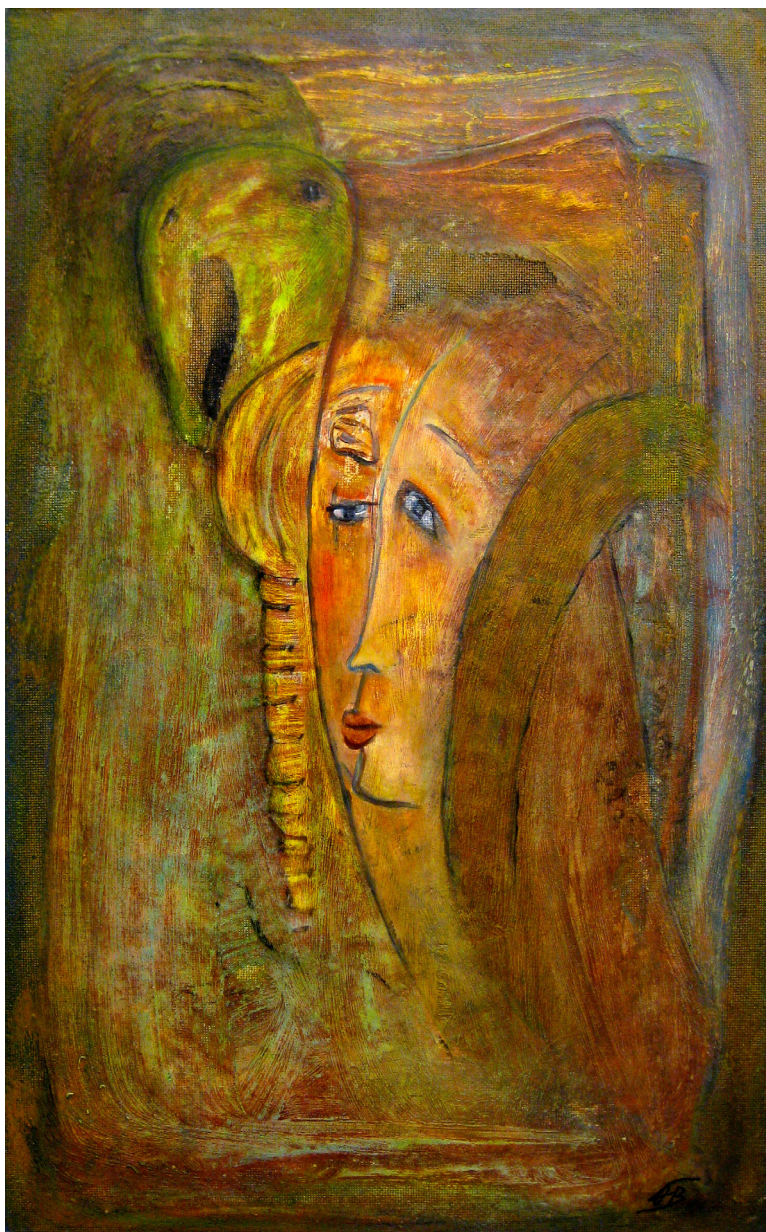
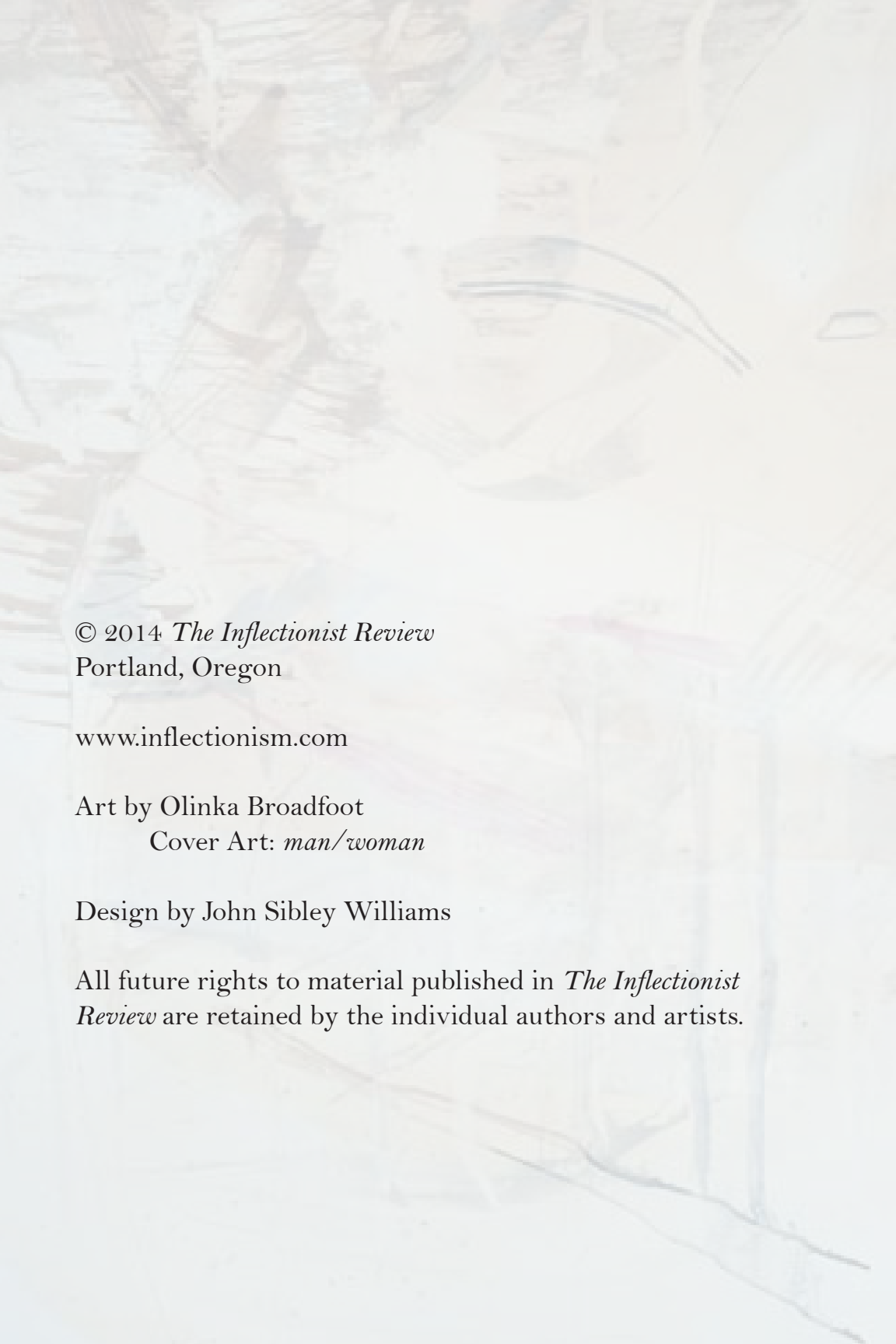


