

THE INNISFREE POETRY JOURNAL

An Online Journal of Contemporary Poetry



The Lake Isle of Innisfree

—William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honeybee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

Innisfree 5

September 2007

Welcome to *Innisfree 5*. In this issue, we make two innovations. First, in addition to the option on each poet's page to email the poems to a friend or to print them in a printer-friendly format, we have added the ability to download the entire issue as a pdf document using the link given on the Current Issue page. And if you load your printer with 108 pages of yellow-cream paper, you'll have a reasonable facsimile of the real thing. Who knows—carrying poems around in a physical form and format might catch on!

Second, in addition to our usual biannual collection of new poems by writers known and little known, we inaugurate a "A Closer Look," a feature in which *Innisfree* presents work by an especially accomplished poet that has appeared elsewhere previously, sometimes years ago, but which deserves a second look and a new audience. Our first Closer Look is at the poetry of Terence Winch, whose poems have previously appeared in *Innisfree 1 and 4*. Terence's poems presented here appeared in such places as *The Paris Review*, *Best American Poetry 2003*, *The Oxford Book of American Poetry*, and *Best American Poetry 2006*.

News from other *Innisfree* poets:

Gary Beck's (*Innisfree 5*) new chapbook, *The Conquest of Somalia* will be published by Cervena Barva Press.

Sarah Browning's (*Innisfree 4*) first book, *Whiskey in the Garden of Eden*, was recently published by The Word Works.

Grace Cavalieri (*Innisfree 5*) was given the key to the city of Greenville, South Carolina, and February 16 was proclaimed "Grace Cavalieri Day" by the Mayor of Greenville for her play, "Quilting the Sun," which brought that city's black and white cultural communities together. She was also featured in the February/March 2007 issue of *Writers' Digest*.

Niamh Corcoran (*Innisfree 5*) received a 2007 Individual Artist Award in Poetry from the Maryland State Arts Council.

Martin Galvin's (*Innisfree 1, 2, 3, 4*) most recent chapbook, *Circling Out*.

Ann Knox's (*Innisfree 5*) most recent chapbook, *The Dark Edge*, is out from Pudding House Press.

Barbara F. Lefcowitz's (*Innisfree 5*) ninth collection of poetry, *The Blue Train to America*, was published by Dancing Moon Press earlier this year.

Mary Morris (*Innisfree 5*) has won the 2007 Rita Dove Award.

Beth Paulson's (*Innisfree 5*) poem, "Hollyhocks," was nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Heddy Reid's (*Innisfree 5*) chapbook, *A Far Cry: Poems of Childhood and Psychoanalysis*, was published recently by Finishing Line Press.

Noel Smith's (*Innisfree 5*) first collection of poems, *Drifting for a While Toward Cash and Dreams*, will be published by MotesBooks early in 2008.

John Surowiecki's (*Innisfree 5*) most recent collection, *The Hat City after Men Stopped Wearing Hats*, won the 2006 Washington Prize.

Terence Winch's (*Innisfree* 1, 4, and 5) most recent collection of poems, *Boy Drinkers*, was published this year by Hanging Loose Press.

Rosemary Winslow's (*Innisfree* 1, 2, and 3) first book, *Green Bodies*, was recently published by The Word Works.

Kathi Wolfe (*Innisfree* 1, 2, 3, and 4) was awarded an honorable mention in *Passager's* 2007 poetry contest.

Katherine E. Young (*Innisfree* 5) has a chapbook of poems, *Gentling the Bones*, coming out this fall from Finishing Line Press.

The Editor, editor@innisfreepoetry.org

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Masthead

Editor, Greg McBride

Greg McBride is the founding editor of *Innisfree*. After a 30-year legal career, he works as a freelance editor. His work has appeared in such journals as *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Chautauqua Literary Journal*, *Connecticut Review*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *The Hollins Critic*, *Poet Lore*, *Southern Indiana Review*, and *Southern Poetry Review*. His website is at www.homepage.mac.com/gregmcbride.

Publisher, Cook Communication

Cook Communication provides support for new writers who seek publication of their work and publishes the work of emerging and established poets in the pages of *Innisfree*. Its website is at www.cookcom.net.

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Submission Guidelines

The Innisfree Poetry Journal welcomes submissions of original, previously unpublished poems year round. We accept poems for consideration only via email from both established writers and new writers whose work is excellent. We publish well-crafted poems, whether in free verse or in traditional forms, poems grounded in the specific, which speak in fresh language and telling images. And we admire musicality: we welcome those who, like the late Lorenzo Thomas, “write poems because I can’t sing.”

Deadlines: February 1 for the spring issue, August 1 for the fall issue.

Details:

1. In ONE Word document, submit a brief bio and up to five poems, attached to an email addressed to editor@innisfreepoetry.org. (If you do not have Word, please use rich text format.)
2. Include your name, as you would like it to appear in the Journal, in the subject line.
3. Simultaneous submissions are welcome. Please be sure to notify us immediately if a poem is accepted elsewhere.

Declarations:

In making your submission, you are assuring *The Innisfree Poetry Journal* that the work is your own original creation; that it has not been published, electronically or in print; that it has not been accepted for publication elsewhere; and that you are 18 years of age or older. By accepting a poem, *Innisfree* acquires first publication rights, the right to retain it in our online archives, and the right to republish in an online anthology, if that should occur. All other rights revert to the poet after publication of the poem in *The Innisfree Poetry Journal*.

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A Closer Look: Terence Winch



Photo by Susan Campbell

The son of Irish immigrants, Terence Winch grew up in the 50's and 60's in the Catholic-Irish community of the Bronx, New York City. It is that community, and his growing up within its close embrace, that is the setting of his acclaimed new book, *Boy Drinkers* (Hanging Loose Press, 2007), and that inspires its themes of tradition, love, betrayal, and redemption. In his a central role within the larger Irish-American community, he serves as anthemic poet, musician, and fiction writer.

Winch's creative work has been honored repeatedly by the literary and musical communities. His first poetry collection *Irish Musicians/American Friends* (Coffee House Press, 1985) won an American Book Award. Another collection, *The Great Indoors* (Story Line Press, 1994) won the Columbia Book Award. His work has elicited praise like this from poet Eamon Grennan:

Winch's serio-comic imagination renews the world with panache, letting ordinary matters take on a glow at once enigmatic and everyday. In this technically impressive collection, the poems offer a witty, intrepid, unsentimental response to pleasures of the flesh as well as to pain and soreness of spirit . . . Winch has a beautifully tuned ear, whether working in formal mode or in supple lines of free verse. In all their zany, plainspoken ways, these poems sing.

And this from poet Meg Kearney:

Here is a new look at the Irish diaspora, where the sound of glasses clinking is as familiar as the smell of incense at a Catholic Mass, where Terence Winch prays, "If the spirit has its own life, let the noises /it makes be as silent as the multiplication / and subtraction of time, and not / the rattle of a cough in the dark." *Boy Drinkers* looks with sober eyes at the people, tragedies, and traditions that shaped any of us who grew up in a community where alcohol and God were equally able to bring us to our knees. With his musician's ear and Irishman's humor, Terence Winch pokes fun at the Holy, makes sacred the mundane, and redefines the meaning of "grace."

Winch's previous collections are *The Drift of Things* (The Figures, 2001) and *The Great Indoors* (Story Line Press, 1994). His other titles include *Contenders* (Story Line Press, 1989), a book of short stories, and *That Special Place: New World Irish Stories* (Hanging Loose Press, 2004), which draws on his experiences as a founding member, with his brother Jesse, of the acclaimed Irish band Celtic Thunder.

Many of the songs he wrote for Celtic Thunder recount the story of New York's Irish community, including such Irish standards as "When New York Was Irish," "Saints (Hard New York Days)," and "The Irish Riviera." Celtic Thunder's second album, *The Light of Other Days*, won the prestigious INDIE award for Best Celtic Album in 1988. Terence Winch's most recent music project is a CD that collects his best-known Irish compositions on one disk: *When New York Was Irish: Songs & Tunes by Terence Winch*.

His poetry is included in *The Oxford Book of American Poetry*, three *Best American Poetry* collections, and has been featured on Garrison Keillor's "Writer's Almanac" and NPR's "All Things Considered." His poems have appeared widely in such journals as *Verse*, *Paris Review*, and *New American Writing*. Winch has been a grant recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Fund for Poetry, and the Maryland State Arts Council. He has been one of Washington DC's "Mass Transit" poets and a writer connected with the Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church in lower Manhattan. His website is www.terencewinch.com. A selection of poems by Terence Winch:

PROCLAMATION FOR MY FATHER IN 1965

Whereas time has caught up with me and the boiler
broken down again, and day after day it snows and snows
and there I am, with my shovel, in the dark
cold night waiting for day, and wishing I was in New Jersey

with Ethel and P.J. & Marion having a drink and taking in a play.
Maybe later eating oysters at the Oyster Bar
and dancing until four at the United Irish Counties Ball

Whereas I am now sixty years old and don't feel so good
much of the time, like right now, while fat Father Hammer
just turned fifty and I know is getting set to fire me
but I've been here for fifteen years and am ready to go

my own way, into the secret America I never knew before.
The banjo-playing lesbians, the depressed school teachers
who tell me Paddy, Paddy, Paddy, you're our man

Whereas I feel it all coming apart, the hard years
in this country, the loves gained and lost, the tough jobs
the gigs, the booze, the dearly departed friends
the wife whose absence never ends

while I never mend, always sensing the ghosts so near.
The thing you most fear in life all boils down
to your own invisibility, there for all to see.

Therefore be it resolved that tomorrow will be eighty
degrees and sunny. My children will visit me. My grandchildren
will sing me songs. The Bronx will float on the clean, sweet air
of paradise. I will feed a basement full of cats.
The future sprawls out like a drunk on a bed.

—Terence Winch
in *Inertia* (on line)

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA

Guy asks me for \$1.80 on the subway.
White guy, bald, shirt and tie.
Says they towed his car with his wallet in it.
He is sitting in front of me. All the men
in the car have been stealthily eyeing
an astonishingly beautiful young woman
in a very short skirt, who has been
drawing in a big sketchbook. She is luminous.
Summer is almost over. I can't concentrate
on reading because I have to sneak looks
at the gorgeous artist. The day is flying
past in the fading sunlight.

Big bald oval head right in my face.
I'll pay you back, he says. That's okay,
I say. I give him two dollars. He says thanks
and turns around. We all resume studying
the woman. Two young black guys sit
across from me. One of them keeps
snapping his gum so loud it's like
a cap gun going off.

An enormous fat guy says to the beauty as he heads
for the door: I don't know how you can draw
with the train bumping around. She smiles
at him. We are all overcome with the radiant
brilliance of her smile. I think about music,
I think about my godson smashing nine windows
in New Jersey yesterday. We are always trying
to break out. Sex is better than religion.

She gets up at Metro Center. The doors slide open
for her and she's gone. It's back to real time.
The Yankees are one and a half games out of first.
Someone's cell phone rings and he squawks:
Can't hear you. I'm on the subway. What?
The bald guy rises up. I know he will turn
around before exiting and thank me again,
give a further gesture of appreciation.
It's the right thing to do. Two bucks
is not nothing between strangers.
I'm sure he'll give me that bonus nod.

—Terence Winch, in *Smartish Pace*

JENNIFER CONNELLY SESTINA

The boy returns home with blue hair.
The dog understands everything we say.
He is wearing an lampshade around his neck.
His left hind leg is stapled closed.
The veterinarian says there is no reason for God
because the universe is just a dog's dream.

We can all agree that Jennifer Connelly is a dream.
Almost naked, in a thong, cloaked in her long black hair,
her every move is proof for the existence of God.
The boy with blue hair is not willing to say
why his lips are sealed, his mind made up, his door closed.
I am not wearing a lampshade around my neck.

My wife once owned a jacket with "Great Neck"
printed on the back. Before we met I had a dream
about her name. I waited until the restaurant closed
to tell her she had dazzling movie-star hair.
In fact, she is just as beautiful as, let us say,
the astonishing Jennifer Connelly, so help me God.

The boy and the dog are friends with God.
They claim they feel his hot breath on their necks.
Unfortunately, they don't like what He has to say
I'd like to take this occasion to daydream
briefly once again about Jennifer Connelly's hair
and the rest of her: extraordinary. That's it. Case closed.

When I got to the church at midnight, it was closed
tighter than the eyes and ears of our good friend God.
Frankly, in that proverbial foxhole, I'd take Madalyn O'Hair
over the Pope. The boy's upstairs playing bottleneck
guitar. The dog is drunk on pain-killers, dreaming
that if he could talk, he'd know just what he would say.

O, Jennifer, there is still so much left to say
but my time is up, it's late, everything is closed.
I want to crawl into bed, past the dog, and dream
of the sex palaces of Heaven, where everyone is the God
of love, and you and me and my wife are racing neck in neck
with the erotic angels of Paradise, but I win by a hair!

New Orleans, like you, is now a dream. Maybe I'll call this "The Hair of the Dog," who, by the way, has become an incredible pain in the neck. What more can I say, except that in *Waking the Dead*, you played God.

—Terence Winch
in *McSweeney's* on line
www.mcsweeney.net/links/sestinas/13TerenceWinch.html

URBAN TURTLES

Small green couch in the living room. I come home at night and sit in it. "Law & Order" is on TV. I have a glass of cheap cabernet and make eggs for dinner. It gets later and later. I hit the mute button and listen to the old clock on the piano tick, then tock. I wash my dishes. I choose tomorrow's work clothes.

