, deciding

where to chew and crunch privately. The dog knows too, her little black nose lifted in my direction. I toss a couple peanuts her way, a well-deserved reward for keeping the delicious secret between us.

Leeward
Dave Wakely

Under Amsterdam's native Dutch, signs say
No Ball Games in English, German, French. Undeterred,
 Italians and Americans play on, stumps unguarded
 And goals open-mouthed as smartphones flicker
 Like fireflies in the trees. Summoned through the ether
 By digitised pheromones, they speak their
 Own tongue here. In London, we might call it
 Queen's English: in Vondelpark, e-motion's second letter
 Now a hyphen, the joke does not translate.

At the lakeside terrace on the hunting grounds' periphery,
 Baristas hide in shady corners, spiders watching the barflies
 Dance. Coffees dark as our Ray-Ban lenses,
 We study the fauna that rustles the undergrowth
 As dusk descends. 'Animal observation,' you mutter, as if
 At any moment you might unfurl your journal
 And update your case notes. Our waiter loiters in monastic black,
 Lizard tongue licking his pencil tip as he gazes out
 Over passion's scriptorium.

'Witness the courtship of the urban adolescent' you say
 As one doe-eyed buck signals to another, hip rolled
 Euphemistically in passing, spine slowly arching though
 It's hardly his shoulder he intends to stretch. We stipulate cream
 And sugar while their requests will be expressed more carelessly,
 Numbers scribbled on bus ticket backs that will rust
 Tomorrow in tumble dryers, never to be rung.

'The passion fruit,' the waiter murmurs as he delivers my plate,
 And I'm glad I long no longer to be touched
 So badly. Grateful to be touched so well,
 To weather this late summer at a calmer mooring
 Here on the leeward side of love.

He Wears a Sky Blue Polo in the Photo with his Wife
Matt Kennedy

in the wreckage of another man's

i am formed
while he disappears

over & over again

i slip
parts of myself
until i am his
mother &

& feeds from the swollen pink of

masculinity

like ice

inside of me

through him

he leeches
me

Litany for Self-Pity
Jeffrey Lee Dieter Jr.

Because I cannot sing like Callas, beautiful but imperfect
and cannot stand the sound of my own voice, womanish,
more nose than throat.

Because I was beautiful once and didn't know it,
and a waitress once told me that I looked like a Greek statue
and I was wanted as water is wanted,
because I carry a dead man's name
and the bronze will hold long after I'm gone
because I had a death wish
and drank and smoked and tripped while looking through
glory-holes at cum-stained screens, cock and balls,
not knowing that it was O.K. to love cock and balls,
because I fear death every day and don't know enough
and my best writing is done and this is habit.

theremin players
Lorelei Bacht

we climb our ghosts out of the hole

disguised as meadowlarks, teachers,
regular jacks.

we flood this half-lit dream.

we conspire a bridge: we will
write books to address each other –

a veinwork of stanzas across
obsidian waters.

a chapbook is contact enough.

Well-Read
Andrew Howdle

I often catch the second-hand,
Books old and cherished, the timeworn —
Like myself — that gladly display
Their slightly musty yesterdays.

For there is something heartening
In searching them out, the long-shelved:
In how they bide their time mildly
And welcome others on the shelf.

A meeting of minds? I suppose
That is part of their attraction:
How books age and lovingly fold
Their histories, embody life.

And how they, like this bagged H.D.,
Signed and timely inscribed, mark how
Earth hath ... variety: open
Worn pages to divergent loves.

Outtakes **Len Lukowski**

after Eddy

A man is lying on his back in a bed, shot
from above we see only his head and neck

and the legs and hand on of the man
straddling his face and holding the camera

'lick my balls, lick my balls'
the cameraman is saying, 'good boy'

the reclining man removes his mouth
from around the balls

bursts out laughing and
the top starts laughing too.

'I'm not your good boy,'
says the bottom,

'you're *my* good boy!'
The caption above

says something
about the downsides

of filming with your
best friend. I always

thought sex that was hot
could only be dark

and dark can be good

but the humour I

never quite found, that feeling
you'd always be kind of

an object
for it to be hot.

The bottom was trans
which shouldn't matter

but of course it matters
I needed to watch someone like myself

Licking the balls of another
man, laughing

My Husband Loves Diners
Isaiah Vianese

We've eaten our way across the city—
omelets on the Upper West Side,

the perfect sandwich in Chinatown.
We dine and talk, drink weak coffee.

We hold hands, worry about our friends,
try to remember pop songs we like.

We pay cash. We tip too much.
We are always hungry,

and that's the key after all these years.
We've not given up on longing

for each other, this city,
for everything and everyone

we want to taste and touch,
together and on our own.

We love. We crave.
We make joy how we can.

True Belief Belongs to the Realm of Real Knowledge

Patrick Wright

after Idris Khan

I believe our lives go on inside a tesseract.

In dreams we make love & amnesia stops me wanting to stay.

I believe if I wait long enough, till the end, you'll return as a saviour.

I believe in Orphic descents, & dreams are encrypted, & dreams are between here & the place we belong.

I agree with Bohm: that the Andromeda spiral could be curled inside one of our teardrops.

In the realm between quarks, everything occurs.

I believe this room doesn't exist till we look at it.

I agree with Augustine: that time makes sense till we think it through.

If time's a river, how do we know the water moves?

If we're not flesh & something else, why choose Earth?

Why is the Moon in just the right place?

I believe in leaving our shadows to step outside the cave.

I believe that death means falling out of time, & living the same life over & over again.

The Once-a-Month Night

Paul Stephenson

at 'Dot Cotton', The Junction

I didn't sit with Joel in the college bar
to hear him whining on – over wine
that he'd never meet someone. It was beer.

He didn't say, *Won't you come with me?*
or insist, come closing time, *Go on, please!*
I said, *No, go by yourself, I'm not comfortable.*

We didn't go, didn't queue, didn't pay.
There was no music. It wasn't disco and so
I wouldn't venture into the blackness

or turn my back to find Joel gone –
Joel clung to me, not fussed, a wallflower
in his sweet scent of Clinique *Happy*.

I didn't drink or scour, but bottled it,
not managing to find my body dancing
towards you – you were standing still.

And no, you didn't tell me I kissed too hard
because I didn't kiss you, never knew
inside the dry ice that you were even there.

The dawn never came. We didn't amble
home with your girlfriends as chaperones –
they saw me and, frankly, did not approve.

We didn't date or check to see if we'd fit
together. Each of us went on to travel nowhere.
I met nobody, lived thirteen years alone.

DNA Speaks
Olivia Banks

Listen.

I must confess—
this nucleotide sequence
isn't your fault.