The
Inflectionist Review

No. 2





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No. 2

Winter 2014

Portland, Oregon

mission

The Inflectionist Review is a small press publishing stark and distinctive contemporary poetry that fosters dialog between the reader and writer, between words and their meanings, between ambiguity and concept. Each issue gathers established and emerging voices together toward the shared aim of unique expression that resonates beyond the author's world, beyond the page, and speaks to the universality of human language and experience.

Inflectionism is an artistic movement that was started in 2010 by three Portland, Oregon poets who sought a more organic approach that respected both poet and reader, both words and interpretation. As a creative philosophy, Inflectionism seeks to build upon what has come before and gently bend it to reflect what has and has not changed about the world and the language we use to express it.

editors

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John Sibley Williams

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from the editors

*My words take up a
space
that I would not notice
without its being taken*

Is that not often the way with things—love, trust, creativity, meaning? Absence is often recognized and defined by *its* absence, by presence, and once even partially sated we realize the empty space has existed all along, around and within us, bleeding from things until we name and “understand” them. This duality, implied in Gregory Moore’s lines above (possibly in discussion with Mark Strand’s *Keeping Things Whole*), speaks to our inability to consistently witness what surrounds us. Even as poets, who emphasize gratitude and introspection, we can have a blind spot for empty space, until we have filled it. And then, as with all the authors in this issue, we are left in awe of a world that required words to be appreciated.

Rae Gouirand showcases her fascinating, challenging work as this issue’s Distinguished Poet. We are grateful to our featured artist, Olinka Broadfoot, for lending her quirky visions to the poetic cause.

Each piece in TIR thrives within its own created world yet adds to the larger discourse we hope to foster. We invite you to join the conversation.

— A. Molotkov and John Sibley Williams



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distinguished poet

Rae Gouirand

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Contributors

Submit to TIR



Greggory Moore

Silenced Urge (Silence; Dirge)

My words take up a
space
that I would not notice
without its being taken
I speak and it
goes
I feel it going

honest space
I cannot recover
honest space I
do not feel
until I speak and
choke the life from it
I utter

and experience utterance
with repugnant intimacy
and wish it silence
lamenting the drive
to speak
sickened by
speaking
speaking
all the while

Doug Bolling

Questions

Long emptiness of sky
within which the sojourner
pauses, takes stock,
begins the template
of a self.

Even the seas, even the
mountains momentary
as sudden slant of a
west wind.

In the shadows the solitary
one asks of sun why the
flame, what the travails
of time.

Why these words that rise
from the blood,
the unseen circuits
below the skull,

how to build a life
somewhat of light
within a greater
darkness.

Doug Bolling

Weathering

Our steps through the hours.
Sun and moon. The memories
held in their arms.

That distant summer when
we walked for miles in
the fields.

The sheaves. The furrows.
Our words carving out spaces
in which the dream.

The time we made a fire
on the creek bank and
studied the flames
to invent a future.

You saying: we are made
of death and desire,
our shadows tongue-tied
but following close

like the childhood we left
behind and only now believe.

Adreyo Sen

This Promise

Perhaps when I am gone,
you'll find me in the quietest of places,
not even in silent lawns dewily mute
in the absence of the sun's kisses.

I'll be your whispered half-sentences,
your sudden trailing away,
your sudden enchantment by a spider
trawling along a cracked window pane.

I'll be the death running alongside
the rhythm of your heart.

You'll search for me and when you want me,
I'll be not.

Jose Angel Araguz

Argument Rooms

The hands on the clock follow each other like a couple in an argument.
Only once every hour do they come close to touching.
The minute passes, and the distance begins to grow again.
This is how life is measured. In silence. In passing.
In rooms where silence remains unbroken.

Marriage



Jose Angel Araguz**Blackout**

When a flash passes, we dip again into a loud dark,
listen to water drum across the roof, clasp with dirt.
Unable to see the world, we are a people of flash
and broken skies. When we speak, each word
cracks, passes our lips as if for the first time.

Jose Angel Araguz



Paper Clouds

He began the night by tearing pages out of the sky
and now finds he has nowhere to hide. He rests,
breathing in the same air as stars,
an air cold in him that turns
like paper clouds folding, breaking.

Anton Frost**So long**

above your portrait,
I write

a million years ago
in green pencil.

my narrow winter,
my aching house.

I say *forever*
as we pass between cities,

a way of naming good things,
of indicating your gestures

when you
have so much to say.

forever, a word
more ether

than object,
more memory
than stone.

You are the farthest city,
the longest shore.

I am your traveler,
citizen,



So long

student
of birdsong.

a million years ago.
then your name

and then
nothing.