I said to my barber, "Give me a haircut that looks exactly like Frank Sinatra's wig," and he did. My barber is a very nice, gay Egyptian. I take a hot bath and listen to right-wing talk radio, which I find very relaxing. I keep wondering where everyone went.

The dog was just here, I'm positive. I can smell dog. There's another strange odor in the bathroom. Perfumey. Or maybe it's Lysol or 409. The toothpaste is cinnamon flavored. I spray a "Fresh Outdoors" scent throughout the house.

Maybe I am all alone. Which is not what I really want. I want a party going on in every room. I want guests in the guest room. I want people taking baths in the bathroom. I consult *Each Day a New Beginning* for today: "We have judged our world and all the situations and people in it in terms of how their existence affects our own."

I remember a conversation I had this afternoon with a colleague about urban turtles. Could they really survive in the fast-paced city? Sure, he said. I don't really care. A friend of mine died in November and I think about him all the time. I stopped calling him because he never initiated contact with me and I didn't like that. But a week or so before he died, he said to me: "I always loved seeing you. I loved being in your presence." Now he is always talking to me from the beyond, as he had threatened to. It's his voice, then the tick tock of the clock, then his voice again.

—Terence Winch
in *Crowd* magazine

SOCIAL SECURITY

No one is safe. The streets are unsafe.
Even in the safety zones, it's not safe.
Even safe sex is not safe.
Even things you lock in a safe
are not safe. Never deposit anything
in a safety deposit box, because it
won't be safe there. Nobody is safe
at home during baseball games anymore.

At night I go around in the dark
locking everything, returning
a few minutes later
to make sure I locked
everything. It's not safe here.
It's not safe and they know it.
People get hurt using safety pins.

It was not always this way.
Long ago, everyone felt safe. Aristotle
never felt danger. Herodotus felt danger
only when Xerxes was around. Young women
were afraid of wingèd dragons, but felt
relaxed otherwise. Timotheus, however,
was terrified of storms until he played
one on the flute. After that, everyone
was more afraid of him than of the violent
west wind, which was fine with Timotheus.
Euclid, full of music himself, believed only
that there was safety in numbers.

—Terence Winch
from *The Drift of Things* (The Figures, 2001)
originally in the *Paris Review*; then in *Poetry* 180

MY WORK

In my work, at any given point,
the great issues of identity politics
and dialectical absolutism assume
a tight coherence, a profoundly
threatening total awareness
by which I seek to mediate
the conflict between meaning
and the extremes of deconstruction.

I never strike a false note.
I believe in savvy artistic
incandescence as a constitutive
enhancement of racy sexuality,
all as a way to examine the
necessity of self-love.

It's always dangerous to underestimate
my work. I insult the intellectual
dignity of the French. They arrive
in my brightly colored landscape
right after quitting time only to discover
an empty stage set in which all the clueless
actors have wandered off to an installation
of obsolete Marxist sloganeering.

Yeats was deeply immersed in mythology
and so am I. T. S. Eliot preferred Dante
to Shakespeare, but I don't. Charles Bernstein
loves the way my sentences decompose.
John Ashbery will read my work only
while naked. Everything I do is the pure
output of brains, speed, and skill.

A couple of weeks ago, I digested
Aristotle. I found him to be electrifyingly
ahistorical, and he now has been subsumed
into my work. I have open-ended stratagems
when it comes to the Germans, particularly
Goethe and Kant. They live now in my
imagination. I go way beyond alienation
into a new synthesis of desire and content.

My work stands for something invisible,
something inner. I attempt to explain
the risk of appearing. Foucault would know
how well my work succeeds in revealing
the discourse between power and structure.
When you read my work, you may think
"simile" or "metaphor," but what you really
get is the storm, the dark mansion, the servant
girl standing alone in Columbus Circle.

Triumph and loss permeate my work.
People should try to pick up on that.
My technical virtuosity is unrivaled.

Don't talk to me about subject matter.
My work takes "narrative" and turns
it into what never happened. In my work,
"story" becomes language contemplating
its own articulation in a field of gesture.

There is a higher reality at play in my work.
Sacred memories resonate with perceptual
knowledge of the body as primal text. Yet
my work is never subservient to the dominant
ideology. It circulates warmly and freely
through all available channels. My work
is like the furniture you so much want to
sink into, but must wait as it wends its way
from distant points in a giant moving truck
screeching across the country
to your new home.

—Terence Winch

from *The Drift of Things*, originally in *New American Writing*, then in *Best American Poetry 2003*

SLEEP WALTZ

for mcw

Get old enough so you won't have much to fear.
By then, the music plays inside your head
and everything beautiful must be learned by ear.

In the bathroom mirror I behold my wear and tear.
In our bedroom I try to levitate in bed.
Get old enough so you won't have much to fear.

Meanwhile, my son at six wants to keep me near
and we sing together every night head to head.
So everything beautiful must be learned by ear.

His father's tunes, though, will one day disappear
beyond today's routines and daily bread.
But get old enough so you won't have much to fear.

Remembering my mother was my first career
and the songs surrounding her on which I fed,
knowing everything beautiful must be learned by ear.

We may waltz in the kitchen now, my dear,
or dance out of time in our sleep instead.
Get old enough so you have nothing left to fear.
Everything beautiful must be learned by ear.

—Terence Winch
from *The Drift of Thing*
originally in the *Paris Review*

NOISE UNDER GLASS

An old man arrived at my door with light bulbs.
I opened the door a crack
and asked what he wanted. He said he wanted
to tell me that when a man dies,
his body is placed in the middle
of the men's lavatory, with two urinals side by side.
I had never heard this before, and was happy to get
the word. I stood in the hallway with him,
hoping my friends couldn't hear him. Finally, he departed.

The old man crept through the mysterious grass
of the bush and put the coffee right here
on this table. We sat on French chairs
in the middle of the hut while the bodyguards
walked around the body sprinkling milk and murmuring
"I'll have some coffee too, I'll have some coffee too."
Nobody said anything about the funeral.

I am restless, now that the old man is gone.
My entourage yeses me to death.
I am bored. As the soul of my mother was taken
into that greater territory of the self, I lay
on the bed watching "Entertainment Tonight"
with the sound off, trying to remember
something, anything, about her.

—Terence Winch
from *The Drift of Things*
originally in *The World*; also in *The Book of Irish American Poetry from the 18th
Century to the Present* (Notre Dame, 2007)

COMFORT

Father Ray Byrne quickly became
a star. He played sports, danced,
sang, told jokes. He was a man
of the people, and we loved him
for that. He came to our apartments
and brought us comfort.

He even came to a high school graduation
party one night. I was a little drunk.
Father Byrne came up to me and asked
“Are you thinking about it?” I panicked.
What did he mean? Sex? Booze? Basketball?
Could he read my mind? Then I realized
his tone wasn’t accusatory, so I said,
“Yeah, I’m thinking about it,” not having
any idea what he was talking about.

“That’s great,” he said, “I can always
tell when a young man is thinking about
it. Just let me know if I can be of any help.”
Now I was positive he wasn’t talking about
sex or money or any of the things I actually
did have on my mind. Father Byrne thought
I might have a vocation.

But I wasn’t considering the priesthood.
I didn’t even think professional basketball
was a possibility any more. God had walked
out the door about a year before,
when I was sixteen, and never looked back,
even though I begged him not
to leave me, alone and weeping
in this valley of tears.

—Terence Winch
from *Boy Drinkers* (Hanging Loose, 2007)
originally in *The World*

MYSTERIES

All last night I kept speaking in this
archaic language, because I had been reading
Poe and thinking about him. I read 'The Murders
in the Rue Morgue' which is supposedly the first
detective story. Who dun it? I wondered.
It turns out an orangutan was the murderer.
Its looks to me like the detective story got off
to a pretty ridiculous start. I used to visit
Poe's house in the Bronx. I used to think,
God, Poe must have been a midget. Everything
was so small. Poe died in Baltimore and I can see why.
In Baltimore, all the people are very big and sincere.
During dinner last night, I told Doug and Susan
about 'Murders in the Rue Morgue.' I said I hadn't
finished it yet, but it looked like the murderer
was going to turn out to be an orangutan, unless
the plot took a surprising new twist. Then Doug
suggested that he and I collaborate
on a series of detective stories in which
the murderer is *always* an orangutan.

—Terence Winch
from *The Great Indoors* (Story Line, 1995)
in the *Oxford Book of American Poetry* (Oxford University Press, 2006)

GHOSTS

In the rain falling on her.
In wide open space I think of.
I wake up without you, smoking
a cigarette, without a moment.
I have no name. The street without looking.

I am awake. I get done in a day.
I try to remember your faults.
The ghosts are covered with footsteps,
without memory, that open like
editions of *Vogue* in the small room
without you where you see everything
without her, without emptiness
without turning to someone in bed.

—Terence Winch

from *The Great Indoors*; included in *Out of This World: An Anthology of the St. Mark's Poetry Project, 1966—1991* (Crown, 1991)

CIVILIZED ATMOSPHERES

The bar is filled with a foul odor, something
to do with the sewage system. People don't mind
one bit. They smoke, talk, make time, drink, dance.
We don't mind either. We like to see people having fun.
We think there should be more fun in all our lives.
And more sex and money. We want everyone to have
more power, as much power as they would like,
because we know how important power is to people.
We want everyone we know to be the boss on the job
and at home too. We want them to get what they want
because when they do, they're happy and we're happy.
We want them to have bigger and better houses and apartments.

More beautiful lovers. We want them to have lean, hard
bodies and perfect cardiovascular health.

We want their health clubs to be radiant and spotless.

We'd like to see their children turn out radiant too.

It is threatening to rain. We hate rain. We hate even more
the heavy oppressive atmosphere that precedes rain. We hate
the bad smell in the bar and we don't like the people in the bar
because they seem so pompous. Their breath is horrible
and they have pot bellies and their clothing stinks of cigarettes.
It is getting dark two hours before it should. That really makes
us mad and depresses us too. Darkness. We hate darkness
because it is so scary.

Nobody calls us anymore, so we call them
because we don't want to be left alone up here
in the dark with no one to talk to. But there's no
answer, or we get the answering machine and leave
a message, or they are there but they just can't
talk to us right now because they're too busy, or even worse,
they're expecting a more important call than ours.

It's pouring now. Thunderous skies are opening up.

Everything is wet. We hate to get wet.

We closed the windows just in time, but now

it's airless in here and we can't breathe.

We don't like work. The coming and going,
the politics, the give and take.

We can live without it. The mindless routine
day after day: the bus, the coffee break, the paperwork.

We don't want anyone to have to go to work
with those disgusting bad-smelling people
who think they're so important. Don't they know
that no one is indispensable? What about when you die?
Do they ever think of that?

We don't want to have to come home from work
in the scary wet darkness and then have to leave again
for the smelly bar where those absolutely horrible people
drink their drinks. We don't want anyone
we know to have to do it either.

We'd like everyone to stay home where it's dry and peaceful,
where they can watch movies and eat whatever they want,
sleeping in a chair, listening to the sound of a car horn,
the scary wet darkness enveloping them in its dream.

—Terence Winch
from *The Great Indoors*
originally in *The Washington Review*

SEX ELEGY

My lovers have vanished. I used to have many.
One moved to Boston and married a Japanese photographer.
Another became a famous actress. Another one, who for a long time
I mistakenly believed to be dead, now lives in Manhattan.

We used to know each other so intimately,
sucking and munching on each other, inserting,
penetrating, exploding. Becoming as one. Funky
smell of sweaty bodies. Clothes strewn on floor
and bed. Candles burning. Smoke of cigarettes and joints
curling up the bedroom atmosphere. Now we never touch,
barely talk. Some I have lost all contact with.

But memories of our pleasure together, my dears,
still play in my mind. My body can still feel your touch.
My tongue still remembers your taste.
Everything else I seem to have forgotten.
The present is the life insurance premium automatically
deducted from your paycheck, while the past burns
out of control in a vacant lot on the outskirts of town.

—Terence Winch
originally in *Verse*
included in *Best American Poetry 2006*

IN RETALIATION AGAINST

The molecule bore a remarkable resemblance
to Elizabeth Taylor in a bikini shaving her legs.
I thought I was in Paris and behaved accordingly,
analyzing unnatural music videos from 1985.

My release mechanism cannot be compared to Madonna
Tina Turner, Hulk Hogan, or Willem de Kooning.
They swim about, lashing their tails in the aquamarine pools
of a mythic past that mocks the Beach Boys where they live.

“We are bored and lonely,” they chant. “Bored and lonely.”

In return, men’s inner lives emit incomprehensible signals.

—Terence Winch
from the (unpublished) collection *Lit from Below*; in *Hotel Amerika*

IT TAKES ALL KINDS

we lived one flight up in our
apartment building and whenever someone
Would ring the downstairs bell
my mother would tell us to stay put
she would say “if they want to see us bad enough
they can walk up the flight”
my brother Kevin used to tell me
to never answer the phone
if I was eating
my father always told us
not to worry too much about money
he would say “money won’t buy you happiness”
my mother would occasionally remark
“it takes all kinds”

—Terence Winch, from *Irish Musicians / American Friends*

Karren Alenier

DRAWING ROOM COMEDY

My husband Paul Bowles bought an island
off the coast of Ceylon.

Taprobane
had an octagonal house opened
to the elements — no closing
doors or windows, no permanent
interior walls.

At night, large tooth bats
with three-foot wing spans, soared
through our lotus hall.

Initially, we wasted
our flashlight batteries to gawk
at the beasts — so many of them
in our garden hanging
in the trees.