I wanted to give you the wanting.
That's just what I do.

I know you tried to tell people
at your birthday party
when you were seven
and said *I want to marry*
the girl on the cake.

That was the same day
you beat up all the boys
who came near you
and carved their names
into the back of your bedroom door.

No one even knocked on it
to see where
you had gone.

Disco Nap
JP Seabright

I dreamt I was in a club	&
someone spiked my drink	&
everything went black	&
I could not move	I
could not open my eyes	but
I could hear the	soft
thudding heartache through	the
guilt-stained floorboards	the
awkward jubilation of	sex
in toilet cubicles	&
stranger's hands were upon	me
I was delicately cocooned	by
the bruised orchestrations	of
the earth against my body	&
the subtle ministrations	of
hands upon my limbs	&
gentle adulations of spit	were
flecked along my mouth	while
all around me fallen	arse
angels hollered hallelujahs	&
kaleidoscopic ejaculate	did
trip across my eyeballs	when
finally someone roused	me
I was naked and alone	&
my watch was gone	&
then I knew that it was true	&
how I long to be dancing	again

The End of Times **Lena Barton**

after “вечером...” (“in the evening”) by Kirill Korchagin

In the evening
a damp wind from the outskirts
brings the smell of fire
and some other elusive smell
a little bit sickly
like rotting persimmons
or blood boiling
like a man washing clothes in the gutter
swaying in line with the tortured trees

and the wind is warm and dense
swallowing smoke and us
while the moon creeps along the September street
like a beggar in yellow rags
and hand in hand
people lock their doors
and escape into the evening's fading light

the crackling radio warns
that we will not get home in time
and in a distant window
a child twirls
like an autumn leaf falling from its branch.

*"Jafar"***Mike Zimmerman**

You were the first faggot
I ever met, squeezing that snake
Staff and hoping to “marry” the princess.
(I think we both agree about that one.)
Sneering under a styled ‘stache, you ranted
About street trash. No one more oppressive
Than the oppressed, I guess. Isn’t that
The lesson every villain teaches? Next:
On a less preachy note, were you in love
With a parrot? Or did you just *love*
How he repeated every desire back at you?
And is that, in fact, how he learned
To speak so well—you had so much
You wanted and you couldn’t ever say
It, so eventually those desires
Became this unwieldy fucking bird, one
That turned on you, of course, since desire
Always turns on people like us, and now
You are a genie, the red embodiment of a wish
Gone wrong, closed and closeted until
Someone comes along to rub your bottle
Just—the right—way.

The Martian Chronicle: A Prelude

Yakov Azriel

1.

When you were still a boy, you didn't know too much about the planet Mars — a dead, abandoned world without a sea; instead of fertile Earth, you'd find a wasteland, so they said. Its rusty deserts couldn't grow a single plant, just like its moons of Dread and Fear; according to the books you read, all signs of life had vanished long ago.

But now you know this isn't true. You're not a little boy, you've learned there's oxygen on Mars to fill your lungs, and rain, and dew. You've learned that Mars has jungles, humid, hot and green. That Mars has blue lagoons. That men can live on Mars. That you're a Martian, too.

2.

What happens when you sense you're drawn to men? You count these men — *one, two, three, four* — but run away from them; you run in hope that none of them will ever overtake you, then you turn around and stop, in hope that when they spot you, they'll try to lasso you or stun you with a laser. You start counting: *one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.*

You imagine counting numbers — *one, two, three, four* — may somehow cause your closet walls to split. Perhaps you're really counting bars that you will visit and the benches you will sit upon in parks when twilight falls, or maybe grains of sand you'll find on Mars.

3.

Forget the rules. Forget the laws. Forget
 your parents' expectations and the kind
 of life your parents live. Forget the blind,
 the deaf, the mute, the lame. Forget the debt
 you owe your teachers and the alphabet
 you learned. Forget the banker's check you signed
 which can't be cashed, and linen intertwined
 with woolen threads. Forget your silhouette.

Remember what you saw on Mars: how green
 a Martian forest really is, how blue
 a Martian sea. Remember, too, the stars
 that dot the Martian heavens aren't seen
 on Earth. Remember Martian songbirds you
 have heard. Forget the Earth. Remember Mars.

4.

What planet are you from? Are you from Mars
 like me? We Martians find it very hard
 to feel at home on Earth, a planet marred
 by animosity to other stars,
 to men from other worlds. An Earthling gnars
 when we embrace; the love a Martian bard
 will sing about most Earthlings disregard.
 They laugh at us and mock our Martian scars.

Although these Earthlings frequently assert
 we Martians are unwanted immigrants,
 my telescope detects on Earth a man —
 a human male — he's taking off his shirt —
 his undershirt — his pants — his underpants —
 I race to Earth as quickly as I can.

5.

Earth's scientists, believing there's no sea
 on Mars, insist the planet is as dry
 as Mercury. They haven't seen what I
 have seen: beneath red desert scenery,
 an ocean flows. And there's a colony
 of mermen in that sea who do not cry

about their lack of legs but simply try
to live a life of aquatic dignity.

Beneath the arid surface, mermen are
as free as dolphins back on Earth, as free
as shadows who have managed to unlock
their closet's door and leave the door ajar.
And in my dreams, these mermen flock to me
to show me where my rocket-ship can dock.

6.
In Martian, every verb must end with "y,"
while nouns must end with "o," or rhyme with "o:"
amigo, scorio, camerado.
So many words are new: to merman-try,
to twilight-stay, to closet-nullify.
And old words have new meanings: shadow — glow —
Its most unique, distinctive feature, though,
is Martian syntax doesn't let you lie.

In Martian, you must tell the truth, without
the luxury of swimming in a sea
of falsehoods or of using words as masks.
It doesn't matter if you whisper, shout
or cry — you have to answer truthfully
the complex questions which a Martian asks.

7.
The men of Jupiter disdain the men
of Mars. Though they acknowledge Martian men
are males, these Martians aren't full-blown men,
according to the Jovians; "*true men
must dream of reaching Venus,*" claim the men
of Jupiter, "*whereas the so-called men
of Mars know only sterile rust — and men
who live in barren deserts aren't men.*"

Between the planets Jupiter and Mars,
small asteroids revolve around the sun.
Because I live on one of them, I see
what Jovians don't see — I see that Mars

is green with meadows, blue with lakes, the sun
and Earth reflected in a Martian sea.

8.