Clarke W. Owens**Coast**

Driftwood bobbing on a wave, floating farther out
with each tidal stroke. It's like breathing.
Ocean has a cosmic breath, and someone ashore
is arranged like scenery, here for a moment,
like a deer crossing a road. Like forest
swallowing deer, ocean sweeps beach
in its seaweed-smelling compass, origin
of all that swims or walks, pebble
of the universe, and you to me like a sun
throwing off planets, are now cosmic debris
flying in mutually repellent directions,
crest picking up speed.

Clarke W. Owens



Rescue

There you sit, among the ruins,
calling out to come look, there is writing
on the stones, stones in the path
to our wider streets. Watch the traffic.
I would say nothing to the passersby
but you light the throats of songbirds.
There is a lantern on your helmet.
A memory rises of being trapped in this mine,
of you dragging me to the surface
with no power of youth.
I am dry, covered with newspaper,
when I burst into the overwhelming light.

Sam Roderick Roxas-Chua**Oaring**

In a shallow bay
my father is slumped
inside a black raft,
arms flung over each
side, fingers flicking
the water. I touch the
ripple of sunset. I want
to be his fingerprint
and index his lolled
years, carry his melody
of back and forth, un-
learn the sway of push
and pushing.

Today I wrap
the oars in silk,
leave the telephone
receiver pendulous
over the oak table
where you taught me
to write my name in
English, this round
eddy where forgotten
things appear and dis-
appear, like those
beetles I tied to
strings during a storm.

Oaring

That same table carved
from a bend listens to the
chorus of wings outside
the window, oaring the
sky for forgiveness,
oaring the sky for
another way home.



Love

Sam Roderick Roxas-Chua

Fiddlebones

But before I go, instead of an obituary, I want my feet washed by the pastor who left my mother bleeding in the confessional, I want him bathed in a crimson swell, left parched, minnowed, hungry for the cadmium bell to play his alma mater, his eucharist canticle, his *tromp le monde*.

Father József and The Chapelletes @ 7, no cover. Outside,

the living walk with their overcoats and cough drops inside their pockets, bow their heads to strangers, women tuck their silk hair behind their ears and listen. Children speak about snakeroots squirming underneath their flat feet searching for each other's tender sisters in this once alpine forest we call earth.

The weight of branches embraces the arrival of my grandmother, *Winter*. Nests drop and find their way home only to wake up scattered, like brown fiddlebones put together by beak and chew.

Outside, the living fear to read *The Cannon of Last Words*, their tongues numb like green mangoes from Mexico, where I lived for a decade of curse by duendes who suck the yellow out of fruit. The last breath of summer is dust. *My grandfather*.

The veranda is open now, the soldiers are home from the war, their mothers ready to start the *Hemming Year* once again. Outside,

Sam Roderick Roxas-Chua

Anatomy of F

I was born on a flotilla of islands en route to the edge of the world. A boyless father to words shoved in closets, brother to unclaimed spaces between alphabet and asperity. I don't know many things but will love you for your story about fawns nestled against maple trees. *Feeding.*

I walk alongside fistlocks and propeller mouths, offering nothing but these englished words awaiting the last push on a cliff. *Flight.*

You were born in a basket of frond, each layer falling to form the shape of your weight. A pullgirl collecting fragments of light from planets outside your house. Your house made of stoneflaw and rookie, oval windows conversing with the color of gravity. *Forever.*

You walk alongside train tracks, kissditched in your kicking, skirt as umbrella opening and closing to mansize boys who know your silent names. *Fitful.*

Anthony DiMatteo**“The canvas is never empty”**

— *Robert Rauschenberg*

Because the brain needs a wheel.
Because the light pours in silence.
Because the future casts a shadow.
Because a man drowns at a table.
Because a woman refuses to model.
Because memory is a wet dog.
Because of the majesty of the moment.
Because a dream swatted a fly.
Because people walk around hungry.
Because of what the painter steals.
Because the poet gets the last word.
Because of the fear of loving you.

featured artist

Olinka Broadfoot

artist statement

I am a sculptor and I paint.

My work is varied because life is varied and I create from at least three different cultural backgrounds. I work in a wide range of mediums, reflecting the language of whatever medium happens to be on hand. I enjoy the challenge. One medium releases the energy for the other.

I would like the viewer to see what I see. I want that “YES” moment.

The materials used, the process of creation, the artist behind the piece and the location where the work is made all contribute toward the actualization of any given work of art. I enjoy seeing how far I can push any given medium and I enjoy being forced to create within the material's parameters.

I know a piece is good when I am no longer aware of myself while creating it.

I feel very, very lucky. I have been given the opportunity to work without any outside pressure, to create whatever/whenever I needed/wanted to, without having to worry about rent, materials and studio costs. This is not something that most artists get to do and I doubt my work would be “mine” had it not been for that.