At first four of us —
Paul, Paul's protégé Ahmed, our driver
Temsamany and I occupied
the house sleeping in alcoves
made private by curtains. I couldn't sleep,
the heat burned more intense than Panama.

"Timmie," I said, "turn on the light.
In the house of Poe are things that bite."
But in the flicker of the oil lamp, menacing
shadows populated our camp.

"Timmie,"

I said, "kill that pungent flame. God
only knows why I came."

I couldn't sleep
and there was nothing to drink.

"Timmie,"

I said, "turn on the light. My hair is a fright.
It's falling out in clumps. That devil drumming
on the mainland scares me, makes me
jump. Walk on the water, tell them to stop.
My ears are gonna pop! Fit a sunbill
over my twitching eyes, then maybe
I could write till I drop.

What deep pit
will I plummet into? What hairy fingers

and stinging tails will grab
and stab me? Timmie, Timmie,
douse that fire. No, no, bring me
whiskey! How about gin?
With this thirst, I could ignite
a funeral pyre.”

While every morning at sunrise
Paul, dressed in a sarong, wrote
The Spider's House, I, the Spider's
Wife, meditated on a drawing room
comedy. Not a comedy, more a moral
tract about a married pair: she, jealous;
he, indifferent; each enjoying many
suitsors.

Ahmed Yacoubi set up his easel
and painted primitive landscapes.
Paul coached, encouraged, breathed
down Ahmed's neck — pretty boy Ahmed,
eyes, black and deep like caves. Ahmed
who plays his flute to blow life
into his finished painting.

Timmie dreamed
about Paul's Jaguar, parked and unmanned
in Tangier.

But I couldn't think and I had nothing
to drink. Was I a faker bored with the daily rain —
what was wrong with my brain? Did Paul whisper
I was a neurotic sick at the lack of friends to gossip
with at the local pub? Or did I Jane Bowles
swallowing Serpasil, a blood pressure
drug, suffer a damaged heart? Why
couldn't I start my play?

I said, “Timmie, let's pick up
our skirts, visit Colombo. Low tide now, we won't get
that wet.” Not be dry, that was my plan. Down a few
rounds, kick off my shoes and dance, fly quenched.

Then came Peggy Guggenheim ready to slum
with artists out on the edge. Unlike Libby
Holman hoping to marry Paul and call me
sister, Peggy didn't even bat lashes
at my mister. Peggy, just an heiress
complaining about wetting her bottom
on the low-tide wade to Taprobane—hey!
no gondolas waited at convenient wharves
—the other lacks, no running water

for a shower, no electric lights
to illuminate her bedtime
novel, didn't raise her well-plucked
eyebrows.

 Actually, she noticed
my distress, offered to take me
to Bombay and Calcutta, *but India*,
I sniffed, *meant withdrawing*
from my work. My subjects played
on the black basalt of Paul's island.

So Peggy and I spent a week in Colombo,
circling Ahmed's flat images. I served as her wife.
She wouldn't let me share her bed, but I know
I got into her head. The head that saw
our house on Taprobane
as the Taj Mahal.

 But I still couldn't think
and had too much to drink. All the webs
of my dear spider could not cradle,
could not rock, those endless hours
on that tropical clock.

Karren Alenier

Karren LaLonde Alenier is author of five collections of poetry, including *Looking for Divine Transportation* (The Bunny and the Crocodile Press), winner of the 2002 Towson University Prize for Literature. Her poetry and fiction have been published in such magazines as the *Mississippi Review*, *Jewish Currents*, and *Poet Lore*. *Gertrude Stein Invents a Jump Early On*, her opera with composer William Banfield and Encompass New Opera Theatre artistic director Nancy Rhodes, premiered in New York City in June 2005. Forthcoming in the fall of 2007 is *The Steiny Road to Operadom: The Making of American Operas*, her collection of essays about creating opera in America and the libretto *Gertrude Stein Invents a Jump Early On*.

Gary Beck

UNTRANQUIL

The roar of engines shocks the night,
wheels hum, whine, screech on darkling streets.
The clop of hooves, neighs, moo's, cockadoodle doo's
no longer prod our sleeping windows.
The million snarls of grumpy motors,
grumbling and complaining of the coming day,
throttle the grating voice of morning man
striving to command the dawn.
Recalcitrant machines resist
man's jostling for control of life.
The brief doze of the city is shattered.
The sounds of drive break the last peace.
The calm thought and quiet dream is forgotten.

VIGIL

The brief night silence slowly fades.
The snorting wind runs home to nest.
The sleep of houses day invades
and pokes dulled dreamers from their rest.
The traffic sounds the hour to rise.
The light bulbs cruelly end the gloom.
The sleepy dust makes bleary eyes
blink at the odor in the room.
The morning yawns and curls its paws
'round men who rush to work in herds
with razor cuts upon their jaws,
they never hear the songs of birds.
Their cigarette and coffee through,
men start machines and in their fright
forget the sleepless poet who
in every city guards the night.

Gary Beck

Gary Beck's poetry has appeared in dozens of literary magazines. His recent fiction has been published in numerous literary magazines. His chapbook, *The Conquest of Somalia*, will be published by Cervena Barva Press. His plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes, and Sophocles have been produced Off-Broadway.

Bob Boston

FATHER'S DAY

Friday is the first of
the month.

Check day.

It's the only day
of the month many of
the homeless have
somewhere else to
stay apart

from the shelter.

Some rent
rooms,
some stay
with "friends."

Others,
simply walk the streets
ending up too numb to care
where
they end up.

It's the one day of
the month—
they're "someone's"
with friends

and lives.

For the 29 or so days
which follow,
I am their

only friend.

The only one with
smokes, change,

and sense.

RIGHT-WING, WRONG FEATHERS

An eagle's army
consists

of pigeons.

They aren't worth the skyline
they poison,
are a dime a
bushel,
and die fast when their
necks
are snapped.

Eagles prey on them
whenever they get the chance—
reminded them
who's
in charge.

Eagles keep them in
their rightful places.

In fear,
hungry,
and battling a war they will
never win
every time their
wings flap.

But just what
are they protecting
the eagle from?

The fear that maybe, just
maybe
he's not as
invincible
as we'd all

like to think.

Without the pigeons—
he's nothing.

Dethrone him
and then
we'll know peace.

It's a pigeon who'll land
in your hand
and knows what
it means—

to be loyal.

Bob Boston

Bob Boston, a poet residing on the East Coast, is indigent and moves constantly from shelter to shelter at this time. Although he has been writing for many years, these are his first published poems.

Grace Cavalieri

from Breast: Anna Nicole, A Fiction

NEGATIVE CAPABILITY

Why not be happy? the counselor said.
Try to be creative, make things,
creation is a divine collaboration with God,
so why not try to do something useful? Use your hands,
Why not, thought Anna, why not?
She could start with banana bread.
Banana Bread. There were these rotten bananas
and that's what it took. She always had those. What a mess,
all over the kitchen, the squishing and buttery hands.
Then she ate it. Where did it go? Where did everything always go?
She wished she could play video games
but they went too fast for her eyes and hands.
She almost wished she still played cheerleader
in the afternoon for that old man, the game where she jumped
up in the pleated skirt and yelled for his favorite team.
He said she didn't have a choice in what he wanted to do with her.
The difference in command and management, he said
Why not try to be happy, the counselor had said to her just that morning.
If she was a loser, like her mother always said, where was the finder?
Who would find her? And when?
She could donate to breast cancer but silicone didn't grow lumps.
She turned off the announcement. Once
she heard on TV that if a man rapes you, he steals your soul.
That had always stuck with her.
That's why she always gave in to men,
so she wouldn't have to be raped, so she could save her soul.

FALL MORNING

Children were going to school, holding hands,
a mild morning,
the yellow rose was straining toward the sun,
God's word was spoken agreeably in the farm kitchen,
an old lady started a green crocheted kettle cover.
From the highest tree, a wren's sound persisted larger than the wren,
a cigarette was lighted down the street,
a poet walked the perimeter of the lake,
the bark of the beech shone silver,
the melancholy breeze wrapped the jackets.

With the curtains drawn, an eye mask on her face, the bottle on the floor,
Anna lies in the comfort of numbness, disabled again, Thank
God, against the moment after waking, saved from
even the coolness of white satin sheets.
Last night on Court TV, a mother duct-taped her child's face,
to keep him from crying. But she didn't keep him from dying.

WHAT DOES IT PREDICT

Anna was frightened because she felt happy—Relief!
Maybe it was the doctor, the Ativan, maybe not.
This was horrible, the feeling
that everything was possible, that
there was help for her, people to help her.
Being happy did not feel right on her form,
like a loose girdle about to fall off.
She covered the mirrors with bedspreads and sheets.
She didn't want to go
back to who she was before,
but if she gave up bad feelings, would she
give up the person she used to be?
And could she afford to lose any more of her self?
She wasn't famous when she was happy.
Maybe this was just crying WOLF
and would not come back again. Maybe
her good feelings were talking about
her as if she weren't there.
Anna wanted to make chicken soup, but
she didn't know how, fear so inscribed on her soul.
She could call her doctor but
men took out their happiness on her,
so could he be trusted with her soup?
Maybe the guy, mowing the lawn.

Grace Cavalieri

Grace Cavalieri was given the key to the city of Greenville, South Carolina, and February 16 was proclaimed "Grace Cavalieri Day" by the Mayor of Greenville for the play "Quilting the Sun" that brought the black and white cultural communities together. She was featured in the February/March 2007 issue of Writers' Digest. She has 14 books and 21 produced plays to her credit. Grace is the Book Review Editor of The Montserrat Review, and the producer/host of "The Poet and the Poem from the Library of Congress" for public radio. Audio columns "INNUENDOES" and "ON LOCATION" are presented by MiPORadio, on line.

Norma Chapman

PNEUMONIA IN 1940

I fall asleep in a shadow
of sweat. I wheeze.
My mother throws back three
jiggers of bourbon and lies
on her bed in our room.
I hear her rumbling breath.

The hairdresser's daughter
died of the black measles. It is better
to have pneumonia, but no one is safe.
War is coming.

I dream that everyone
in Perris, California, is playing
ring around the rosy. The people who
fall don't get up. They die singing
I've got American fever. My cousin
gives me her hand. We sing.

ALTA LEE LEACH AND THE GREEN HAT

My father was the fifth husband of his second wife.
The one summer I stayed with them, she told me
she now had what she had always wanted: initials
that spelled ALL. She took me to her beauty parlor,
frizzed my hair, let me read the books labeled risqué
at the front of her shop, and gave me a green crocheted hat
with soft balls dangling on yarn strands around the brim.
I loved it, though I can't say I loved her. Daddy said,
in front of both of us, that I came first. That's
what I'd always wanted, but I didn't believe him.

One night I heard a loud noise from their bedroom.
Alta Lee ran into the living room where I was sleeping
on the couch. She showed me the inside of her arm.
A bloody line began at the crook of her elbow
and ended at the wrist. *Look, this is what your father
did to me.* Daddy ran after her, yelled at me to get dressed
and began to stuff my clothes into a suitcase. I brought him
my hat, but Alta Lee grabbed it, *You can't take that*

it's mine. My father said *Bitch* and we left. As we walked
to the car he said, I doubt I'll ever see my clothes again.
I knew my green hat was gone for good.

Norma Chapman

Norma Chapman lives in Brunswick, a small town in Western Maryland. She started writing poetry after turning sixty. Her poems have been published in *Passager*, *Innisfree Poetry Journal*, *Iris*, *The Sow's Ear*, *River Styx*, and elsewhere. In 2003, she received a Maryland State Arts Council Grant.

Lydia R. Cooper

DECEMBER IN AKRON, OHIO

Factory plumes sear the sky,
blue tongues of polycarbons.
Cold ash drifts onto knee-high

snow-ruts, tires slicing ribbons
of slush. Empty warehouses
gape, starved gardens Adam's

long since abandoned. Whose
Gore-Tex boots crunch old snow?
Grown kids, wearing shrouds

of black trashbags, stumbling, go
past up crippled brick streets.
This is the only Eden I know.

I hunch at a window, faint heat
smelling like burnt lint blistering
numb knuckles, and I sketch feats

of heroes on napkins, crumpling
failed words, nose dripping, stale
coffee spilled like blood crusting.

Ripe sunlight suddenly cracks pale
washes of clouds, strikes high
city windows. Molten gold frail

as breath blinds my aching eyes.
The crushed napkin of dumb lines
falls off the table. Paradise

creeps in as the city burns. Shines.

Lydia R. Cooper

Lydia R. Cooper will receive her Ph.D. in English Literature from Baylor University. At Baylor, she has met poets from Paul Muldoon to Derek Wolcott at the annual Beall Poetry Festival, which she helped host this last year. The festival is the highlight of her year. She writes poetry when she is not reading it.

Niamh Corcoran

LEAVING TÍR NA NÓG

From the fog of her mouth, from the sea's loose
Blue-green horizon, her siren songs
Of Eire beckon and collapse like spent light
On the island of bogs and walls and heather.
Boatmen try not to listen, but hear the tendril lines
As they pass, *Away, come away,*
Then simply, *Yes.* Yes begins their dream
Of soil without blight, plots without headstones.

Even the myth is a distant island now.
Old names are spoken less, another tongue.
Once I saw *Niamh* spray-painted on a bridge
In a border town aside the word *loves*,
Threatening to become part of the tourist code
That marks sign-posts, sea-towns, obsolete maps.

COOKBOOK CHEMISTRY

for J. K.