Answer all items on this questionnaire:

Your name: _____ Your age _____ An early memory
of Mars _____ What makes you feel that you are free
on Mars? _____ How did you first become aware
of Mars? _____ Describe the voices that you hear
inside your closet back on Earth, the key
you lost and shadows you can sometimes see _____
List all the lies you tell _____ Your greatest fear _____

Describe the Martian whom you dream about _____

The language he speaks _____ Where he goes at night _____

Describe the moons, the comets and the stars

your Martian grasps _____ When did you first stretch out

your hand to him? _____ How often do you write

his name? _____ How often do you yearn for Mars? _____

9.

you're not allowed to touch the lock you're not
allowed to hope you're strong enough to break
the cage you're not allowed to even shake
its bars you're not allowed to wonder what
it's like to cruise aboard a yawl a yacht
a skiff you're not allowed to stay awake
all night imagining brave sailors take
you to an island tropical and hot

you're not allowed to burn when standing near
another man who burns you're not allowed
to sparkle in the dark or glow or gleam
you're not allowed to breathe the atmosphere
of Mars or fantasize a Martian cloud
embraces you you're not allowed to dream

10.

At sunset, on a nameless Martian hill
which overlooks a nameless Martian sea,
a man from Mars is waiting patiently

for someone else to come — a man who will
resist the urge to hide, the urge to fill
the emptiness with lies. A solitary
oak is growing on the hillside, a tree
whose branches do not stir, whose leaves are still.

One man is waiting for another man
to come and be a Martian just like him;
he waits beside the oak. He thinks that some
of us might make the journey if we can
discover how. For now, he goes to swim
alone, until some other Martians come.

A Journal of My Father **Seán Griffin**

after Jiro Taniguchi

the buzzing teeth are warm against
my nape with your belly pressed
to my back. You bring the electric
razor up, lifting, gentle, creating
a fade. i'm perching on a wooden
stool we've since gotten rid of, cramped
in the bathroom. Your nose
wrinkles aren't keeping your
glasses on, and the breathing
that can only be your breath
sweeps the shores of my ears.

there's no way i can tell you
i'm not a son. You rub the back
of my head, now trimmed shorter
than you trimmed the grass. As i
am warmed by your palm, it was
mom who opened the bathroom
door to me in my sister's dress,
shocked as though she saw me
wounded, bleeding, but closed
the door. Unaware, you continue
cutting my hair in the only style
you could: short.

What We Caught **Ed Madden**

My dad hauled us across the dark
water by pulling on the trotline,

inspecting each hook for what it held.
The anchor was a chunk of metal,

a broken bit of farm equipment sunk
in the muck of the river, the other

end of it tied to a tree hanging over
the water, a bright bit of plastic flagging.

Watch out for snakes, he said. One could fall
off a low branch into the boat with you.

The water pulled us one way but my father
pulled us another, across, against.

We pulled up nothing that day but a gar,
ridged and slick, prehistoric, its eye gone dead,

probably bigger in my memory that it was.
He cut the line and let it sink. We floated

then he started the motor and we headed
back up the river.

what my father (not a poet) might say
Italo Ferrante

after Mary Jean Chan

that he got pushed into his dad's open casket when he was 8
that I should get a mastiff and name him Nero
that watching two men kiss on TV is like watching chimps scratch their bums and take a whiff
that he has never lost a tennis match in 56 years
that he will never accept blood from me
that watching two men kiss on TV is like watching a headmaster staple the tongue of his secretary
that he would never shake hands with a man who shaves his groin
that he was tickle tortured by his uncle for playing truant
that watching two men kiss on TV is like watching a nurse fit a catheter to an old sex addict
that I look like a meat loaf in my mustard jumpsuit
that he didn't raise his boy to be a daisy chain smuggler
that watching two men kiss on TV is like watching toddlers swallow a fistful of washing pods
that I don't need therapy when I can get a self-help book
that he will call in sick to my wedding
that watching two men kiss on TV is like watching an elephant rip off the bonnet of a truck
that he'd rather sell his forehead skin than change his family name
that he learnt to cure his loneliness with a cup of vinegar

The Nightowl
Raymond Luczak

I scrounge around in dumpsters behind restaurants.
I switch lights on statues of shame caught in the act of faking.
I listen to music beneath windows when they're open in the summer.
I observe the street from underneath a thick shrub.
I knock garbage cans over and watch them spill out stench.
I eavesdrop on young lovers heating up their cars.
I blink like mothwings spinning propellers.
I hide behind thick trees in the glare of security lights.
I breathe inside the cracks of mortar in brick walls.
I record in closed-circuit the blurry footage of illegal acts.
I flit lighter than flies zeroing onto a rotting tomato.
I wiretap bedrooms and kitchens full of secrets.
I blow ice-cold puffs of air across wet sidewalks.
I see deeper than infrared the silent wishes flashing like neon.
I stand stiffer than curvature.
I await the perfect moment to snatch your glimmering dreams.
You are a mere mouse.

Your Monster
Christopher Gaskins

Youth – it underlies
everything.
It makes you older.
It is sand in your clothing, the seductive
habit
of the mind's betrayal and again
he is breathing
hot needles and gravel
on the back of your neck – your father in red, his
uniform dirty
and after-work anger like a serial rapist,
that need for an outlet,
a plan
by chance and you the accomplice
at seven years old.

A stray cat he'd discovered
hiding under our porch, alone
and timid;
he lured it gently, tempted by hunger, his voice reassuring,
then hung it
from the limb of a nearby oak tree.
Smiling, in afterglow,
he hugged you
on purpose, furtive and close, this
cigarette man, this god
of Coors beer whose love is infection –
your father, your
monster
in the darkness of memory.

Docile Movement
Marianne Brems

Thin sunshine perforates a cool morning.
We're on our bicycles on a road
whose name I forget.
Long stalks of colorless dry grass
stand upright next to pavement
that wanders through Live Oak and Madrone.
She tells me that being around happy people
makes her feel sad.
That's just the way it is now she says.

She sees a gopher snake on the road
and stops, unhurriedly.
With gentle motion, she picks up
this snake in both hands.
Without hardening, hissing, or venom,
its movements, docile, loose, flexible
mimic hers.
She keeps her hands close to her chest
while it slides around her fingers.
She rubs its belly, its back.
Their gestures one.

Her features softer now,
she lays this straw colored snake
in the dry grass away from cars
where it is instantly invisible or gone.

Queer American Sentences

Joshua Barnes

with thanks to Allen Ginsberg

That scar in his beard, a jagged line of pink deforesting his chin.

Four men stand at the bar, cocktails for crutches, waiting to be noticed.

Homo communist pinko fag – hear the bray of my reddening heart.

Three boys prove they're men by beating the neighbor kid, their knuckles hairless.

Clock the brunette in blue, whisper hot in her ear, under the lacefront.

Levi's and leather make the man, a tight white T-shirt just helps the cause.