— Olinka Broadfoot



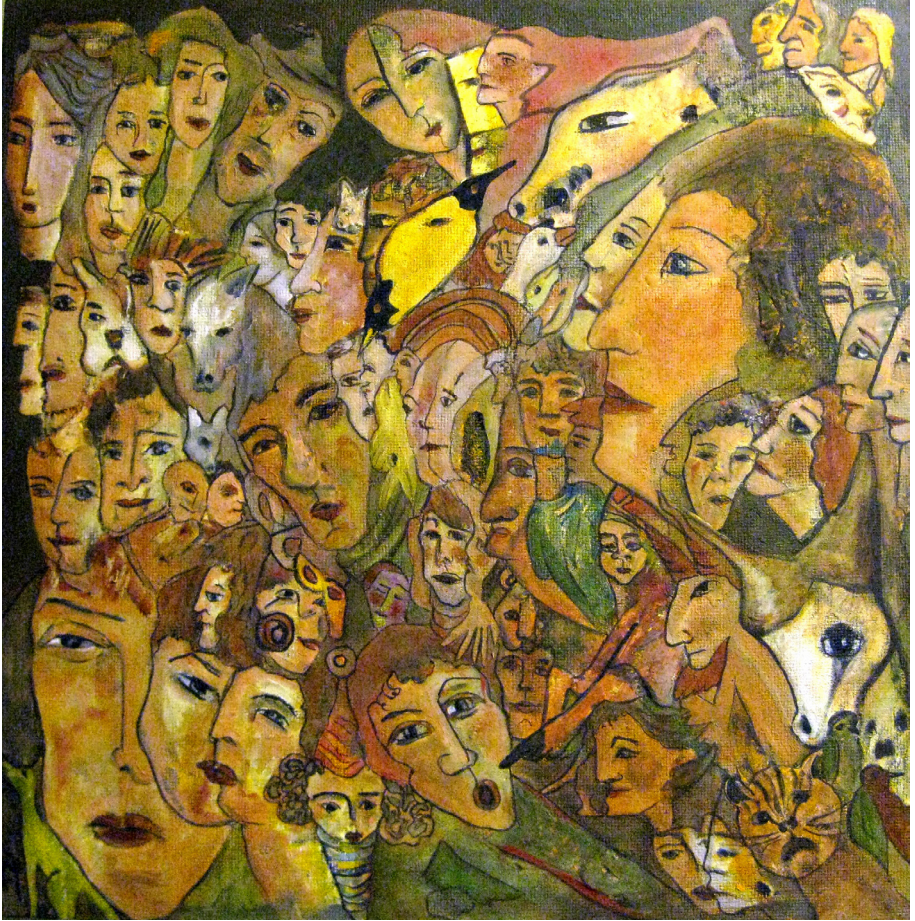
We are Here Together



The Red Bicycle



Jack



Untitled



Toro



Mask (Self-Portrait)

Brenda Taulbee

The Fever

Your body is. Exhalation.
Rainwater fingers on the
shipwreck of my ribs. You.
Lonely moon swollen
in my chest. Your mind breaths
ripples into tidal waves;
forever into almost. Your
mouth, rainwater. Need. You,
winter sunlight.
Swallowing shadows but
leaving me cold. My lips
crave floods. Your body is
hot flood of. Nevermind.
Waiting to breathe in. You.
Trapped between my dreams.
Hot flood of dead stars. Waiting.
Breathe in.

Brenda Taulbee

Hangman

My life hangs suspended. In the gallows
 your mouth is a golden noose
 breathing monsters with your words.
 I am: hands, feet, heart, mind.

Your mouth is a golden noose
 where my worries hang. Suspended.
 I am (hands/feet/heart/mind)—
 twitching in the gallows.

There. My worries hang suspended
 (a row of memories) Twenty-seven jackals
 twitching in the gallows.

Fading
 deathrow of memories. Twenty-seven jackals
 breathe monsters, with your words
 fading

My life hangs. Suspended
 in the gallows of your smile.

Sarah Brown Weitzman



In the Dark

at night
with lights out
air appears granular
like separate particles

light retained
on the retina
may be
an explanation

eerie
nonetheless
as if air could go
solid and suffocate

hard to shake
that feeling
like opening the door
of an unlighted room
to see the dark leap back
to make space
for us

Ian Gibbins

Firefront

The proposition: a firefront, climbing the hillface, approaching lines of grey box, an edge, a vibration, ragged, the juxtaposition of above and what lies below.

You must decide upon a frame of reference, a coordinate system, within which local events, diary entries, arrivals and departures can be securely placed.

Option one: (as usual) the sky. Some common descriptors: oppressive, leaden, foreboding. Alternatively, overcast, cloud-streaked, ambivalent. And yet,

notwithstanding prior predictions, there is absolutely nothing to see: (as usual) the air, through all its troughs and ridges, typical for the season, remains clear.

Option two: the earth. Once again, far too familiar. You already know what it means: bedrock solid, unable to move without the application of heavy

machinery, set fast, interlocked to tectonic plates, a foundation stone, like a mother's mother, off-white, like salt, or milk, or thoroughly unexpected snow.

Option three: an ocean. How does it go? Roiling? Tumultuous? Surging with swell and storm and eddy? Fathomless? Uncharted? The boundary we cannot extend?

A source of endless lies, stories that intrigue, inveigle, insist on continued disbelief. Shallows tempting? Rising to cover your curling toes, your reef-scarred shins.

Option four: the fire itself. This you also know. The things that can burn: lava flows, molten glass, cast iron, magnesium. Your throat, raw as it is. A blue-lined notebook,

school-yard friendship, fingertips, letters dreamt at midnight, music ringing from plaster walls, a road you barely recognise. Objects singed and ashen and burst apart.

A final reminder to make a list: the items we must not forget. Ingredients we do not grow here: cinnamon, clove, cardamon, Indian tea, black currant, berries, blueberries.

Materials we must find time to mine: cobalt, nickel, molybdenum, opal, fully oxidised zinc, diamond, tourmaline, malachite, crystalline quartz, pure and simple.


Firefront

The direction of the wind: a return address, the passwords we require, the encryption keys that preserve our integrity, hold our neighbours to account, plot a pathway out.

To repeat: the direction of the wind. Disentangle arms from safety blankets, scarlet across our backs. What else? Count the numbers that name exploding supernovae.

Laura LeHew

Approximation

The most dangerous of all falsehoods is a slightly distorted truth.

—Georg Christoph Lichtenberg

walking the road
connecting confessions
ungiving moments
her thoughts
pebbles&sand
concretions she
just starts screaming gravels
against being
time unlit

Jennifer Wheelock**Moor Me**

I drift. Despite
anchor and ring,
stake or gravity,
glue gun or stapler
love, a foot,
heavy rocks to hold
my edges, arms
of all kinds,
I keep leaving
my own life,
crossing lines of latitude.