Because we delighted in the brilliant
color shifts of liquids in our chem lab,
eager in our over-sized goggles, our drab
and stained denim smocks, the teacher dismissed

us with the nickname cookbook chemists.
We took the veiled joke with a grin, but when
he called my lab partner skirt, suggesting
XX genes and science hardly mix

in his classroom, lines were drawn in the linoleum
floor. War oiled into motion within the shadow
of the periodic table. And row after row,
elements swarmed the coliseum.

Calls to Venus, calls to Mars, *Cuprum, Ferrum*,
transition metals armored up, taking sides
as our Bunsen burners were boldly fired.
Again, *Cuprum, Ferrum*, then, *Aurum*,

Aurum, we incanted primaries, while the boys
won praise for testing more methodically.
But what honeyed loss to glimpse a recipe
for art, the spoil and shift, the beautiful choice.

Niamh Corcoran

Niamh Corcoran earned a B.A. in English from Yale University and an M.F.A. from American University, where she was poetry editor of *Folio*. Her manuscript was a semifinalist for the 2006 Discovery/*The Nation* Prize. Most recently she was the recipient of an Individual Artist Award in Poetry in 2007 from the Maryland State Arts Council. She works at a school for the learning disabled.

Laura Fargas

VEAL ISN'T ALWAYS A THING WITHOUT FEATHERS

Life is like the man who tried cattle ranching
but his cows all laid eggs
so he tried poultry farming but he dropped the eggs
so he opened a restaurant.

No matter what we try to make
our cows sprout wings and fling themselves
gaily over the available moon
taking along the fiddle the spoons the cat to croon.

What lasts is the sheer simmering joy of transformations
a new vegetable in the same
old soup each night until the lightning strikes

and the whole mess rises up
to embrace the light and hot ions of its making
like a perfect souffle.

FIRST LOVE

I loved twice and both were cheats.
I loved thrice and all were alcoholics.
I loved four times and each man is balding now.
I started once to love a boy whose father
was very famous, whispering, "I can't believe
I can have what I want." And I couldn't.
And it's rude to start every sentence with "I."

A HOUSE OF THREE ANIMALS

Each with its habits. Two that can roam,
one stuck behind fences. One
that gets food for them all. One that snores.
Two that care about ritual. Two
fastidious. All three incapable of offspring.
Rubbing against each other sometimes.
All three sprouting gray hairs and running less.

Laura Fargas

Laura Fargas is Washington DC poet who practiced occupational safety and health law for 27 years. Her work has appeared in many journals, including *Poetry* and the *Paris Review*; her most recent book is *An Animal of the Sixth Day* (Texas Tech University Press). She currently teaches at the Writer's Center in Bethesda.

Simki Ghebremichael

SNOW IS DROWNING THE DAFFODILS

Neck deep
In a white, suffocate sea

yolk yellow heads
are shaking and gasping

flailing hallelujah arms
that plead life

from gray,
last judgment air.

Simki Ghebremichael

Simki Ghebremichael has been a featured reader in the Washington area at Poesis, Miller Cabin, Nora School, and Artomatic. Her poem, "For Coretta," appears in the 2006 Beltway Quarterly DC Places Issue. She is in the MFA Program at American University.

Ron Goudreau

WALKING BEHIND HER

I was walking behind my mother
and all of me was there in her wake
made of her flowing dress,
her clicking heels, the flop of her hair,
and I was behind her walking with no wake
for no wake was willing to walk in the wake of her.
I was walking behind her, and that's all I was,
walking behind the sway of hips, the click click,
the sidewalk a platform unrolling in front of her,
the stores staring at her without a blink.

When I was walking behind her I knew only that,
and that this glorious day had held the hope of it,
and I had waited all day for her to say:
"do you want to come downtown with me?"
I would be walking behind her and she never looked back at me,
and of course I never looked anywhere but at her
walking in front of me, her nylon shirtwaist
printed with dark hieroglyphics swishing
when she stopped short or stepped off the curb.

I was walking behind her that day
just as I had walked behind all my life.
But my father never walked behind her,
and that was why he did not know her
as I and her mirror knew her,
looking from behind her as I did,
looking into and through her as the mirror did.
It was as if the tall arched mirror was gliding in front of her now
and each step she took was into its liquid,
her foot's splash was the swish of her dress,
and she was stepping into it, and there I was bearing witness
to all of her as I walked in her wake,
wanting nothing more than to walk into her.

Ron Goudreau

Ron Goudreau has been writing poetry for over 40 years, but with a 20-year hiatus from the mid 1960s through the mid 1980s when he began taking poetry workshops at the Writers' Center in Bethesda. Since then he has had two chapbooks published: *The*

Flagellation and *An Audible Touch*, both published by Argonne Hotel Press, and his poems have also been published in *Wordwrights* and *Beltway*. Ron has read his work at several local venues including Takoma Public Library, The Writers Center, Bolt and Jolt, Pulp on the Hill, and Starbucks. He is employed at the Library of Congress as the Editor of Subject Headings.

GTimothy Gordon

VOCABLE

(after Seamus Heaney)

Señor Heaney cannot drop
A flat vowel
Into bog, well, meadow,
Without mincing words,

Snouts of riffraff, cow,
And calf, blowing Blague,
And blowing into turf-teats,
Into some smalltalk of Broagh.

SONG

caught / in the cold snows of a dream.

—Yeats

Lines of early Spring
Ripen, recede,

Dwarf the morning star
Staggering in.

Day gnaws at a pace
Beneath the mind

Of man and beast
And root and rock, changes

The business of becoming
Whole

To peace
Peace among

The quiet race
Of Spring so
Dumbly brought in.

So much this Spring,
This need.

*G*Timothy Gordon

GTimothy Gordon has recent fiction and poetry in *Dos Passos Review*, *Evansville Review*, *Saltzburg Poetry Review*, and *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*. A poem has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Joshua Gottlieb-Miller

GRANDMA CALLIOPE—THE RECEPTION

When Grandma threw her knitting needles
at the nearest orderly
and creaked up from her chair
to the expectant podium,
she was ready to make her authorial debut.

She took the open mic stand
with a copy of her new chapbook,
"Poems I copied when I broke out to Kinkos"

and suddenly I felt like Calliope's grandson:
made to stand watch
while she bathes naked in the river.

All the old folks huddle
over in the reception space.

Crackers, cheese, grapes, chocolate
what poetry could sate these diabetics?

Joshua Gottlieb-Miller

Joshua Gottlieb-Miller has been published in *Prairie Margins* and *Avatar*. He was the winner of the 2004 Bethesda Youth Poetry Slam. He is now the poetry editor for *Avatar*, St. Mary's College of Maryland's literary magazine. He is a member of the Squaw Valley Community of Writers. Joshua lives in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Taylor Graham

IN THE ASIA MARKET

A catch of rock cod, bright carnelian,
waits on ice. Striped sea bass, pompano,
grouper, carp identified in Vietnamese.
Others with names I don't know in any
language, each one waiting to be hand-
picked, then gutted by the aproned man
wielding his lightning blade.

All I want is a fish to steam
in a ginger-garlic glaze, served
with a seaweed broth with radish.

In a narrow tank, giant catfish crowd
and jumble, gape lips against glass
where a young child stoops, wide-
eyed as if to kiss on the mouth
a startled swimmer. So many silver
bodies swarming foreign dialects about
me in the simple tongue of hunger.

THE WRECK

Telephone poles snap past the corner of my eye,
I could count them like freight cars on the track
without looking, if there'd been a train

instead of steel ribbing the flat fields
and this interminable argument that started
twenty miles ago when we stopped for gas.

What, exactly, was the point of dissension?
Beyond the empty parallel rails, some nameless
crop extends row after row, as if forever.

It's been 57 years since my father's brother
slammed the driver's door and stuck his key
in the ignition, still arguing with my aunt

over who-knows-what on a frigid Christmas Eve.
Left her arms akimbo watching him jab
one foot on the clutch, the other on the gas,

headed east across the tracks. Still arguing
with her no with himself. Arguing so loud
how could he have heard the whistle?

REFUGE

A tiebreaker between light and shadow,
now, when the noon is no more than
a slip and shoosh of tidewater out
to the bay, and the strange boy
has gathered his fragments of shells,
plodding past a swamped canoe
and fishermen's litter caught like
dirty bandages in reeds and cockleburrs,

if you stop long enough, you might feel
your boot-soles settle in to mud,
the pull of water stretching itself
between here and there, the gaze
of some ungainly grace almost hidden
in rushes, the night-heron with his
one red eye turned to watch you.

Taylor Graham

Taylor Graham is a volunteer search-and-rescue dog handler in the Sierra Nevada. Her poems have appeared in *International Poetry Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *The New York Quarterly*, *Poetry International*, and elsewhere. Her work also appears in the anthology, *California Poetry: From the Gold Rush to the Present* (Santa Clara University, 2004). Her latest book, *The Downstairs Dance Floor* (Texas Review Press, 2006), is winner of the Robert Phillips Poetry Chapbook Prize.

Jonathan Highfield

PALETTE

Tuesday morning, driving to Boston to see the plastic surgeon,
anxious but awed by the morning with its promise of renewal,
the trees are all budding out in that spring tree color and I'm fiveyears old
again, with my 64 color box of Crayola crayons open in front of me,
methodically taking out Spring Green to color the leaves of my picture.
This is back before I could see, well, not literally, but if you looked at my
drawings
you would have noticed that trees were all brown trunks topped by blobs of
green.
Three years later getting my glasses, I will exclaim to the amusement of my
parents
that I can actually see the leaves, until then I had imagined that they only took
form
when one got close to the tree, emerged as jagged oak and maple, smooth
poplar or narrow willow.
Other crayons I might use were Burnt Sienna for the trunk and my favorite,
Thistle, would probably appear somewhere, flowers under the tree
or a splash of color in the sky, clouds streaked at sunset.

Those colors are all gone from the Crayola Box now, replaced by Neon Pink,
Tropicana, and HiLighter Yellow. Fewer kids know what a thistle is today, I
guess,
and even I was always hazy about Burnt Sienna, though it did make great tree
bark.
So changes come and each loss may bring a gain,
though I had an Egg McMuffin the other day, my first in a decade, and it
seemed
so smaller than I remembered and the egg was chewy and overcooked,
no warm egg yolk squirting down my chin,
so sometimes a loss is just a loss
and the children drawing with the new crayon box see the world differently
than I did,
HiLighter Yellow resonates for them more than Spring Green, I imagine,
and their drawings reflect this and maybe that's neither loss nor gain,
though using my daughters' crayons and carefully staying in the lines
or removing my glasses and scribbling blurry blobs for trees I can never
capture the way things should look, the colors are never right and that's how it
will feel with you gone.

Jonathan Highfield

Jonathan Highfield is an Associate Professor of English at Rhode Island School of Design, where he teaches a wide range of courses in colonial and postcolonial literatures. His poems have appeared in *The New Review*. He lives in North Scituate, Rhode Island, and likes to cook with the vegetables from his garden.

Susan A. Katz

THE LOSS

Who could have known
The severed veins
Would ooze until only
Pale skin over paler
Bone remained.

I have no name
To call it by, this sense
That though I breathe
I die that though I touch
I do not feel.

I could say You
In a thousand ways, lover,
Loving, loved, anoint
Myself in the savage
Scent of you, prayer
Of your breath exhaling
My name.

THE WOUNDED YEARS

Dust settled like a hymn
Over the memory of your eyes; dark
Deep as sorrow, blind
To passions I couldn't name
That came over me in waves
Of words I couldn't speak; we spoke
Like swords, each interchange
A clash of separate wills that spilled
A bit of blood, a splattering of tears.

*Who pays the price for all the wounded
Years? What happens to warriors when all
The wars are lost or won? What is the cost
To heroes whose names become a lapse
Of memory on the tongue? Who cares
For causes when banners lay
Forgotten in trampled mud.*

What good are causes now time
Has emptied you to silence, filled me
With a thousand small regrets.

I could have held your face
Between my palms, stroked
Your eyelids as they closed
Against the light; I could have whispered
How scars would fade beneath
Sterile layers of night; I could
Have asked forgiveness and in return offered
Never to unlearn you, to sing you
Like a marching cadence through the hollow
Victory of the years.

OBVIOUS DEATH

She was a moth, skin gone
Dry, delicate wings breaking
The air moving
Nothing going
Nowhere.

It was this
She had become when the storm
Of her years shattered what was left
Of memory into a million
Pieces, when all she had
was a tepid smile
To tempt a partner
To her side at Saturday
Senior Dances.

She loved to dance, loved
The ritual of soft chiffon,
Silk lacing her afternoons
With adolescent desire, shaking
Dust out of remnants
Of old dreams.

When they found her
Stale, limp as last night's
Corsage, they closed
The report tersely, "Obvious
Death."

As though anything
Was obvious passion
In the pasty smile when four
Young men came
To lead her in a last
Waltz, obviously cold
Flesh warmed
By the tenderness of any
One's touch.

Such girlish pleasure
In so many hands
Fumbling for a pulse, the turn,
The dip, the lift, the flare
The down beat, feet
Learning to dance
On air.

Susan A. Katz

Susan A. Katz is the author of three poetry collections, *The Separate Sides of Need*, *Two Halves of the Same Silence*, and *An Eye for Resemblances*. Her work has appeared in *The American Scholar*, *Negative Capability*, *The Kansas Quarterly*, *Anthology of Magazine Verse* and *Yearbook of American Poetry*, *When I Am an Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple* and numerous other literary magazines and anthologies. She lives and works out of her home in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut.