There's no smoking here now, the men are both prettier and uglier.

Listening to this hetero say gays are the new majority.

Cedar, sweat, spring, juniper, amber, leather, if I could bottle you.

The term straight implies an opposite, a way of living somehow bent.

Invading armies of shirtless, sweating men, all coarse hair and biceps.

Nine black teens voguing their beautiful brains out at midnight on Thirteenth.

What gay man hasn't had *faggot* shouted at him from a moving car?

Take off my shirt, stretchmarks, teardrop tits, a roll of flab, put it back on.

Friend of D, fan of the D, orders a clean-burning vodka soda.

Suspected sodomites sit sibilant on asses of solid steel.

The lights are off, nothing's open, and I'm not allowed to board the flight

Basilica of the Big Sky
Luke Larkin

I didn't understand it, "God's country,"
until I crawled across its prairie
on four wheels, everything beyond
my headlights so dark that the road widened
into sky, not a even a horizon seam to bind them at their center

and every few miles jutted a lamppost
shining football-stadium light down
onto groundhog apartment complexes
and white plywood crosses reminding
transcontinentalists that this whole country's a cemetery

from the fruited plain to the purple
mountaintops jagged like teeth that chew
before swallowing and spit me out
onto blacktop bloodstained by skunk,
and by deer, and by motorist too drowsy to make it through

to the next gas-station cathedral where
I buy two 5-Hour Energies and prostrate
myself to a cashier named Maureen
who rounds down to the dollar as if to leave
me change for my crossing, the sun not due in God's sky for hours yet.

Rosmålning
J. Freeborn

for my mother

Did you never ask
because to ask and not
receive was worse
than the original deprivation?

They say the Spirit
moves in you—: that this
is how you survived
so well. But by their metric

to survive is to win
while everything else
is a medalless place.
You paint the scroll

and flower as your
forebears did—: on spruce
and pineboard dragged
from silent mountains

down the long and
fraying coast. You paint
the name you never
asked for amongst

these aureations
to fix above the lintel
on a house where even
Summer's tread is light.

In Rooms Once
David Meischen

Galveston 1974, September and Onward

I lived behind a shipping magnate's red brick
corner-towered dream

wrap-around balcony
widow's walk looking out to sea

I lived above
the carriage house
in rooms once servant's quarters

narrow stairwell
mullioned windows
cords to sash weights
long since frayed
snapped

pools of dusty light from the shell-strewn alley

~ ~ ~

In the yard a Great Dane paced like Cerberus.
Basement renters grinned at the gate, nipple-
ringed, bellies haired like twin hurricane maps,
their black Eldorado docked at the curb when

I jogged to the Seawall. Breezes heavy with damp,
with salt. I picked up a stranger there one afternoon.
Because I could. Aftertaste of unwashed foreskin.

~ ~ ~

I said *yes*

to dinner at the magnate's house
yes to drinks on the balcony
where Shannon pursed his lips and winked at me

I said *yes*
to a drag show at the Dolphin Room

to a platter of oysters at Gaido's

yes

yes

to a nightcap with Shannon

promise unspoken between us

my body wrapped in his

upstairs

in the servants' quarters

beneath my damp sheets

~ ~ ~

In the spring, a red tide came to Galveston.
I walked the shore with Shannon, a wash
of algae, seaweed, toxified fish between us
and the murmuring surf.

The light smelled of rot.

We picked up shells. Nothing whole,
no shell un-marred. Shannon wanted
fragments, edges smoothed by sand and time.

later

I dawdled
watching Shannon bathe

he reached for a towel

luminous

the curve of his lovely cock

a droplet trembled there
catching light
for the instant of falling

Love Poem with Teeth **Syd Shaw**

I keep sweating at night from the dream
where your teeth fall out. You, bless,
change the sheets again.

In the dream you chip a tooth and start to cry.
I hold you, offer tea and glue,
stroke your hair helplessly.

In the morning you say I am sleepwalking
again, pacing the hallway
and crying out.

I take new pills, put a stone under my pillow
with lavender just in case.
The stone is lumpy.

It is an old recipe, lucid dreaming;
lavender, moldavite, xanax. Asleep,
I cling to agency.

In the dream you chip a tooth and I am ready
this time, have stored a first aid bag
between my ribs.

I fill your mouth tenderly with my old teeth
until the bag empties
and you smile, crooked.

One missing canine. I pull it from my own mouth
and it does not bleed.
I feed it to you,

Hold it against the roof of your mouth until it takes root.

In the dream we kiss, you run
your tongue over my gums.

I am toothless, grinning like a fool. You are whole.
All night I dream of us
and do not sleepwalk.

Contributor's Notes

BECK ANSON

Beck Anson (he/they) is a queer and trans writer whose work is featured in *Rattle*, *RHINO*, *Humana Obscura*, and others. He lives in Northampton, MA and is working on their PhD in plant biology at UMass-Amherst.

YAKOV AZRIEL

Yakov Azriel was born in New York and came to live in Israel at the age of 21. He has published five full-length books of poetry in the US, the latest being *Closet Sonnets: The Life of G.S. Crown (1950-2021)*, which was published by Sheep Meadow Press in November 2017. Over 900 of his poems have been published in journals and magazines. In addition, his poems have won twenty-four prizes in international poetry competitions.

LORELEI BACHT

Lorelei Bacht's poetic work has appeared / is forthcoming in *The Night Heron Barks*, *The Selkie*, *Queerlings*, *Barrelhouse*, *Beir Bua*, *Corporeal*, *Harpy Hybrid Review*, and elsewhere. They can be found on Twitter @bachtlorelei and on Instagram @lorelei.bacht.writer. They are currently watching the rain instead of working on a chapbook.

OLIVIA BANKS

Olivia Banks is a LGBTQ+ poet and aspiring English teacher from Hudson, Massachusetts. She received her BA in English from Framingham State University in 2021, where she is currently attending graduate school. As a writer, she mainly explores the intersection between sexuality, trauma and the body. Her work has been published in *The Onyx* and is forthcoming in *Plume Poetry 10*.

JOSHUA BARNES

Joshua Barnes was born and raised in Boyne City, Michigan, and is now a Philadelphia transplant with a career as a Nurse Manager. His poetry has previously appeared in *Philadelphia Stories*, *Kairos Literary Magazine*, and *The Bloom*. He's been a devoted comic book nerd since he was ten. When not writing

or working, he can be found reading poetry and horror fiction, perfecting his handstands, or binge-watching Drag Race.