I move not as a wave moves,
carrying only energy.
My whole mass moves.
I am a leaky boat,
always unmoored,
no matter my longing
to come ashore.
I launch delible messages
in uncorked bottles.

In every country,
I learn new languages,
then lose the desire
to speak. I seek
less of me
and so find it
everywhere.

Jennifer Wheelock

Instructions for a Sculptor

Low Relief

If your shovel finds a hefty rock, unbury it.
Get help from an archeologist to drag it up,
blow it off, disperse the dust like blame. Chisel out
your mother's cheekbones, your father's torso,
and so on, until your story's set in stone.

High Relief

Once the slab of stone is done, fire
the archeologist. Go home. Try to hang
the finished work. It will be too heavy. Instead, prop it facing
your full-length mirror. Then move
the mirror.

Jude Conlee

the lost art of asking

How?
 did I manage to make
What?
 was made

were you there when I didn't just
 make but *invented/created/constructed*

a something out of void

Why?
 do you call it a void
Where?
 are you planning to put it

the something out of nothing
doesn't know
doesn't know never knows never knew

never had a question to begin with

Patrick Meighan**Feast for Flies**

Alone at a long table
A feast for a king has been
Set before you and before
The empty seats. The untouched
Food is cold. This dining room
Is a memory, but not a memory.
The lights are low. You are dead.
My thoughts are dead.
The only sound the distant
Buzzing of flies coming from
Inside you, inside me,
From these lines, this decomposition.

Thomas Piekarski

Iceberg

I feel the heat and cold
Like mold growing on a brass door handle.
Temperature gain and loss flows through me
As though my mass were mercury.
I can freeze in the heat, or sweat
In temperatures lower than on distant planets.
I'm not alone but my tribe is shrinking.
If a fix could be implemented to reverse
Planetary impulses, should evolution seize,
Then perhaps I would embody a future.

Adrian Koesters

Penitentiary

Remembering backwards, the dizzy recourse
 of the year ahead, the one in which you said—you will say—
Remember. The mercy that was last year.

*The story of her ankles, the phonograph
 playing, the icy stops, fingers wringing,
 ankles a cross message, an uncontrolled story.*

Advertising the self, the self in one's hands,
 the year an iceberg on which a bell is set backwards,
 the self a story of a clapper stopped

against the interior of a yoke. *No mercy
 at your hands, no rings, no touch uncontrolled.*
 Working at the backwards grasp, no moment

to stop. Between mercy and mercy
 and control, between grasping and control,
 between *Tell me a story* and *Touch my hands*.

The *backward* of mercy, the back word of mercy
 likely is, will be, if you demand it, *Remember*.
 Remember. The phonograph plays it, counter-clock.

Adrian Koesters

This Morning, Making a Back Payment

Behind the blinds of asking,
and tenderly ceasing, ringing
and musical the questions

Where the world has gone, and

How do you fill, with

preamble

music made of hollowness,

I turn.

The young man in

the wheel chair

on the business side of the social

security window.

The grandfather and the boy

making slumped music of their words,

big as houses, both, and necessary

as one to the other

and daily existence.

Why are they necessary

each to each and I only

alone, a check

lost its bounce in my hand, the young

man in the wheelchair

neither skin-

less nor boneless nor part

of any scream

from my hollowness, just there,

perfecting a necessary tone

in my presence and

pain sometime ceasing

distinguished poet

Rae Gouirand

the interview

Q: Pertaining to your unique poetic structure, why did you choose to create a bi-poem appearance? What are the strengths and potential weaknesses in this approach?

The body of poems to which these ones belong offers a way for me to wonder what alternatives to resolution might exist and what the values of those potential paradigms might be. These pieces (and the others in their group) are also a way to investigate formally what I'm investigating thematically—what doesn't translate in metaphor and figurative thinking, what can't be equivocated or transposed, what shouldn't be assumed about sense in any relationship (either of ideas or of people). Can a poem be a ligature, a connective tissue. Can it show what the mind does when it reads—how it moves. Can a poem reach for what we discard in the process of 'finishing' a thought.

Q: Are your poems meant to be read both traditionally (line by line) and by column? How do you feel this affects ambiguity and cohesion?

I love the seeming paradox of formal behavior—what is freed within a system of restraints. I embrace verticality, simultaneity, and investigative reading, and I have great hope for the poem as a site where the rhetoric of the thesis and its defense can be retired and other deeply necessary rhetorics might take root. A poem should show the mind how great its capacity for understanding actually is.

Some of the 'steps' in these poems are (almost or momentarily) readable continuously across the two threads. Most aren't, but both possibilities are visible within the project. That's what I understand about it so far. I want to see what the variations make visible. I think we understand the conversations of visuals more readily than we do other conversations. Take still lives, for instance. We know pretty instinctively that the subject of a still life is what rises out of its combination of things and less literally those things themselves. Our world encourages us to see across and between images, to interact with (not just passively observe) and test out our take on visual symbols. What about other kinds of invitations that come from other kinds of work.

Q: Do you approach each poem with a clear mission or is a poem's greater purpose molded and defined by the process of composing it?

My mission is to write. To me that means finding the edge of what I can find in language. When I want to execute something, to produce a specific end result within specific parameters, I cook. When I want to go see, I write. I try to emphasize this all the time when I teach—it's dangerous to think of questions as running counter to knowledge. Questions are live knowledge. Knowledge becoming itself. We write to go and see. To find the edges.

Q: "I just want to finally feel something." How do you find your balance between the personal and universal? How do you remain true to your own poetic vision while ensuring you are engaging your audience?