Ann Knox

THE SOURCE OF MEMORY

Adam woke from sleep and found her
watching him. They looked in silence
not yet knowing fear, surprise or even how
to address the other or how to shape a question.

He picked a fig and handed it to Eve.
She felt its weight, the skin's roughness
and the soft give to her touch. She bit
and a sweet tide flooded her tongue.

Later when they sat together under a carob tree
Adam told her what he'd done since morning,
how he'd walked the river bank naming
seven species of moss and made up the word
current for how water moved downstream.

Eve was watching ants crawl from a tiny hole.
Where do they come from? How is it that
we're here? Adam paused, reaching
for a plausible answer but found nothing
beyond the day's events. So he made up a story.

God, he said, God made us. And he went on
to create creation. She remembers that night, back
before work began, before hunger, cold
and the need for a friend, before knowing she'd
been a blank until something happened. But

if the mind knows only experience, where did
sweet come from, or sorrow or wonder, and
how come Adam could invent God?

EVE IS BORED THEN TEMPTED

I.

A sparrow tweaks oats from piled horse-dung,
Eve fiddles with a pebble, picks a twig to clean her nails
then buffs them against her thigh. What now?

Yesterday Adam brought her a fig, its meat
pink and grainy, but he went right off again
to confirm a new species of lepidoptera.

Sure, she's learned a lot this past year
even to count a year and that past means
gone, but what was before, she can't imagine.

When she asked Adam, he went on and on
about a void, about separating night and day,
land and water. Nothing useful, nothing
about family, childhood or the collective unconscious.

Oh, well, as Adam says, *one step at a time*;
still, she can play with the fox cubs, invent games,
tell herself stories, make up a best friend.

I'll be that friend.

The voice coiled out of the leaves
from a striped creature she'd not seen before.

Good, someone to talk with. And it was
good, the old story: snake oil merchant,
lonely farm wife—they chat, he opens
a whole world she hadn't imagined.

There's a stir, definitely a stir, an unnamed
something beyond. Perhaps Adam would change,
would wonder about wants, motives. But change how?
The snake sways toward a tree heavy with fruit.

II.

Why not?

His words echo in the empty
silo of Eve's history. *Why not?*
Cleopatra, Emma Bovary, Hester Prynne,
we all make choices, aren't we human?

The fruit, plump and firm, drops neat
in her palm, she breathes its heady scent,
her teeth slit the skin, the flesh

quickness on her tongue and new knowing
spreads, rioting through her body—
Molly Bloom's enormous *yes*.

LOCKED OUT

The landlord claimed we broke the lease
then threw us out but all I did
was make friends with this guy.

Okay, so he was a dealer, but a real
charmer, lithe elegant as Fred Astaire.
All he did was roll a joint,
show me how to breathe in and hold.

Adam must try this stuff.

I find him sorting shells--
mollusk, bivalves, gastropods.
C'mon handsome. (He is handsome,
nice pecs, chunky calves, not bad.)

Try this, I wave the joint.
Eve, you shouldn't.
Well, I have and it's great.
Look, you're messing up my classification.
C'mon. Mess up your mind,
Try a toke, you'll love it.

He brushes sand off his knees,
takes the joint gingerly, breathes in
and stands a moment utterly still, then,
Ahhh.

I laugh.
I know something else you don't.
C'mon. I'll show you in the hayloft.

Fred Astaire, leaning against the tree,
twirls his cane, smiles and slides away.

EVE'S CLOTHES

The leaves were my idea.
Big, they need to be big.
Adam brought burdock but
the fabric proved brittle.

Try figs leaves. Their tough skin
held my bindweed stitches but
the aprons weren't much to look at.

In fact after the blowup, God
made us coats from animal skins
that with a few adjustments
hung on me really well.

Fur was a good idea and it was
nice of God after His big outburst.

But I know something about that—
rain, kids indoors all day
squabbling, horsing around,
a broken bowl—the one
Adam carved for me from curly maple.

Out, I yell, *Out*.

On the porch, the two, silent, forlorn,
look at the rain. I turn back
for their slickers. *Here, take these.*
The girl buttons hers askew.
Ach! I squat and set it to rights.

I'm still mad but something
gives way, not forgiveness exactly,
but a letting go, an *Oh well*.
I turn them around, and with a small shove
set them off into the wet world.

TWO SONS

Eve knew there'd be trouble when God honored
Abel's flock over Cain's heaped grain.

Field work is rougher than keeping kine and Cain
had filled the corn-cribs for his brother herd.

She'd watched him scythe in angry arcs, heard
him shout and whack the oxen as he tilled the ground.

Abel would stop to scratch a hog's back,
not Cain, even dogs gave him wide berth.

Strange that two sons could be so different,
should she love them both the same?

With her firstborn she'd learned mothering from animals
And when Abel came, she knew what to expect,

besides he was a smiler, a nestler and wanted to please.
Cain carried a wind around him and sometimes

he frightened her and fear gave an odd twist
to love as if to love him was a debt, an owing.

After the horror, one son's blood
darkening the earth, the other son banished,

grief broke over Eve, rising in waves breaking,
again and again until a slow subsiding began.

Abel's absence gentled and dimmed, but Cain—
the thought of Cain ripped her like a cry in the night:

Why, why? What had she done wrong?

BED

Adam goes upstairs first, taking his time,
everything takes time these days,
his feet thump each step then pause.

Eve imagines him, hand on the banister,
not wanting to admit uncertain balance
or short breath, then he starts up again.

Eve pats the dog, checks his water bowl,
locks the back door and runs a finger
across the jars of pickles she'd made that day.

At the bedroom threshold she pauses to note
Adam's steady breath, the Appalachian ridge of him,
old and worn down now, like herself.

Under the quilt Eve lets her body loosen,
as the bed takes her weight, her hips ease
into the give and old aches surface. With time

she's accustomed herself to a twinge of arthritis, the heart's
odd rhythm, the sear of a critical word
or a friend's silence. These pains, no longer sharp,

have weathered like bedrock, rough edges smoothed
and blanketed. Eve unfastens from the day's tasks—
wrinkled gherkins, armfuls of shirts from the line—

and reaches across the rift to Adam. Her hand
rests on the parallel crest, shaped from the same rock,
the same upheavals, seasons, storms, losses

but each has eroded in its own way—a wrinkle
gave way to a rivulet, an outcrop held firm,
now this new landscape: two bodies at rest.

Ann Knox

Ann Knox's chapbook, *The Dark Edge*, was published last year by Pudding House Press. In addition, she has two full books of poetry: *Stonecrop*, winner of Washington Writers' Publishing House Prize and *Staying Is Nowhere*, winner of the SCOP/Writer's Center Prize. Her poems have appeared in many literary journals, among them, *Poetry*, *Blue Line*, *The Green Mountains Review*, *Atlanta Review*, and *Alaska Quarterly*. A collection of short stories, *Late Summer Break*, was published by Papier Mache Press. She received

an MFA from Goddard-Warren Wilson and has taught workshops and writing seminars in many venues, including The Writer's Center in Washington, DC, Antioch Writing Workshop, Aspen Summer Conference, Johns Hopkins Writing Program, and Hagerstown Community College. For eighteen years she served as editor of the *Antietam Review*.

Judy Kronenfeld

MINDING DESERT PLACES

Winter—4 P.M.

Shadows lay themselves down
on the bare hills, darkly
soft, breast to breast.

Every tree and bush
in the wash—mesquite,
creosote, tamarisk—
is articulate
in its loneliness.

Cholla blink here,
there, guttering out.

Light slides from the warm
rock's upturned face.

You still see nothing
that is not there,
but now you sense
everything that is.

Judy Kronenfeld

Judy Kronenfeld's poems have appeared in many journals including *The Portland Review*, *Passages North*, *Hubbub*, *Poetry International*, *Chariton Review*, *Kansas Quarterly*, *The Manhattan Poetry Review*, *The Evansville Review*, *The Mississippi Valley Review*, *The Louisville Review*, *The MacGuffin*, *Spillway*, *Pebble Lake Review*, *Hiram Poetry Review*, *Snake Nation Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Natural Bridge*, *The Pedestal*, *Barnwood*, and *The Women's Review of Books*, as well as in anthologies including *Blue Arc West: An Anthology of California Poets* (Tebot Bach, 2006), and *Red, White and Blues: Poets on the Promise of America* (Iowa U. P., 2004). A book of her poems, *Shadow of Wings*, came out in 1991 (Bellflower Press), a chapbook, *Disappeared Down Dark Wells*, and *Still Falling* (The Inevitable Press) in 2000, and another chapbook, *Ghost Nurseries* (Finishing Line Press) in 2005. She has published stories, essays and reviews in *The Madison Review*, *The North American Review*, *Potpourri*, *The Crescent Review*, *Under the Sun*, *The AWP Chronicle*, *Chelsea*, and *The Literary Magazine Review*, as well as criticism and scholarly reviews in many journals such as *Shakespeare Quarterly* and *ELH*. A critical study, *KING LEAR and the Naked Truth: Rethinking the Language of Religion and Resistance* was published by Duke University

Press in 1998. She teaches in the Creative Writing Department at the University of California, Riverside.

Barbara Lefcowitz

DANCING ON THE DECK

They're dancing on the deck
to the wind's music
stems leaves blossoms
in a fluted urn
swaying and shuffling
to the cakewalk rhythms
of light breezes, as if
they will never stop, shift pace

So when the winds become stronger
the dancers go on, this time
to a livelier beat, closer to
a ragtime waltz, ca. 1912

Not far away the branches of an oak
that stood on the roadside
before there was a road
also frolic, it's late April
and nor'easters are for winter

But soon a gust shears off
the oak's entire trunk near
where its roots began
it falls across wires
without the least hesitation
rolls to a halt
so cars have to swerve
crash into each other

Witnesses wonder why
that tree and not the others
and why those BMWs and Jaguars,
a shame, things like that
don't happen around here

When the urn is blown
off the deck blossoms
and leaves tearing loose
tumbling onto the road
smashed bits of the urn's
fluted cement turning up

miles away no one believed
weather forecasts
any more than before
having sworn off both chance
and augury what the hell
could they have done anyway

TOXIC BERRIES

Brazen as fake jewels,
alluring as the quince and apple,
beads and coins on display,
since ancient times
toxic berries have tricked
those who wandered past

enticed them to pluck and taste
the splendid globes of flesh,
swallow them even if bitter
despite suspicion such berries
can cause deafness, pain, even death;

the yewberries, the pokeberries that shift
between rose, red, and purple, clusters
of bright orange fire weeds for the greedy.

Some say they embody nature's evil.

More likely they satisfy the need for decor
to please the eye rather than appease
the hunger for food,
except for a few birds,
who can feast and behold at the same time

unlike people who lust
for every color in the field
cart them home to show off

despite suspicion the colors
soon will sneak back

to refurbish the stalks
from which they'd been wrested.

BLUE BOTTLE

My plastic bottle of water
with its blue Dasani label
and scrolled outer sash
has a blue inner life

though surely the bottle's not Green.
Like its ordinary kin, its toxins
will not dissolve for eons
while it continues to contribute
its carbon foot
to the air's contamination

But is not such artistry
worth the risk?

The whirlpools of blue rings
that ripple when I hold it upright,
cascades of small sapphires,
scrolled diamond shapes that
expand with each silvery tilt,
surprise of a large five-petalled
white flower floating to the top
when I turn its neck to the light
and look straight down;
the flower turning black
with a slight shift of angle,
folding up in the dark
to bloom again with the sun
no matter how hot its blaze

Rumors of a bottle roundup
arise daily with strict orders
to recycle, a sort of mouth
to mouth resuscitation
until someone figures how to
purge them without enhancing
their power to release yet more poison

Still I'll keep it hidden
so it's the sole survivor
of doomed art, what else to do
with this treasure
meant for a museum not a landfill
nor a succession of hands
that likely will never

contemplate the beauty
of that blue inner life.

IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

The woman seated in front of me
has no idea

what's going on behind her back
where a gun-toting gangster
is about to shoot a cop, ca. 1930.

I tap my screen and puppets
perform a hula dance *tap tap*
a map of Labrador
which we've been flying above
for at least an hour

tap a clash of samurai swords
tap tap a man's driving a Mercedes
who slightly resembles my late great-uncle Herman

tap can that be Marilyn Monroe risen from the dead
to rejoin Tony Curtis? Damn, the woman in front
pushes her seat all the way back
Some Like it Hot landing on my food tray.

What does the person behind me see—
an x-ray of my spine? my deepest secrets?
He roars with laughter. An orgy from a
porno flick must be taking place
behind me. For the hell of it

I make my seat recline
so his monitor knocks over his beer
just at the critical moment, the world
behind my back a blank screen again.

Barbara Lefcowitz

Barbara F. Lefcowitz has published nine poetry collections. Her latest collection, *The Blue Train to America*, appeared in January 2007. Her fiction, poetry, and essays have been published in over 500 journals, and she has won writing fellowships and prizes from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the

Rockefeller Foundation, and several individual journals. A native New Yorker, Lefcowitz has lived most of her life in Bethesda, Maryland.

Israel Lewis

from "The Lies I Told My Children"

BROOKLYN

They asked if I'd had other girlfriends before
their Mom, and I said, Never, ever.
I was shy and never had a girlfriend, but then
Mom came along and she was very pretty
and laughed at my jokes, so I kissed her on the lips
and we got married. And they said, Really?
and I said, Really.