STUART BARNES

Stuart Barnes is a poet from Hobart living in Rockhampton on Darumbal country. His first book, *Glasshouses* (UQP, 2016), won the 2015 Arts Queensland Thomas Shapcott Poetry Prize, was commended for the 2016 Anne Elder Award and shortlisted for the 2017 Mary Gilmore Award. His second book, *Like To The Lark*, is forthcoming from Upswell Publishing in 2023. 'Cerberus watches Eros' was nominated for the 2020 Pushcart Prize, 'Off-world Ghazal' was shortlisted for the 2020 Montreal International Poetry Prize and 'Sestina after B. Carlisle' won the 2021/22 Gwen Harwood Poetry Prize. @StuartABarnes

LENA BARTON

Lena Barton (she/her) is a student in the UK reading Russian. She is currently working on a collection of translations of early 20th century Russian poetry.

MICHAEL MCKEOWN BONDHUS

Michael McKeown Bondhus (formerly Charlie; ze/zim or he/him) is a bigender (male/neutrois) Irish-American writer. He's the author of *Divining Bones* (Sundress, 2018) and *All the Heat We Could Carry* (Main Street Rag, 2013), winner of the Thom Gunn Award. His work's appeared in *Poetry*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Missouri Review*, *Columbia Journal*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, and *Bellevue Literary Review*. He's received fellowships from the Virginia Center for Creative Arts, the Sundress Academy for the Arts, the Tyrone Guthrie Center (Ireland), and the Hawthornden Castle International Retreat for Writers (UK). He lives in Jersey City, NJ (unceded Lenape land) and teaches at Raritan Valley Community College. More at: <http://michaelbondhus.com>

VANESSA R. BRADLEY

Vanessa R. Bradley (she/her) loves fantasy novels but manages to write a lot of poetry about divorce and discovering queerness. She lives in Epekwitk (Prince Edward Island) with her wife, and she has been published with *Farside Review*, *Adriatic Mag*, *Tilted House*, *The Wild Word*, *Blank Spaces Magazine*, and *On Loan from the Cosmos*, and is forthcoming in *Drunk Monkeys*. Find her on Instagram @v.r.bradley and on Twitter @vanessarbradley.

MARIANNE BREMS

Marianne Brems is a writer of trade books, textbooks, short stories, and poetry. She has an MA in Creative Writing from San Francisco State University. She is the author of three poetry chapbooks from Finishing Line Press *Sliver of*

Change (2020), *Unsung Offerings* (2021), and *In Its Own Time* (forthcoming in 2023). Her poems have also appeared in literary journals including *The Pangolin Review*, *Nightingale & Sparrow*, *The Sunlight Press*, *The Lake*, and *Green Ink Poetry*. She lives and cycles in Northern California. www.mariannebrems.com.

MELISSA CANNON

Melissa Cannon lives and writes in Nashville. She has recent publications in *Sinister Wisdom*, *Tofu Ink Arts* and *Phantom Kangaroo*. She is queer, in all senses of the word, and, at 76, has returned to the work force.

BRAD BEAU COHEN

Brad Beau Cohen's (he/him/they/them) poetry has been published by *fourteen poems*, *Versification Zine*, anthologised twice by Fincham Press, and exhibited in The Hilbert Raum and SomosArt House. Some of his poems have been adapted into film by Sian Williams and were catalogued at the BFI Flare LGBT Film Festival and screened at FRINGE queer film festival. Cohen is a queer, working class writer from Guernsey based in London. *Sugar Water* (Soho City Books) is his debut poetry pamphlet.

JEFFREY LEE DIETER JR.

Jeffrey Lee Dieter Jr studied at Goucher College and lives in Nottingham, Maryland. His work has appeared in the following literary journals: *Allegheny Review*, *Bacopa Literary Review*, *Barrier Island Review*, *Calliope*, *Grubb Street*, *Harford Poetry and Literary Society*, *The Hollins Critic*, *River Poets*, *Tributaries*, *Gertrude Press*, and *Maryland Literary Review*. He also had the great fortune of winning 2nd place in the Bethesda Literary Contest judged by Stanley Plumly.

ITALO FERRANTE

Italo Ferrante (he/him) earned a BA in English Literature and Creative Writing from the University of Warwick. He is currently undertaking an MA in Creative Writing at Lancaster University. To date, his work has been published by *Train River*, *Nymphs & Thugs*, *Dreich*, *Queer Zine*, *Flash Journal*, *Reinvention*, and *Orchard Lea Press*. In his free time, he likes re-watching *The Passion of Joan of Arc* with post-punk playing in the background (ideally The Cure).

J. FREEBORN

J. Freeborn is a social worker and the anthology books managing editor at The Poetry Society of New York. They have recent work in *Stone of Madness*, *Travesties*, *Dear Poetry Journal*, and elsewhere.

CHRISTOPHER GASKINS

Christopher lives in Central Florida and works as both a high school and college instructor. His poems have appeared in the journals *Pearl*, *Ganymede*, *Assaracus*, *Down in the Dirt*, *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*, *Chroma* and in the anthologies *Sanctified* and *Gay City, vol. 2*. My first full-length collection of poetry entitled *Boys Have Been...* was published by Sibling Rivalry Press in October 2013.

SÉÁN GRIFFIN

Seán Griffin (she/they) received an MFA from Manhattanville College. Seán's writing appeared in *[PANK] Magazine*, *The Mud Season Review*, and elsewhere. Seán contributed to the long poem, *Arrival at Elsewhere* (Against the Grain Press). Seán teaches creative writing at Mercy College and is an editor for *Inkwell Journal*. Instagram and Twitter @seangrifter

DENIS HARNEDY

Denis Harnedy is a barrister living and working in Dublin. He has recently begun writing poetry with two distinct sources of inspiration – his year of living in Lucan from November 2020 to November 2021 (much of it during lockdown) and his reading of Chinese history. He was published in Issue 11 of *Impossible Archetype* and has three poems forthcoming in the next double volume of *Shearsman Magazine* (133 & 134; Autumn/Winter 2022).

ANDREW HOWDLE

Andrew Howdle is a retired teacher and educational consultant. He lives in Leeds, England. He studied literature at the Universities of Manchester and York. Poems have appeared in *Ekphrastic Review*, *Impossible Archetype*, *Nine Muses*, *Singapore Unbound*, *Words for the Wild* and *Lovejets: Queer Male Poets on 200 Years of Walt Whitman* (2019).

MATT KENNEDY

Matt Kennedy (he/him) is an Irish Research Council Scholar, a doctoral candidate in the area of trans studies in the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice at University College Dublin, a writer and boxer. He is employed currently as the policy and research officer in *Belong To*, Ireland's National LGBTQ+ youth organisation. Instagram @matt_c_kennedy.