That line—there toward the bottom of *Tin Man*—actually comes in the voice of someone I'm talking with in that poem, but I don't know that that matters. Thinking of the I and its uses as in conflict with, even partially in conflict with, the you or the other or the all, is an approach that reinforces a gap I believe creative work is capable of crossing. Because creative work privileges and activates the imagination. Several poems in the book I'm finishing right now ask why it matters that we believe that the bounded individual identities we cling to matter. There is the individual and the individual's experience, and there is the plurality of others' experiences, but really conversations always go so much slower when we're attached to ourselves. I tell my students: your job as a reader is not to like or dislike, or identify or not identify. Your job is to consider. The work, yourself, your internal friction. To see it. To notice how the work gives you the opportunity. You don't get to fault 'the writer' if you feel excluded from their project or resistant to its terms. You get to recognize your own desire to enter the project on your terms. Take responsibility for that desire.

Literature is sometimes a site for those threads we call 'experience' to connect or find each other, but its allegiance is to itself. And ought to be. It is a body, a plane, we all have access to. I resist the supposed crisis of allegiance between the poet and the reader. Poetry is not for the one who writes it or the one who reads it. The lines of a poem are there to talk to each other, not to do something for us. (Mary Ruefle has written beautifully on this subject in *Madness, Rack, and Honey*, a collection of lectures that I highly recommend.) Thinking it has to be about 'me' or 'them' is a really small way to approach a much bigger vision that

poetry offers us. It might satisfy, or feed, or restore some piece of a self, or of an us, but we shouldn't mistake our feelings of relief or validation for the 'success' of the work. I'm forever grateful to Robert Wilson for saying in an interview he gave around the first production of *Einstein on the Beach*, the opera he did with Philip Glass and Lucinda Childs in the 70s, that (I'm paraphrasing...) it's not the artist's job to explain. I remember discussing that idea in a directing seminar I took in college—it stuck.

All we mean when we call work experimental is that it's in conversation with itself. That doesn't (have to) mean it's removed from us.

Q: Poetry lovers feel strongly about rhyme these days, some in favor, most against it. There are many easily discernible rhymes running through your text. Even we, the editors, were uncertain whether they enhanced or compromised the poems. What is your view of rhyme and why the interest in the use of rhyme in this selection in this selection, considering most of your prior work appears to be unrhymed?

That's not entirely true—as a writer I have always been interested in where the local or human takeaways of language (sound, memory, perception of pattern) get tangled up in its more open, transferrable qualities (sense, definition, complication). I used to experiment often and directly with the repetition of words within the fairly compact bodies of short poems. Rhyming words exist, and sometimes they show up in the same 'poem' together, just like other related or parallel things often do in a poem. It's just one way that poetry stacks, layers, and acknowledges.

In the manuscript I'm working on (the working title of which is *Tenor and Vehicle*, for the two parts of a metaphor) I'm trying to ask in many different ways what all the possible relationships are between the parts of any relationship of sense, and what problems exist within our current notions of two-ness. Why our assumption of or projection of an equals sign between the parts, where there are two, disables us from perceiving other relationships. There is a cost to figuration and figurative culture.

Rhymes can signal alignments, but they can also disrupt other aspects of a poem's sense. They reinforce attention when we are paying attention, but not when we are not. When they are what a poem is written toward, they often deaden a poem, yes, because they exercise a kind of gatekeeping control over

our attention, but when they make other strange appearances I think of them like anything that jumps out in the road in front of you and looks you in the eye. An intimacy. Like some intimacies, a site of discomfort and crisis. I think part of the reason we resist rhyme so deeply on the page as a general rule is that we love it so much when it comes out of our own mouths. There's a kind of territorial satisfaction in singing along.

Q: “Meanings carry one another made of one another.” This elegant statement may be key to the core of contemporary poetry. Do you feel that in the realm of poetry, it’s no longer possible to speak in simple terms? Has much of what used to be poetry devolved to cliché, forcing poets to the outer edges of invention?

That line is a fragment of a longer phrase at the opening of *Boat*—‘Do I believe in figures anymore in the way / meanings carry one another made of one another / like a net of fingers.’ It’s a question about belief, and what I as a poet or human being might be capable of believing.

My younger self was a very serious instrumentalist—music was really my first place before my mind moved into language—and one of the greatest ideas I got to consider studying music is that bit about how there is no (and can never be any) copyright on middle C. Language is a medium in which we work, period. We owe it to ‘poetry’ to understand that, and to realize that poetry lies not just beyond, but perpetually beyond, what language can accommodate.

The point of writing should not be to colonialize and brand ideas, visions, new areas of inquiry. It should be to multiply them, to invite others and their varieties of sense into the conversation. Poetry *should* shift its locations and its methods, like any other practice that evolves over time. It should always be in a different location than it used to be, throwing itself against a new wall, eating itself alive in a new way. Why wouldn’t poetry too have a story? Its surface is a record of what we saw and tried to touch.

**Q: Is now a good time to be a poet? A bad time?
Is there a good time for that?**

I think these are the wrong questions.

Q: What else are you passionate about? Do you work in other genres or art forms?

I live a kind of invented life—ever since finishing my MFA and a post-MFA lectureship at the University of Michigan I've been working out ways to teach and to live a teaching life mostly outside of the academy. I occasionally teach for departments, but I support myself directing and sustaining a variety of local and online workshops for writers who want to dive deep and stay in the water, in connection to one another, over longer stretches of time than traditional workshops allow. That work is the greatest joy of my life. It is *damn* hard and the most fulfilling thing I can imagine. My writing, my teaching, and my relationships have the bulk of my attention. Sometimes I make physical things to satisfy an occasional need for immediate evidence of my productivity. I enjoy bookbinding. I take a lot of pictures. I'm working on a project right now (it might turn into a photo essay) that involves photographing handwriting from correspondence I've saved throughout my life. I imagine if I owned a home I'd be pretty obsessed with learning how to fix and change and build things.