But they asked me again and one day I said,
Well, almost really. There was one.
And they said, What was her name?
And I said, Shirley Finkelstein,
which made them very merry,

and I told them that she lived in a mystical
place called Brooklyn, an island near New York,
a floating island held anchored to the
land by a beautiful bridge and a tunnel under the
water in which ran a train called Canarsie.

Brooklyn lay in mist, a wild place
all covered by grass as high as a man,
and on the whole island only one tree, and roaming
through the grass wild dogs and crocodiles, and a gang of men,
the Artful Dodgers, with spiked shoes and wooden clubs.
The people of the island were famously rude and spoke in a strange patois,
but on Sundays they dressed up—the men in suits and ties fedora hats
the women in summer dresses and picture hats—
and went to the baseball game, played
on the one clear meadow of mown grass.

But what happened to Shirley Finkelstein? they asked.
She wasn't my destiny. I went to war, and
when I came back Brooklyn had drifted off into the mist
and the Artful Dodgers vanished into the West.

Israel Lewis

After a career as an engineer, Israel Lewis took up prose and poetry and has been writing stories and poems for twenty years. A short story received Honorable Mention in a national competition for community college students. He has studied poetry in workshop courses at the University of Maryland under Phyllis Levin and Michael Collier, the Jenny McKean Moore program at George Washington University under Linda McCarriston, and more recently at OLLI (formerly the Institute for Learning in Retirement) at American University under Jennifer M. Pierson. His work has appeared in *Aurorean* and *Wordwrights!* A "science" poem in an anthology of poems on "Love and Mathematics" will be published next year.

Caroline McNeil

THREE CANADA GEESE IN RAIN

You fit so perfectly, geese. The lake
loves your grayness. The rain-pocked

wavelets mime your ruffed and stippled coats.
The sky becomes you. You float content,

three low mounds on a plane of moving
curves and shimmering arabesques,

endlessly exchanging shades of grey.
You alone are still, being made

for this. My eyes keep turning back,
dwelling on your denser bulk.

Occasionally you dip your beaks to drink
then all in one motion arch and fling

your black necks high, their loosening arcs
dark, sinuous, flying.

OVERCAST DAY, WITH ROCKS

Uncanny the way these granite boulders
strewn at the edge of the lake resemble clouds.
Bumpy tactile likenesses of clouds,
dark condensates of clouds, mottled, irregular.
And like them tumbled today upon a dull silk plane,
both sky and sky-like lake being overcast,
both smooth white strata.

Uncanny. We might imagine even that
vapor and granite had in some primordial age
been merged. And that a friendly god had
pulled down handfuls of the cosmic stuff for
men to have and made it dense.
Something solid for us to comprehend.
Something to hold our gaze, to comfort us
with heft.

ADVICE FOR A WARM EVENING

Rest on the Adirondack chair's slant back.
Regard the stars.
Name the brightest—Castor and Pollux
near the moon, Deneb overhead.

But do not wish on them.
Stars are too far from us for wishing,
six million, million miles times four
the nearest one. What's more, they are
wearing themselves away in fire storms,
and some even now are ghosts,
their final nuclei of hydrogen combined,
cores furiously expired.

Instead, half close your eyes and wait.
The fireflies appear in sheltered places first,
among leaves, under eaves.
Small earthy signalers,
night cyclers of odd proteins—
luciferin, luciferyl—and light,
cool flashing glims, there by the
steps, the sill, the sweetgum,
random creators these,
skimming the lawn, near the wall,
the liriodendron tree.
Wish now.

Caroline McNeil

Caroline McNeil writes about science and medicine, with an emphasis on cancer research, for professional audiences. Her work appears currently in several medical news publications and professional journals. She lives in Reston, Virginia.

Susan Meehan

A SILLY FOR A SICK POET

LET'S BE SILLY.

An old raggedy gritty day
like today
don't deserve no power
not even if I see you all bundled up
hunched over
sneakin' a peek round the door
past the corner of your eye
lookin' for that last Horseman,
the one with the scythe,
and you castin' for one good charm
one extra-strong curse
that'll do the trick.
I know you.
Don't bother—
not needed.

Instead
Let's thumb our noses
twaddle them in our ears
defy the gray, the sullen day
spit in its eye
stamp on the sidewalk's lines
and dare the bears.
Let's watch wrestlers on tv
and bet on the yellow tights
let's play hearts—
the one who cheats the most
wins.
Let's shout mysterious words
we just made up,
and laugh.

Today's a day for tickles
nickels
pickles
wishes
fishes
romolo
romolo
rumph.

SURPRISE!

You gonna be just fine.

Susan Meehan

Susan Meehan formerly served as the District of Columbia's only Patient Advocate for all persons in substance abuse treatment; one of her most successful poetry readings was to 300 HIV-positive drug addicts and their families. She now devotes herself to politics and poetry. (The two combined when she was asked to write and read an inaugural poem for Marion Barry's second term as mayor!) She and her husband have made three trips to Ireland, the first to focus on traditional music in Clare, the second to serve as peace monitors in Belfast during the summer of the 1998 Peace Accord and the murder of three little boys in a mixed Catholic-Protestant family, and the third this summer to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary with their grown children.

Mary Morris

FELLINI'S ROMA

(inside the ruins)

Red bison, yellow deer.

Within minutes the pigment fades, then dissolves from the sudden burst of air. Federico wears a miners hat, dirt, khakis, and boots. Darkness surrounds him. Federico is thinking fragment, delicate, the world of primitive and new, his mothers' Vespa, a modern chariot. It happens to be Ash Wednesday and he thinks of the Archbishop's liturgy at the Vatican, from dust to dust. He thinks of catacombs, the beds of bones, of earth and salt, Mussolini and the eternal city. Fellini slides against the wall of rock in the cool, once sealed cavern, sits on the most ancient dirt of his country. He's thinking bordello, the madrigal singers of Puccini, of opera, the baritone coming down the aisle, the way a storm enters a parched valley. He thinks of Mass, the confessional, three boxes--forgiveness in the middle of the two sides of sin. He thinks Chianti, fucelli, the way cypress grow in long neat rows along the road to San Pellegrino. He thinks about the lace of his wife's black mantilla, of weight and measure, the way water fills in arched aqueducts, their scheduled holes, the ancient history in his blood moaning among the ruins, a sound and a feeling he will carry forever in his genes, a certain frantic attachment through the instantaneous separation of the departed from existence.

BOY

I envision *The Dragons of Vortigern*,
all the books I read to my ten year old son,

who has been a knight, king, captain of a ship,
Robin Hood stealing alms from my purse at midnight.

A dusty black dog breathes bear-heavy, next
to the side of his jeans, where pockets are filled

with boy's treasure—mica, bone, empty diamond
skin of a snake, velvet grey feathers of a grackle.

He speaks to doves in the field.
They coo back.

And by the evening candle, the manx cat purrs
from his blessed hands

the way a lion does in the arms of Daniel.

MILAGROS

Each year I buy a milagro, a small silver amulet
of hope and a blessing—first a horse, then a heart,

a house and a bird, a tiny green Buddha,
and a dog that looks just like yours,

the one who stayed with you when you were four, lost
in the maize of arroyos, then found.

Miracles aren't mysteries that happen
only in someone else's time and place.

They happen constantly, each moment
folding into another, the way you came here,

the way you passed through my body like light,
became bones, flesh, and blood.

How strange in this techno world,
the X-rays of you inside

and outside of me
the miracle of diagnosis and survive,

how, in the book of grace, two bodies
turn to three, each of us alive.

AUTOBIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

—after Frank O'Hara

When I was a child, I pretended to be a priest
and made Communion from coins of bread.

I practiced on my younger brothers—
all five of them, even the baby.

This is my body. This is my blood.

My mother caught me once
and scolded me for being sacreligious,

so I never told her that my older sister
was hearing confessions,

and we had to say, *Bless me sister, for I have sinned*,
before repenting to her Grace, for she was a Bishop.

And here I am, having always escaped
the organized matter of religion, listening

to the rich acapella of gospel, so believing
in the conviction of those voices!

Mary Morris

Mary Morris is the winner of the 2007 Rita Dove Award. Her work has appeared in *Quarterly West*, *Indiana Review*, *Blue Mesa Review*, *Red Rock Review*, *Nimrod*, *The Sun*, and many others.

Beth Paulson

AFTER

One early June day we saw the doe
lying under a juniper on a slope.
We'd watched her walk lame the day before.
Some said haul her body out with chains
behind the jeep. Some said bury her
in dry, rock-filled adobe soil. Meanwhile
we lived a summer near that knoll—
daisies and poppies spent their season
in the sun until the hill turned bronze.
In the end we left her where she lay down—
in dying, how many can choose the place?—
her last sensing, fragrant boughs,
last view, immensity.

LOVE GEOLOGY

One evening we drive down the river road,
red-dusty from a lack of summer rain,
not traveled much this hour after supper.
We've come to search for flagstones
to pave a shady place next to the house we think
we'd like to sit: a friend said he got some
near these high sandstone cliffs
up from the river bank across the road.
Over the years these sedimentaries cleaved
and fell to new repose, half-buried or lodged
near sturdy firs or trunks of knotted Gambel oaks.
So you stop the truck when I say
There and Over there
so I can scramble up through brush
when we spot one, or two a little further up.
Then I push them down to you, or you climb
up the steeper banks, worried I might fall.
The stones you lower down the slope to me
I lift in my scratched hands and
with slow care stack in the truck.
Each heavy, red-brown slab I hold
an earth gift: I, the thrifty one,
always wanting to make something
out of what's free I can find,

you, the one who bears the heavy burden
to content me, who says if I want,
you'd move a mountain.

LIFE AT THE EDGE

On the surface of the earth
it seems apparent, most action
happens where things meet—
cup to the lip, beak to the nectar,
beetle to the bark, hook to the scales,
dragonfly to the skin of the river.
Slick purple eggplant,
fuzz of ripe peach, bristly pinecone,
silk rose petal that breathes its fragrance
on my fingers—each surface emanates.
Everything blooms at the edge—
crocus in spring, summer wildflower,
new grass shoots, ancient redwoods.
Great rivers run underground
but on earth's green and blue veneer's
a plenitude of waters.
Half-buried boulder, baby's soft crown,
fur, feather and hair, facial features
of persons I most love—
I'm content with what's exposed.
Where things contact are crusts,
membranes, molecules that cling and cleave,
open doors and borders.
So I'm grateful skin holds me in,
for fence line, tree line, porch and sky line,
black rim of distant mountain,
white curve of the moon's margin,
and I ponder with a complex brain
a universe in me that has no edge,
no horizon to hold everything inside.

Beth Paulson

Beth Paulson taught college writing for over twenty years at California State University Los Angeles and now lives near Ouray, Colorado where she teaches writing workshops, directs local poetry events, and writes a popular column for the *Ouray Plaindealer*. Her poems have been widely published in literary magazines and her work is included in anthologies published by Houghton Mifflin and University of Texas Press. She has two published collections of poems, *The Truth About Thunder* (2001) and *The Company of*

Trees (2004) as well as a CD of nature poetry, *By Stone By Water*. Beth's poem, "Hollyhocks," was nominated for the 2007 Pushcart Prize.

Roger Pfingston

MITTYESQUE

All that kamikaze bumping
and buzzing up against
the siding, the window,
not to mention the near misses,
you'd think it was blind arrogance
on the wing, and sure as hell
it's something like that: horsefly,
the summer evening deck disturber!

Nothing sexist, mind you,
(Mother Nature's way, after all)
but it has to be a blood-sucking female,
the male elsewhere, partying down
vegan style, scoring some pollen.
And me, I'm just trying
to finish a book, drink some tea,
though now my brain is a dark headline:

Swatter Ace Makes Mid-Air Kill

Roger Pfingston

Roger Pfingston is a retired teacher of English and photography. His poems have appeared recently in *Kaleidowhirl*, *Mannequin Envy*, and two anthologies from Iowa Press: *Say This of Horses* and *75 Poems on Retirement*. Another horse poem is scheduled to appear in *Cadence of Hooves: A Celebration of Horses* from Yarroway Mountain Press. His most recent chapbooks are *Singing to the Garden* from Parallel Press and *Earthbound* from Pudding House Publications.

Shep Ranbom

THE SUPER

He talked in glances over the Daily News after a day
supervising construction crews or wielding calipers
to map each tree along the Turnpike. Tall and lanky,
he'd stretch on his lounge to read the box scores
and school lunch menus aloud as we quaked
about, the housemoods easily shaken. My mother,
dusting, would sing with Beverly Sills on the Sony,
as I read the catechisms of Russell and Auerbach,
then tore up the living room with my dribbling,
denting the dadoes to the parquet, newly butchwaxed,
to the lolly columns below. He rose only when
something smashed, tending wounds with cement.
His palming hands could repair any shard of glass.
He was steady as a pulley in a window sash.

A CONVALESCENCE

Up the narrow transit of the basement stairs, Dad watched over me,
his desk a drafting board on the poker table, as he sat sensing
for seismic shifts in the ceiling to see if I needed tending
that winter when I was eight and in a month's recovery

from two throat operations. Off-season and in charge
of road construction in town, Dad moved his field office
to our house, and every few hours would send his assistant
to bring me ice cream—mostly cartons of cherry vanilla,

Boozie's favorite flavor. "There's nothing better for a man
on his back than some jugs on his lips," Boozie said,
as he entered my tiny porthole, bringing me a sundae bowl
with two sculpted scoops, milky white with cherry nipples.