BEN KLINE

Ben Kline (he/him) lives in Cincinnati, Ohio. Author of the chapbooks *SAGITTARIUS A** and *DEAD UNCLES*, Ben was the 2021 recipient of Patricia Goedicke Prize in Poetry and the winner of the 2020 Christopher Hewitt Award

poetry. His work appears in *South Carolina Review*, *Autofocus Lit*, *bedfellows* magazine, *POETRY*, *Rejection Letters*, *Southeast Review*, *The Shore*, fourteen poems and many other publications. You can read more at benklineonline.wordpress.com

PHILIP KOBYLARZ

Philip Kobylarz is an itinerant teacher of the language arts and writer of fiction, poetry, book reviews, and essays.

LUKE LARKIN

Luke Larkin is a queer writer living in Missoula, where he received his MFA from the University of Montana. His work is featured or forthcoming in places like *HAD*, *Sonora Review*, *Iron Horse Literary Review*, and others. He edits *Unstamatic* and helps out with *CutBank*.

RAYMOND LUCZAK

Raymond Luczak is the author and editor of 30 books. Titles forthcoming in 2022 include *Chlorophyll: Poems* (Modern History Press), *A Quiet Foghorn: More Notes from a Deaf Gay Life* (Gallaudet University Press), and *Widower, 48, Seeks Husband: A Novel* (Rattling Good Yarns Press). His most recent title is *Lunafly: Poems* (Gnashing Teeth). He lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and online at raymondluczak.com.

LEN LUKOWSKI

Len Lukowski is a writer and performer based in Glasgow. He writes poetry, fiction, lyrics and memoir. His work has been published in *The Quietus*, *Magma*, *New Writing Scotland* and many other places. In 2018 he won the Wasafiri New Writing Award for Life Writing. Len's debut poetry pamphlet *The Bare Thing* is published by Broken Sleep Books. He has played in the punk bands Jean Genet, Twinken Park and Faggot.

MICHAEL MCKIMM

Michael McKimm's publications include *Fossil Sunshine* (Worple, 2013) and, as editor, the anthology *The Tree Line: Poems for Trees, Woods & People* (Worple, 2017). His poems have most recently appeared in the anthologies *Arrival at Elsewhere* (Against the Grain, 2020) and *Queering the Green: Post-2000 Queer Irish Poetry* (Lifeboat Press, 2021). He lives in east London, UK and is currently collecting swimming pool poems: michaelmckimm.co.uk/swimming-pool-poems/

ED MADDEN

Ed Madden is the author of four books and four chapbooks of poetry. He is a professor of English at the University of South Carolina. In 2022 he will complete

his second and last term as poet laureate for the City of Columbia, SC. He is recipient of the Academy of American Poets laureate fellowship and artist residencies at the Hambidge Center in Georgia and the Instituto Sacatar in Itaparica, Brazil. His work has recently appeared in *Channel*, *storySouth*, and the 2021 *Forward Book of Poetry*.

JEFF MANN

Jeff Mann has published six books of poetry, *Bones Washed with Wine*, *On the Tongue*, *Ash*, *A Romantic Mann*, *Rebels*, and *Redneck Bouquet*; three collections of essays, *Edge*, *Binding the God*, and *Endangered Species*; a book of poetry and memoir, *Loving Mountains, Loving Men*; six novels, *Fog*, *Purgatory*, *Cub*, *Salvation*, *Country*, and *Insatiable*; and three volumes of short fiction, *A History of Barbed Wire*, *Desire and Devour*, and *Consent*. With Julia Watts, he co-edited *LGBTQ Fiction and Poetry from Appalachia*. The winner of two Lambda Literary Awards and four National Leather Association-International literary awards, he teaches creative writing at Virginia Tech.

DAVID MEISCHEN

A Pushcart honoree, with a personal essay in *Pushcart Prize XLII*, David Meischen is the author of *Anyone's Son*, winner of the John A. Robertson Award for Best First Book of Poetry from the Texas Institute of Letters (TIL). David has twice received the Kay Cattarulla Award for Best Short Story from TIL, most recently for "Crossing at the Light," lead story in *The Distance Between Here and Elsewhere: Three Stories* (*Storylandia*, Summer 2020). Co-founder and Managing Editor of Dos Gatos Press, he lives in Albuquerque, NM with his husband—also his co-publisher and co-editor—Scott Wiggerman.

STEPHEN S. MILLS

Stephen S. Mills (he/him/his) is the author of the Lambda Award-winning book *He Do the Gay Man in Different Voices* (2012) as well as *A History of the Unmarried* (2014) and *Not Everything Thrown Starts a Revolution* (2018) all from Sibling Rivalry Press. His work has appeared in *The American Poetry Review*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *The Antioch Review*, *The New York Quarterly*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *The Rumpus*, and others. Two of his books were placed on the Over the Rainbow List compiled by the American Library Association. He lives in New York City with his partner and two schnauzers. <http://www.stephensmills.com/>

RON MOHRING

Ron Mohring is the author of *Survivable World* (Washington Prize) and *The Boy Who Reads in the Trees* (forthcoming, 2023). He is the heart and soul of Seven Kitchens Press.

JOSEPH MONAGHAN

Joseph Monaghan is a recent graduate of English with Creative Writing from Goldsmiths College, University of London. He has been published in *14Poems*, *Silver Rose* and *Streetlight Magazine*.

ERIC NORRIS

Eric lives in Portland, Oregon, USA.

ANN PEDONE

Ann is the author of *The Medea Notebooks* (spring, 2023 Etruscan Press), and *The Italian Professor's Wife* (Press 53), as well as the chapbooks *The Bird Happened*, *perhaps there is a sky we don't know: a re-imagining of sappho*, *Everywhere You Put Your Mouth*, *Sea [break]*, and *DREAM/WORK*. Ann's work has recently appeared in *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Chicago Quarterly Review*, *The Louisville Review*, *Gigantic Sequins*, *New York Quarterly*, *Narrative Magazine*, *Bayou Magazine*, and *Conduit*.

KELLY PIGGOTT

Kelly Piggott (she/her) is a native Midwesterner, lesbian, and graduate of the MFA program at Georgia College and State University. Her work is influenced heavily by folklore and examines relationships with the body, environment, and familial attachments through a queer lens. She lives and writes in Georgia.

GRETCHEN ROCKWELL

Gretchen Rockwell is a queer poet who can frequently be found writing about gender, science, space, and unusual connections. Xe is the author of the chapbooks *body in motion* (perhappened press) and *Lexicon of Future Selves* (Vegetarian Alcoholic Press) and two microchapbooks; xer work has appeared in *AGNI*, *Cotton Xenomorph*, *Whale Road Review*, *Palette Poetry*, and elsewhere. Find xer at www.gretchenrockwell.com or on Twitter at @daft_rockwell.