Q: "I'm never surprised when our stories play us out." Your work has a feel of an eagle's view – you examine life from terrific altitudes, and yet every detail is clearly seen. Are you conscious of trying to keep so much in?

I really respect birds of prey, so thank you for that. For years I've had a little falcon carved out of stone on my windowsill as the nearly invisible mascot of my house.

And yes. I am. The restrictions that simultaneously shape and free the poem are as much of (if not more of) a mirror for the desires of the poet as anything we might ever call (too narrowly) its (or the poet's) 'content.'

A poem is a body. My thesis. Just like a human body, a poem expresses a force that is larger than it and not about it. There's a reason we have to leave space around poems, why we instinctually observe a pause after a poem that is read. It's not because poetry is barbed, or coded, or beyond our comprehension. The point of a poem is to get us to hear not just the poem but perhaps even moreso that silence that follows it.

There's a book called *Powers of Ten* published in conjunction with a documentary the Eames office made in the early 80s—I think they called it an adventure in magnitudes. It's an incredibly elegant photographic project that

demonstrates visually what it is that I think a poem can demonstrate formally—that when you zoom out as far as you can, you end up looking at basically the same image as you do when you zoom in as far as you can. Atoms look just like the universe, and, somewhere in the middle, people try to understand.

The picture at the center of the book is of a couple having a picnic by the water in Chicago. It's my favorite picture ever—not just because of its context within the broader series of images, but because it's a rare shot of a pair of humans taken directly from above. Neither of them is looking at the camera, or even at each other—they're just napping in the sun surrounded by the tools of their lives. There's something about it that moves me indescribably. To me it looks exactly like what it is to be human. I really want to go to that spot someday.

Rae Gouirand

An Autobiography

The weather is changing in my mouth.
 The difference between inside and out.
 I lean against my lumen wall.
 Trees diagram against an end.
 Snow quiets the stopped hand.
 Cloud cover of folding paper.
 Sky in everything, sky in black water
 cut through by whitened choke.
 Sky sets the day into its question.
 Everything open and opening.
 Always open or opening.
 The weather is changing in my mouth.

I could write this line or move it inside—
 two voices at once I try: in time—
 space goes on: to note or not—
 one half word: we count & don't—
 perhaps just echo of what's been said—
 born to none: to cry it out—
 some have a name & yet no place—
 some just try: to repeat that part. I need
 a second: for these eyes pulled closed—
 one tone gone long while another moves on—
 all my calls made these words that split their end—
 to catch, to hold, to mean, to send

Rae Gouirand

Boat

Do I believe in figures anymore in the way
 meanings carry one another made of one another
 like a net of fingers still I read your letter again
 trace the sentence in which you urge me not
 to fear my heart in the boat the weight of it
 in which you invite me to stand in which you swear
 the boat will not tip but hold I remember believing
 it was my fault I could not believe look at us now
 no words for one another it's not that the boat
 broke it never was and you were never in it it's
 too easy for me to believe what others insist is
 true enough what I trust now is the water exists
 and it knows all routes to my lungs

I'm watching eucalypts shake new summer light off
 to the side of the conversation mulling the difference
 between recognizing something and feeling like it's
 mine driving home everyone is driving home somewhere
 in my mind and we're almost speaking about that.
 Lyrics. When one person talks about dark shit we all
 can into a void. I learn more from your etiquette than
 the words you want during sex that's information
 says a friend. The New Yorker I'm having dinner with
 is surprised where I'm from. Offense. Shears close
 to my head separate lines, silence into different, kind.
 Stranger hands make new work. Lots of things have
 seawater at their base I hardly need to point them out

Rae Gouirand

Map

The hardest thing about blue is it seems to promise
 when in fact it is simply has no end in sight the blue
 girl I loved not because she'd turn to me but because
 she'd recede. She moved me. I didn't want to love
 the world I wanted to leave and she seemed to know
 the way her cobalt veins when she pushed her
 sleeves a self to bathe in. Some people don't.
 She taught me to write it all out in chalk in indigo
 to expel myself to say all the wrong things to get
 them out then all the right ones to prove I knew
 she taught me how to empty how to cast that's
 a word it took awhile to get her meanness the first
 cleareyed thing any girl left. Her name was close to
 my sister's her ways were nothing I recognized

Over time, nothing is stronger than water. Live in it, go
 with it, or don't—call memory foggy, call memory forth.
 Call forth for love or call love what it's not: what waters
 in us when light flashes. Something forged each time
 we cry out. The most true thing of all is the fog called
 simply this: I move through it as though I am the it I
 move. Worry least about those moments that circle,
 suggest not one thing but many a morning is a morning
 to itself even in the dark. As I go the many something
 like a body talking to itself in ways that could never be
 understood: *We change before we reach the water we
 change before we know the line. What is this edge an
 ocean or river: which would we wait by & which would
 we be.* I'm never surprised when our stories play us out

Rae Gouirand

Tin Man

The air outside a metal whip, window silvering, oven
 on high, stomach in a yawn: I'm trying to describe
 what it's like to lose two partners at once, what happens
 when the throat burns a hole through the shape of
 itself now space for thought. I say: I don't get to hold
 on. That girl died. I think for the second time in my
 life. No idea who will come next for my skin, what
 it means knowing a person can in fact come to the end
 of herself and have to ask another life. She says
 what you describe as hurt sounds to me like meat.
 Slices the bird we cooked with her family knife,
 transfers muscle onto my plate and lines the silver
 implements. I just want to finally feel something.
 After dinner I space during the story about the time
 a balloon came down on the neighbor's pines the color
 of things caught. In the valley the air burns. We point
 out the window behind which the sky has already gone
 as though a fire fallen on one is not a fire fallen. What
 would it mean not to catch the same? To have a house
 if it's the only one? What do we want? Nothing I
 understand. Horizons smoke we have words for
 that. But the truth is nothing wouldn't love a match.
 Pretend: our lives are ours. What we really want. I might
 but that's all I have left. Watch what comes even as
 it engulfs. Say I'm not surprised when not. Homeless
 with the facts become an open space overcome



Circuits

John Sweet

bird imagery, for susan

the truth of gods is
the truth of rope

ask gorky's daughters

tempt them with candy

give them
incorrect explanations

walk further north and
make lists of what you
find along the edge of
the interstate

write *one new sneaker*

write *dirty clothesline*

write *rusty hammer*

this is
no place for hope

Judith Barrington

When Nobody Looks?