"Does it take away the soreness?" he asked, watching
me spoon each ounce of goodness. For 30 years, he was
Dad's chauffeur, entrusted to manage all key maneuvers.
He checked my gullet with the same focus he measured

the temperature of a bridge. I lay half awake and woozy,
but daily found new strength, as if Boozie's hands,
like a fisherman's, had entered my dreams, reaching
inside my throat to release every painful hook and suture.

Shep Ranbom

Shep Ranbom recently completed a collection of poems called *The Infinity of Small Places* from which these pieces are drawn. Newly published work includes poems in tribute to the late Irish novelist John McGahern, which appear in *Leitrim Guardian 2007*, and selections from "King Philip's War," appearing in *Independent Scholar*. He is the co-founder and president of CommunicationWorks, LLC, a national public affairs firm focused on education, social policy, and cultural issues.

Heddy Reid

ALMOST OCTOBER

We know the heat by heart, and at the equinox,
we've lost track of how the seasons spin,
of how they play us fast and loose sometimes.
While we're still riding summer's ease, ragged
crickets commence to stitch us urgently toward fall.
Carefully tended borders bolt, while formal gardens,
restrained and held in tasteful check till now,
break rank and riot, flaunting splayed-out petals
and fruited floral parts, a fevered exhibition
from the edge. So much noise, disharmony,
and unexpected ardor! And something like a promise;
something someone slips us to keep us safe
against the coming dark, to hold, hold against the long nights
bereft of warmth that even now are rumored in the hills.

AGE OF MIRACLES

I expect cleaning the restrooms isn't so different
from validating historical principles, or from napping
after the exertion of writing a poem, which I am fighting.
Thursday I pulled off the Interstate just south of Baltimore
to, as they say, refresh myself. Inside the Ladies', a toilet's
electric eye caused it to ghostflush as I rose from the seat,
yes, and at the sink, water coursed from the tap at the merest
pass of my hand underneath. Who could have foreseen this?
Certainly I would do toilets, but would rather not,
all things being equal, do urinals.

Listen: we get off
onto back roads with narrow bridges, barns tilting
toward the horizon, boys on their backs half-swallowed
by rusting cars. Dogs on chains. Where the face of inbreeding
can appear in any doorway, or the face of an angel. Miles
and miles of this. But the black earth roars down by the creek,
and yesterday I saw about a hundred wild turkeys tearing up a cornfield.

Heddy Reid

Heddy Reid's poems have been published in *Alimentum Journal*, *Yankee Magazine*, *Sun and Moon*, *The Calvert Review*, *Potomac Review*, *The Washingtonian*, *Antietam Review*, *The Sand River Poetry Review*, *The Southern Review*, and *Passager*. Her chapbook, *A Far Cry: Poems of Childhood and Psychoanalysis*, was published recently by Finishing Line Press. Her work appears several anthologies, and she has read widely in the DC

area. She has led workshops in DC and New York. Heddy has worked for many years as a freelance writer and editor specializing in health, and has been a "book-doctor." She and her husband live in Washington, DC. They have two sons and a splendid new grandson.

Elisavietta Ritchie

OO LONG IN THE STORM

Let smoky Oolong tea and raisins soaked in rum
remind us both of ancient loves and current pains—

We're trapped inside one huge aquarium!

Rain is cascading down these walls of glass, rain
and more rain.

*The radio reports flood warnings out.
Look, tide fills up the cove, then does not drain.*

Just the usual wet spring.

*Can half a moon, unseen beyond
the storm, grab hold the helm
of tides and pull them back?*

Come on, let's splash through puddles, ponds,
to gauge if surf might overwhelm
the bulkhead, drown the yard again.

*Should we not dump the tea and save
books, photos, manuscripts, the cat?
She scratches at the door and cries.
We'd best grab everything, pack up and run.*

And leave half-written joys and troubles lovers gave
in those forgotten months of drought?

The whole wall's cracked!

Why be wise?
Let's boil more tea, and take another chance,
gamble on the drying power of the sun.

*You think wrecked hearts can heal enough to fancy
one more fling*

EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS

1.

On living or dying.

This time, 1973, the mushrooms,
alabaster parasols of death in sour cream

after a September afternoon of poems and guitar,
motorcycles revving behind the stage, and later
forbidden tasting beyond the floating dock,

then feet mud-caked dashing from car to woods
the whole trip to vomit beyond the dark road—
The start of pain, the ritual sense of doom,

the midnight agony of cramps through legs
and pelvis, then chest squeezed by a closing vise,
while in the Sibley E.R., interns not yet

trained for fungal toxins, ask and ask,
Can you name the current president?
I recount the blunders of his reign.

At 2 a.m., wheeled to bed, sixth floor,
the night nurse asks in her Georgia voice
sultry with cinders and dark velvet gladiolas,

Honey, is there anythin' I kin git you?
Who'd dare say tea at this hour,
ward kitchen sprayed and locked?

She brings one Styrofoam cup,
an ambered string to a Lipton bag
more sacred than all the Oolong tins

clipper-shipped from India. Then
she fills a white enamel bowl
and washes and washes my feet.

2.

Below Johns Hopkins Hospital, 2004, the street is gone:
trees, dead leaves, leaf-blowers, their noise, black bags,
ash cans, loose dogs, ants on October grass.

More questions, decisions: easy as switching the power off?
Would have been, then. Plate shards, stored pills,
penknives, forgotten scissors, smashed glass?

Yet that life force . . . Or dumb habit, sloth, lack of bravado,
all those unfinished tasks—and silly to skip out now
when so many are shipping out daily, *unwilled*.

Till the last tattle and rattle the crone, blind to her liver marks,
the old man despite aches and clocks, unsolved regrets,
cling or are clung to quotidian routines.

And one can't disappoint those who wrote notes, brought sweets,
sent bouquets, tried to phone. So, one does not.
For how will the book turn out?

Elisavietta Ritchie

Elisavietta Ritchie's books include: *Awaiting Permission to Land*, (Anamnesis Award); *The Spirit of the Walrus*; *The Arc of the Storm*; *Elegy for the Other Woman*; *Tightening The Circle Over Eel Country* (Great Lakes Colleges Association's "New Writer's Award"); *Raking The Snow*; chapbooks *Timbot*; *Wild Garlic: The Journal of Maria X*. Fiction collections: *In Haste I Write You This Note*; *Flying Time* (four PEN Syndicated Fiction winners); Edited *The Dolphin's Arc: Endangered Creatures of the Sea* and others. She teaches creative writing to adults and students. Current president, Fiction division, Washington Writers' Publishing House. Several awards and Pushcart Prize nominations.

Noel Smith

THE FILLING OF HOLES

On the way to the tide pools
Annie and I stopped near where the sea
crashes into the caverns.
Before us was a rock
with a gaping hole
like a womb to be filled.
Annie pitched white pebbles
into it to see which would
miss, bounce, or be washed out
by a chance wave.
And which would stay.
Each pebble was a baby
she had never had.
Annie began placing
bleached stones in all the rock
sockets she could reach
until the entire cliff was one
face with many white eyes
like a site of an ancient ritual
of filling where once there was nothing.

FIRST BLESSING

St. Juste, the sorcerer with little baby teeth
who lives in Port au Prince
between All Souls' Cemetery and the sewer
is putting together a bottle.
In it are the shavings
of two skulls
perfumed oils, earth, seeds,
rum and leaves.
This is a paste of dead and alive.
Baby teeth baby teeth

Around the outside of the bottle
he wraps cloth the color of blood
and sets out cradling it under his shirt.
Two skulls two skulls,
And past the tin hovels, dusty alley
lined by peering eyes, as

along he limps through the runoff's stench
and around the corner
oils, earth, seeds, rum, leaves,
paste of dead and alive
to stop at the green door.
He holds the bottle up to the east
for a very long time,
and knocks where the child
has been born.

ARACHNID SASS

I say, that web is a mess you know, little fuzz
hung between nothing but my hat and the back of the chair.
No class. Where are the fine spun wheels of silver
which your yankee kin spin? No grandeur.

Why grandeur? This is an easy land.

*We string out in the eaves soft in the breeze
and we know what is what, we wait, and soon
along will come what we need.*

You don't mind being strung up all day
in that frowsy web, waiting for what happens by?

Somebody happen by, I eat them.

Think of the young women on this island, bright webs
strung in their breast, waiting for what happens by.

Nothing but trouble happen by them.

Nothing but trouble happened by me, either. I came out
the other side of that, now it is good be at peace. I don't even
have to wait anymore for what happens by.

You an old woman talking to spiders.

FOR A BRIEF TIME

we are suspended in a rose light
of dawn lovely enough to tide us over.
The sun has not quite cleared the point.
The goats wake in the bushes,
crying for their kin
then cascade off the mountain
to the beckoning grasses.
Quirky lizards spurt along
twigs. Birds like tiny wind-ups
rustle the leaves, and out to sea,
frigates scavenge the open water.
It is all a matter of light.

We see only surfaces.
Soon the sun will flare out
its stark clarifications of cars
rusting in the thorn trees, shattered glass,
dismembered dolls, slack-jawed refrigerators,
corroded generators.
the concrete mixers will growl and snarl
up the mountain, cement block trucks,
backhoes, frontloaders, pickups packed
with laborers, their dark heads
wrapped in bright cloth and the air
will turn to fumes.

Noel Smith

Noel Smith's first collection of poems, titled *Drifting for a While Toward Cash and Dreams*, will be published by MotesBooks early in 2008. An earlier manuscript, *Twisting Sourwood*, was a finalist for the Tupelo Press First Book Award. Her poems have appeared in many journals including *Yankee Magazine*, where she received first prize in 1996, *West Branch*, *New Letters*, and *Shenandoah*. She won honorable mention in the Denny C. Plattner prize from Appalachian Heritage in 2001 and the Henry V. Larom Prize from SUNY Rockland in 2002. She has been nominated three times for a Pushcart Prize and lives in Pomona, New York.

John Surowiecki

MOVIE STARS THANK MY MOTHER FOR HER PATRONAGE

Rita Hayworth

We do see you, you know,
on the other side of the screen,
always in the fourth row
(since you won't wear your glasses),
eating your popcorn (double butter)
and sipping your drink (Pepsi-Cola).
We know everything about you.
Every time you knocked on Marion
Grabowski's door you asked: Marion,
are you decent? And she answered: Me?

Greer Garson

When you watched *Mr. Chips*
you cried so hard the manager
was ready to call an ambulance;
and even you wonder sometimes
how light thrown against a screen
can burn a hole in someone's heart.

Walter Pidgeon

I remember your handkerchiefs:
scalloped edges and red piping,
some with delicate floral patterns,
all pressed and smelling of cedar.

Olivia de Havilland

Your favorite theater was the Palace:
everything in black and purple
with a crystal chandelier and plush
velvet chairs. When you saw *Snake Pit*
there you squeezed Marion's hand
so hard you nearly broke her fingers.

Franchot Tone

You and Marion saw *Midnight Mary* twenty times,
maybe more. Each time you saw me kissing Loretta Young
you almost passed out. Swooned, I believe, is the word.
I suppose the scene was kind of steamy for its day.
And maybe you thought you were she, a poor girl
trying to make something out of what you were given.

Poverty of the purse, but not the spirit. Thank you
and adieu, adieu: at least I have you to remember me.

MRS. SZMYKLESZCZWLADDECZERYNIECKI'S LAST DAY (1955)

She praises his gift of a tin cat, japanned
and bejeweled and black like her cat at home;
and all the while nurses, unarmed and helpless,

most from Ireland, ask her to drink water
as if that could extinguish the fire in her lungs.
Outside, sunlight runs up and down an orange park
like a child. Students gulp down hot dogs

on the medical school stairs, small against
the brickwork, cold in the shadow of marble,
imagining new weaponry, supplicants as before
and as always, the last friend to those in pain.

She refuses morphine: mists of cheap perfume.
She's not really dying, she says: she's being born
into the world of the dead.

CHOPIN MAZURKA IN A MINOR

It passes the childhoods of people
it doesn't know, meeting aunts
with hennish stop-and-go eyes
and uncles with tiny square teeth.

It finishes school, mourns the loss
of parents, has lunch with exiting lovers,
wanders through the park
holding hands with someone who
relies on it more than it likes.

It knows it is gradually being replaced
by memory and remorse.
A high-school girl takes up its theme,
then goes on to something else.

MISS FLYNN WALKING THE HALLS

When she said she wanted us to *see*
she meant seeing cowslips and musk roses
where there were weeds, English oaks

where there were dead elms and dying
chestnuts, greening hills where there
were mountains of tires and engine parts.

Walking the hospital halls looking for a friend,
she finds herself in every room, bleached
and withered and near death, wondering
if oversized books will groan for her one day

and tissue-paged anthologies issue their sighs,
if Shakespeare's plays will stand as her ribs
and heart and if, in her honor, novels will refuse

to open and volumes of poetry refuse to close,
revealing on each page her long walks home
and late nights spent in the company of words.

John Surowiecki

John Surowiecki is the author of *Watching Cartoons before Attending a Funeral* (White Pine Press, 2003) and *The Hat City after Men Stopped Wearing Hats*, (The Word Works, 2006 Washington Prize). He has also published five chapbooks: *Bolivia Street* (Burnside Review Press, 2006), *Further Adventures of My Nose: 24 Caprices* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2005), *Dennis Is Transformed into a Thrush* (White Eagle Coffee Store Press, 2004), *Five-hundred Widowers in a Field of Chamomile* (Portlandia Group, 2002) and *Caliban Poems* (West Town Press, 2001). In 2006, Surowiecki won the Pablo Neruda Prize sponsored by *Nimrod International Journal* and finished second in the 2006 Sunken Garden Poetry Festival National Competition. He was a featured reader at Cafe Muse in April 2007. The three poems in this selection are part of a long poem, "American Stroke," which is recently finished and looking for a publisher. Publications include: *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Antietam Review*, *Briar Cliff Review*, *Columbia*, *Cream City Review*, *Folio*, *Gargoyle*, *GW Review*, *Indiana Review*, *Kimera*, *MacGuffin*, *Mississippi Review*, *Nimrod*, *North American Review*, *Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Rhino*, *West Branch*, and *Xanadu*.