REBECCA SCHNEID

Rebecca Schneid is a Duke senior, born and raised in South Florida. She's studying English, journalism, and gender studies, and works as a writer for the 9th Street Journal and FORM Magazine, photo editor at the Duke Chronicle. Her poetry has been recognized at Duke with the Academy of American Poets University Prize and the Terry Welby Tyler Jr. and Lee Emerson Tyler Award for Poetry. She has also published articles in *INDY Week*, Durham's alt-weekly, the *South Florida Sun Sentinel*, *ELLE*, and *The Guardian*.

JP SEABRIGHT

JP Seabright (she/they) is a queer writer living in London. They have three pamphlets published: *Fragments from Before the Fall: An Anthology of Post-Anthropocene Poetry* by [Beir Bua Press](#); the erotic memoir *NO HOLDS BARRED* by [Lupercalia Press](#), and *GenderFux*, a collaborative poetry pamphlet, by [Nine Pens Press](#). *MACHINATIONS*, an experimental collaborative work exploring the life and work of Alan Turing is out later this year from Trickhouse Press, as is *Be[∞]Cause*, a microchap, from Ghost City Press. JP is Assistant Editor of Full House Literary Magazine, and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in October 2021. More of their work can be found at <https://jpseabright.com> and via Twitter @errormessage.

GREGG SHAPIRO

Gregg Shapiro is the author of eight books including the poetry collection *Fear of Muses* (Souvenir Spoon Books, 2022). Recent/forthcoming lit-mag publications include *The Penn Review*, *Exquisite Pandemic*, *RFD*, *Gargoyle*, *Limp Wrist*, *Mollyhouse*, *Poetic Medicine*, *Impossible Archetype*, *Red Fern Review*, *Instant Noodles*, *Dissonance Magazine*, *The Pine Cone Review*, and *POETiCA REViEW*, as well as the anthologies *Moving Images: Poems Inspired by Film* (Before Your Quiet Eyes Publishing, 2021), *This Is What America Looks Like* (Washington Writers' Publishing House, 2021) and *Sweeter Voices Still: An LGBTQ Anthology From Middle America* (Belt Publishing, 2021). An entertainment journalist, whose interviews and reviews run in a variety of regional LGBTQ+ and mainstream publications and websites, Shapiro lives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida with his husband Rick and their dog Coco.

SYD SHAW

Syd Shaw is a queer poet from the San Fernando Valley. Syd is Assistant Poetry Editor at Passengers Journal, and has a degree in creative writing from Northwestern University. They have previously been published in Cathexis Northwest, Ember Chasm, Waxing & Waning, Eclectica Magazine, Panoply Zine, and The London Reader, among others. Their passions include tarot, guitar, and aerial silks. Syd's work can be found at <https://sydshaw.carrd.co>

PAUL STEPHENSON

Paul Stephenson has published three pamphlets: *Those People* (Smith/Doorstop, 2015), which won the Poetry Business pamphlet competition; *The Days that Followed Paris* (HappenStance, 2016), written after the November 2015 terrorist attacks; and *Selfie with Waterlilies* (Paper Swans Press, 2017). He co-curates Poetry in Aldeburgh and lives between Cambridge and Brussels.

VICTOR BARNUEVO VELASCO

When not working with flowcharts and spreadsheets, Victor Barnuevo Velasco reads a lot, writes a few, and occasionally curates art exhibits. Born in the Philippines, he currently resides in the U.S.

ISAIAH VIANESE

Isaiah Vianese is author of the poetry collection, *Men and Music* (Coyote Creek Books 2016). His poems and book reviews have appeared in *Assaracus*, *Blue Collar Review*, *The Fourth River*, *Lambda Literary*, *Moon City Review*, *Rattle*, and *Rise Up Review*. He is also author of the chapbook, *Stopping on the Old Highway* (Recycled Karma Press 2009). He lives in New York City.

DAVE WAKELY

Raised in South London, Dave Wakely has worked as a musician, university administrator, poetry librarian, and editor in locations as disparate as Bucharest, Notting Hill and Milton Keynes. His writing has been shortlisted for the Manchester Fiction and Bath Short Story awards, and appeared in *Ambit*, *Best Gay Stories 2017*, *Chelsea Station*, *Fictive Dream*, *Glitterwolf*, *Holdfast*, *The Mechanics' Institute Review*, *The Phare*, *Prole*, *Shooter*, *Token* and *Truffle Mag*, amongst others. A poetry salon MC for Lodestone Poets and one of the organisers of Milton Keynes Literature Festival, he lives in Buckinghamshire with his husband and too many books, CDs and guitars. He tweets as @theverbalist

CHRISTOPHER WELLINGS

Christopher Wellings is a queer poet based in Brighton, with an academic background in sexual dissidence and cultural change. Christopher's poetry has appeared in *Queerlings*, and was long listed for the 2021 National Poetry Competition. Twitter: @ChrisRPoet

SCOTT WIGGERMAN

A 2021 inductee into the Texas Institute of Letters, Scott Wiggerman is the author of three books of poetry, *Leaf and Beak: Sonnets*, *Presence*, and *Vegetables and Other Relationships*; and the editor of several volumes, including *Wingbeats I & II: Exercises & Practice in Poetry* and *22 Poems and a Prayer for El Paso*, winner of a NM/AZ Book Award in 2020. He often teaches classes in form, most recently on the ghazal.

CYRIL WONG

Cyril Wong is a poet and fictionist in Singapore. His last book was *Infinity Diary*, published by Seagull Books in 2020.

TOBIAS WRAY

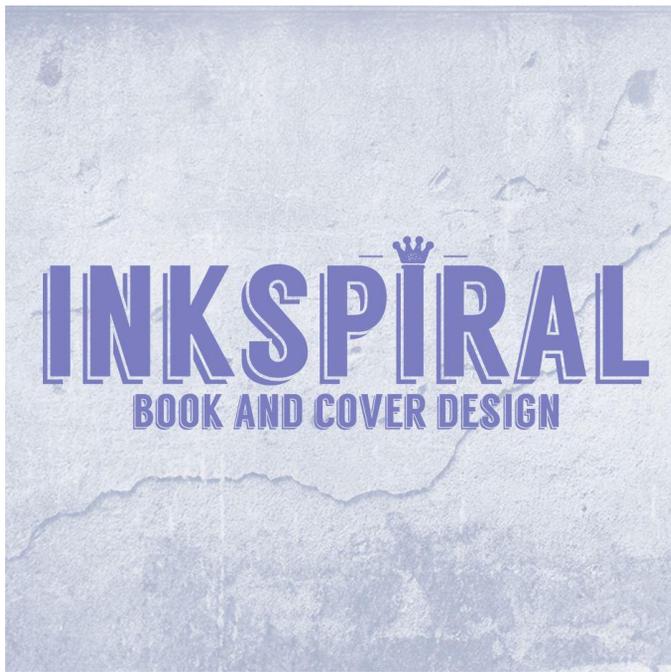
Tobias Wray's *No Doubt I Will Return a Different Man* won the CSU Poetry Center's Lighthouse Poetry Series Competition. His work has found homes in *Blackbird*, *Hunger Mountain*, *Meridian*, and *The Georgia Review*, as well as *Queer Nature: A Poetry Anthology* (Autumn House Press). He currently lives in Los Angeles and is soon to start teaching at the University of Central Oklahoma. Reach him at www.tobiaswray.com.

PATRICK WRIGHT

Patrick Wright has a poetry collection, *Full Sight Of Her*, published by Eyewear Publishing (2020). He has been shortlisted for the Bridport Prize and teaches English Literature and Creative Writing at the Open University. He is also currently finishing a PhD in Creative Writing, on the ekphrasis of modern and contemporary art, supervised by Jane Yeh and Siobhan Campbell.

MIKE ZIMMERMAN

Mike Zimmerman is a writer of short stories and poetry, as well as a high school teacher in Queens. His work has been published in *Cutbank*, *A & U Magazine*, *The Painted Bride*, *Caravel*, *Aji*, *Arkana*, *8 West Press*, *Steam Ticket*, *Typehouse Literary Magazine*, and *Zingara Poetry Review*, and various anthologies.

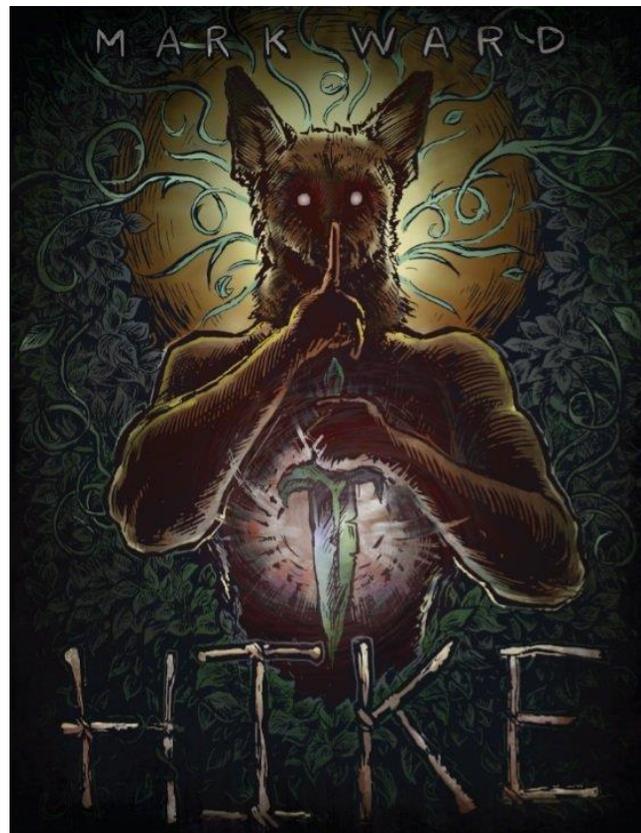


INKSPIRAL DESIGN

This issue was gorgeously designed by Matt at Inkspiral Design. You can find more of their work at <http://www.inkspiraldesign.com> and at www.facebook.com/inkspiraldesign.

MARK WARD

Mark Ward is a poet from Dublin, Ireland. He is the founding editor of *Impossible Archetype*, a journal of LGBTQ+ poetry. His poems have featured in *Banshee*, *The Irish Times*, *The Irish Independent*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Fourteen Poems*, *Southword*, *Skylight47*, *Softblow*, *Cordite* and many more, including anthologies, the most recent of which is *Queering the Green: Post-2000 Queer Irish Poetry* (The Lifeboat Press). He was awarded an Arts Council of Ireland Literature Bursary in 2021. He is the author of the chapbooks, *Circumference* (Finishing Line Press, 2018), *Carcass* (Seven Kitchens Press, 2020), *Faultlines* (Voidspace, 2022), the hybrid prose/haiku *Hike* (Bear Creek Press, March 2022). A full-length collection, *Nightlight*, is due out from Salmon Poetry in 2023. You can find more information about his work at: <http://astintinyourspotlight.wordpress.com>



Submit to Impossible Archetype

Impossible Archetype is an international online journal of LGBTQ+ poetry. We welcome work from LGBTQ+ poets of all genders. We publish two issues per year.

SUBMISSIONS FOR ISSUE THIRTEEN OPEN 1st January 2023 AND CLOSE 1st March 2023. Submissions outside of this window will not be read.

What We're Looking For

Excellent poetry by LGBTQ+ folk. All styles and forms welcome, from page poetry, to experimental poetry, to slam poetry (although particular care here should be taken that it will work solely in a text format). We welcome submissions in English from all over the world.

Primarily, we're looking for poetry that is striking, beautiful, and musical. We are a journal that is not afraid of form neither are we afraid of unusual formatting or experimental work. We also like free verse. Basically, we like *all* poetry BUT what is crucial to all submitted work is that it grabs us, that it has a depth of craft, musicality and passion. Send us impassioned pleas, captured moments, and distilled emotions.

All contributors *must* identify on the LGBTQ+ spectrum. Work submitted does not need to directly identify this (although it absolutely can!)

How to Submit

Submit **1-4 poems** to impossiblearchetype@gmail.com (there is no upper line length and we welcome longer work. Generally, a good rule of thumb is to keep the submission to under ten pages total).

Please format the subject line as follows:

Submission: [INSERT NUMBER OF] Poem/s by [INSERT NAME}

Submit to Impossible Archetype

Submit as an attachment. Word files (.doc or .docx only). No weird file types.

Please pay careful attention to the formatting of your poem, and use a standard font like Times New Roman. Work submitted will be considered the *final draft*.

Within the submission, please make sure to include:

- your name (and, if different, your pen name)
- a biographical note (please keep this to 100 words or less)

We will respond to all submissions within two weeks of the submission window closing date (although work submitted earlier will most likely hear much, much quicker, on a rolling basis).

Simultaneous submissions are fine, but please mark them as such.

For more information on our guidelines, please visit

<https://impossiblearchetype.wordpress.com/submit/>

SUBMISSIONS FOR ISSUE THIRTEEN

OPEN 1st January 2023 and CLOSE 1st March 2023.

Submit to 1-4 poems to impossiblearchetype@gmail.com.

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