Steven Trebellas

TRICK ACAPELLA ANGEL

The lonely Doo-wop man carries his heart
through the streets of the obsidian city. Obelisks,
like colossal electric razors gaze on his pompadour
as he inches along, but make no harmony with him.
He remembers friends—Johnny, Fast Eddie,
Magic Mike, and sad/sweet songs that made
the Ladies cry—sung beneath the moon,
on a South-Philly corner--so long ago.
He tells a cart-vendor who is too cold to care,
that he once opened for the Belmonts, and his song—
the one that was stolen, would have made him. His voice:
smooth, like a Winston makes you think it's true,
but the wind cuts him short with a warning,
and the sun ducks behind clouds as if avoiding
association, so he hi-fives and heads for the shelter.
The lonely Doo-Wop man does not know
that in Heaven tonight, one trick Acapella Angel
will sing all 4 parts of his song--the one that was stolen—
the one that would have made him—and that Girl-Angels
will cry (a little) and all this in an optimised town,
on a perfect Doo-wop corner, and beneath a singer's moon.
Season's over. Time to store the cart. So much can happen
between now and April, and the lonely Doo-Wop man
with nowhere to go but up.

OPHELIA

(based on an EMT report)

The patient was found
eating dirt and
trying to stuff a baby
back into her womb.
She is nude. She is
currently making no sense.
She is threatening, stating she
will place a spell on all of us.
She is delusional,
accusing us of conspiracy, saying
we are lower than she,
that we will eat dirt, that we

will attempt to re-enter our
mother's wombs.
The patient says our time is up.
The patient says it is we
who are delusional.

Steven Trebellas

Steven Trebellas, 54 years old, recently received his MFA from Southern Illinois University. His poems previously appeared in Innisfree 3. His background is in mechanics and home repair. Raised in Illinois, he participated in strikes, riots, and protests, including, at the age of 16, the 1968 Democratic Party Convention in Chicago. He was kicked out of Culver Stockton College at 19 for protesting his black roommate's expulsion for dating a white woman. He was a labor organizer while at Southern Illinois University. He loves the writings of the Beats, but also current poets, especially, Rodney Jones, W.S. Merwin, James Wright, and Kim Addonizio. He currently lives in a gas station, has no health insurance, and occasionally looks for work in Burlington, Iowa.

Patrick Uanseru

DEREGULATION

they have torn the regalia
of peace
they have worn the mask
of war
they have adorned their heads
with beads
of doublespeak
they have plaited our paths
with thread
of hunger
they have armed their teeth
with shrapnel
of deceptions
they have deregulated our stomachs
with needles
of pains
they have regulated their bellies
with barrels
of crude oil money
their republic have won
bronze medal
of most corrupt country
their flowing "adire" robes sweep dust
of death
into our eyes,
our eyes, dusty and jaundiced
blinks in the throes
of their unregulated greed.

Patrick Uanseru

Patrick Iria Uanseru, a graduate in Theatre Arts from the University of Calabar, is from an agrarian community called Uokha, Edo State, Nigeria.

Pamela Murray Winters

DENIAL OF WINTER

Inside the docksiders: a dark warren,
sweaty, slightly disreputable,
a haven for spiders, a lure for cats.
Now my feet are there: rough skin against rough skin,
bare, bald, wrinkled, and, lately, cold.
The walk will heal them, I think, twisting a silk scarf
against a denim collar.
The day is new, and I am still stubborn.
Pine dross packs the driveway; its perfume
rushes my nostrils in the Trojan horse of a cold breeze.
Potato sky, scars of branches,
leaves just their own skeletons in the gullies.
The gravel is louder now, and from down the road
I hear a noreaster murmur on the bay.
I am stubborn. At least it's not raining.
A demon hammers on my knee.
Each ring on each finger sucks up the chill
like a corpse kiss. Fog forms on the silver.
I succumb to pockets.
We will not talk about my face.
I am stubborn, and I am going nowhere, just the circle
that keeps the flagging body from folding.
I will walk until spring if I have to, and until snow flies
the socks sleep in the drawer.

TO THE SECOND DINAH

*My street, in a small town on the Western Shore of the Chesapeake, was named
for one Fardinando Battee. I know very little about him except that he lived long
and married twice—both times to women of the same name.*

It's rooms within rooms, deathbeds, gardens,
cradles, chapels.
I did not build it.
It will outlive me, minus the odd wall,
the floorboards pulled to fix the shifting piers,
the loss from a hurricane or dropped lantern.
They walk in and out, women and men,
built of the same hard clay,
singing the Maryland birdcall:

R quirks the lips in a dry laugh.
T recedes to a memory.
O goes to eau.
Let us not be fussy about names.
We'll all lie together under the locusts,
where lichens erase the letters from the stone
and cats chase sparrows.
So chip off the bricks
to rebuild the kitchen.
A few black marks won't mar:
The bread will rise as sweet.

Pamela Murray Winters

Pamela Murray Winters is a lifelong resident of the Washington, D.C., area whose poems have appeared in *Gargoyle*, *Calvert Review*, *JMMW*, and the anthology *Takoma Park Writers 1981*. A former music journalist, in summer 2007 she studied poetry with her old college instructor Rod Jellema at the Writer's Center and songwriting with poet Tom Kimmel and her musical hero Sloan Wainwright at the Cedar Run Song Workshop. She learned to write four years before she learned to tie her shoes.

Kathi Wolfe

PAPAYA

after Frank O'Hara and David Lehman

It is 12:15 in New York
and I am wondering
what to say when the doctor
blasts the all-seeing
light into my surprised eyes.

I am wondering if the last thing
I see will be Garbo
lying on a couch,
dying in Camille,
or the blue screen
of death on my computer.

I am wondering
if the lights on Broadway
will dim for a minute
in homage to my news.

I am wondering
if I will create
an ars poetica
of Braille,
Seeing-Eye dogs,
stares, averted eyes;
if I will sing new songs
with Homer and Milton.

Or will I dwell in
Shadowland,
where you
don't die,
but feel
as if you should.

I only know,
in Papaya King,
on 86th and Third Avenue
inhaling onions and mustard,
there will always be you,
hot dogs and papaya.

from the Helen Keller poems—

DREAMING OF HEAVEN

You say
I can't speak
of sound
or write of light.
Moonbeams,
symphonies
are off-limits to me.

Defectives, you insist,
can't wipe
a crying baby's tears
or escape
a fire's wild orange flame.

What right
do I have to even talk
of color, you demand.

No more right
than you
to tell of Paris,
unless, like me,
you've inhaled
the mingled scent
of cigarettes and hyacinth
drifting along the Seine.

Can you know
the Pyramids,
if you haven't felt
the rough-hewn, ancient stone,
the scratchy lick
of a camel's tongue,
the sandy silence
of the desert,
as I did one summer night?

Do you dare
to dream of heaven
when you've never been there?

Kathi Wolfe

Kathi Wolfe is a poet and writer in Falls Church, VA. Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*, *Potomac Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Passager Magazine*, *Breath & Shadow* and other publications. She has appeared on the public radio show *The Poet and the Poem* and read in the Library of Congress Poetry at Noon Series. Wolfe has received grants for poetry residencies at Vermont Studio Center, an artist community in Johnson, VT. She was awarded a Puffin Foundation grant for her work on her chapbook of poems on Helen Keller.

Ernie Wormwood

THE POET, THE WIFE, THE LOVER & THE STUDENT

More women have broken heart tattoos than men
—John Irving

He thought the way he loved her,
just as he thought the way he loved his wife,
was enough.

His newest lover, his student,
increased the tension palpably, so he hid
the scissors, the knives

Wherever he was
and he napped like a nervous new mother
because of his new Baby.

It is not ours to know
what mix of alchemy and intimacy
his old lover used,

But one morning, having returned to the marital bed
and his sleeping wife,
very late,

He arises in the shadowy dark, picks up his razor,
sends the shaving cream
to his fingers,

Stands on his lusty homo sapiens feet,
looks into the Venetian glass over the his
and the wife Jane's sinks,

And sees the name, announcing his right shoulder,
a mistress's manifesto in a bleeding red heart
Cynthia.

Ernie Wormwood

Ernie Wormwood, a native Washingtonian, lives in Leonardtown, Maryland. She recently appeared on Grace Cavalieri's *The Poet and the Poem* for the Library of Congress and has new work coming out in an anthology on Walt Whitman and in the book *Poem, Revised*, Marion Street Press, September 2007.

Leo Yankevich

WAKE CAKE

You fly back home, sit at the kitchen table
with the wake cake. The crumbs inside the foil.
Thirty years have passed and you are able
only to stare outside. You watch him toil
in the garden, turn the frozen soil.
You open up his lager, pick the label,
look at the food that in three days will spoil,
wonder if there is meaning to the fable.
He rests the rusty shovel by the window.
His heavy breath is warm and live and rising.
He smiles to you. You feel the winter wind blow
through the panes. You look down at the icing.
He's speaking now beyond the stars. You listen.
You are ten years old and forever his son.

MARY MAGDALENE

When Mary washed his feet he didn't stare
down like an ordinary man. No lust
blazed in his eyes, although her milky bust,
thighs and neck were there for him. Her hair
brushed his calves, her hands reached past his knees.
She was just doing what she'd always done.
It was still early. Her lips had just begun.
Her earthly thoughts commingled with the breeze.
He focused on what was to come: his trial,
his torture and his death. He didn't want it,
rebuking Mary with a gentle smile.
She covered up with sorrow and a veil.
And I sign my name beneath this sonnet,
a man who lusted and who knew her well.

Leo Yankevich

Leo Yankevich's poetry has appeared in scores of magazines on both sides of the Atlantic, among humbler titles in *American Jones*, *ArtWord Quarterly*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Cedar Hill Review*, *Chronicles*, *Envoi*, *The MacGuffin*, *Poetry Nottingham*, *Staple*, *Sulphur River Literary Review*, *The Tennessee Review*, *Visions International*, and *The*

Windsor Review. He lives with his wife and three sons in Gliwice, Poland, where he works as a translator and serves as the poetry editor for *The New Formalist* (formalpoetry.com).

Katherine E. Young

MILKWEED

(for Alexander)

[T]ho' a Child be ever So dutiful it never repays back the cares troubles and Anxieties
which Parents undergo in the raising them to the State of Manhood.

— *Michael Cadet Young to his son, Thomas, ca. 1769*

i.

Weed of the countryside
sprung up in swamps, over septic tanks,
neither hardy nor adaptable as dandelion
but of that ilk, commonplace.
One rare summer day, silk strands
from a far-off plant
slithered across suburban lawns
into well-kept gardens
where weeds were called “wildflowers,”
where cut stones maintained borders
real and imagined —
*hair of milkweed sifting through thumbs
stroking, combing, caressing a cheek —
crinkle of skin like chitin
tough, reluctant in its new landscape.*

ii.

What did I give you, child of my body?
Silk of my spirit, steel of my hide?
Are you roving weed like me, or will you plant yourself,
defenseless, among foxglove and roses?

iii.

Child in the kitchen imitates
the whirl of the coffee grinder;
Papa pours him a cup of milk.
Every moment now watching,
every moment awaiting
the crackling, peeling, bursting
seeds on streamers
sallying forth,
mutatis mutandis,
please god mutable world.

CONFEDERATES

(James Byrd, Jr., in memoriam)

They haunt us all, the stone ghosts surveying
Southern squares, muzzle-loaders close at hand,
one ear forever cocked, as if whole hosts
encircled them still.

In a place called Tinkling Springs, raw boards once
carved with name and cross have rotted away.
Granddaddy, eighty-three, his eyesight poor,
cannot recall the site;

he clears dead leaves, uproots the vines hiding
other lost graves, shifts to keep the weight off
his bad knee. "I could've sworn it's right here,"
he says uncertainly.

Back in town, the Tastee Freeze dishes out
soft serve, onion rings. The smell of frying
grease drifts past the courthouse, the county jail,
soldier in the square.

Asphalt carpets the town, carpets wagon
trails our farmer boys marched off along towards
glory. As if marching off was glory's
only requirement.

We have no Colonel Shaw, no Fifty-Fourth
Massachusetts to call our own; our boys
dug the ditch, threw Shaw's body in among
the "niggers" he had led.

Some of our boys still shoot off their guns, still
breed attack dogs, might just chain a black man
to a pickup's bumper, drunk and rebel-
yelling the whole time.

But not all. Some heard the call: "Civil rights!
Education!" Some stood beside the lunch
counters, some marched with the righteous. Some taught
their young better ways.

Granddaddy, scanning tree and stone for some
sign of his Confederate grandfather's
grave, also heard those words. He says that folks,
his folks, just didn't think.

He tells of hiring neighbors, black men skilled
at butchering hogs. Tired, hungry men, who
refused food rather than eat their meal at
a table set apart.

"I always treated a man like a man,"
he says now, "But I could've done better."
He limps off towards the car, clambers in, says
no more the whole way home.