"We now know that the moon is demonstrably not there when nobody looks."

—David Merman, physicist

When nobody looks
 the moon is not there,
 the sun and the stars become black.
 The Milky Way doesn't light up the sky
 and space isn't space
 but a solid block.

When nobody looks
 my house disappears—
 all of a sudden a vacant lot
 between 618 and 628
 and the porch is gone
 and so is the cat.

When nobody looks
 the river runs dry
 but the fish don't die because fish are not there.
 And the snows don't melt and fill up the river
 unless someone gives them
 a long hard stare.

When nobody looks
 the ocean has gone
 and my sailboat has lifted
 in the air that's still there.
 The sail billows out
 But no-one hears my shout.

Ellen

A Propensity for Boundaries

1.

I dread night windows.

Masks of oak-bark

flaunt textured skin,

molest fading light,

form rough sculptures

pressed against a green sky.

2.

With a need to be contained

I climb a bell tower.

Its pungency of brass

draws dew to my brow.

Polished metal beckons me

to curl within its curve.

Penelope Scambly Schott

Woman among Pear Trees

She lay in cool grass
between orchard rows

where stars lowered
their thin strings.

She plucked a string
and listened for silence.

The bones of her ears
felt the pears growing.

One pear dropped.
It thumped and rolled.

Crickets paused. How odd
to be human. What

did she call herself
before she had words?

Penelope Scambly Schott**January Fog**

Fog frosts my eyelashes
like spangles on fence posts.

Gods and beasts
sleep in the same landscape,

and although on some days
I can't distinguish

the one from the other,
I do understand

I'm too late to be a beast
and still too young to be a god

though I expect to get there
wearing my mother pelt.

Meanwhile,
under this high white meadow,

the roots of lupine
are dreaming of Spring—

my only blue-eyed child.

Kelly Terwilliger

Almost Venice

You arrive late.
All night, you lie awake
over floating streets and listen
to the oracles of things: the voices
of faces in dreams, paving stones,
crumpled paper, bottles, oars.
A bridge
of sudden laughter, a shouted call,
a clatter of smoke—

Midnight, and bells
plunge through open blinds,
shaking and ringing dark air like a body
of water: You are in it.
Everything is. Each molecule
shudders with struck sound...
Done, undone, again and again.

And then, morning arrives, unruffled.
High voices of swallows
scribble everyday light, and pigeons
warble slants of rooftops, snap
their wings like paper fans.

But up from the recollected window
of a darkened shop, a small glass fish comes
floating back: speckled flounder, a scrap
of watered light scooped up
the moment you stepped ashore—



Almost Venice

You can feel that slick curve
cupped in the palm of your hand.
Glass, not glass, shining, the moment
when you have it,
before it wriggles and slips away.

Kelly Terwilliger

Where the muses

The air crackles like cold fish
 swimming long currents of quickening
 dark. Under ice
 my imagined
 sighs. Blowhole.
 Stars.

Back in the world, I have given names
 to the long-legged flying ones
 that appear in my house
 and rest on the soundless walls.
 I have named the casual deer and their various children,
 and the vole that keeps dying
 and reappearing, unexpectedly.

But the door that blows open
 to the sound of rain.
 What is that name? Louder now, the drumming
 on the tin roof
 of my tongue. A song under the night garage.
 The gravel, the woodpile, the rope
 swing. The blue canoe floating forever
 upside-down. The front step needs sweeping.

But the roar of the rain in the throat.

I have no name for this. Here, I have no name
 for myself.

Where the muses

The air trembles. And sometimes—
just—
opens.

Dark rind. Softly, softly, peel it back, softly lift it...
what is there, what is there—
Say it—



Fall Creek 1

Michael Albright

Break

This fragile, bone thin
porcelain cup,
cracked, but not broken,
broken, but still whole,
irrevocably destroyed,
and holding
water.

There are a million
little deaths before
the one big one,
days when nothing
will be the same,
and it isn't and
you aren't.

This break
needs to be,
broken.

contributors

Michael Albright has published poems in various journals, including *Loyalhanna Review*, *Uppagus*, *U.S. 1 Worksheets*, *The New People*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and upcoming issues of *The Stray Branch* and *Wilderness House Review*. He lives in Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

Jose Angel Araguz has had work most recently in *Barrow Street*, *Gulf Coast*, *Slipstream*, and *Right Hand Pointing*. He is presently pursuing a PhD in Creative Writing at the University of Cincinnati.

Judith Barrington, winner of the Gregory O'Donoghue Poetry Prize, has published three poetry collections, most recently *Horses and the Human Soul* and two chapbooks: *Postcard from the Bottom of the Sea* and *Lost Lands* (winner of the Robin Becker Chapbook Award). Her memoir, *Lifesaving* won the Lambda Book Award and was a finalist for the PEN/Martha Albrand Award. She has taught for the University of Alaska's MFA Program and at workshops across the USA, Britain and Spain.

Doug Bolling's poetry has appeared in *Blue Unicorn*, *Storm Cellar*, *Slant*, *Hamilton Stone Review*, *Illuminations*, *Heron Tree*, *Lalitamba*, *Blue Lake Review*, and elsewhere, most recently in *The Missing Slate* with Poet of the Month and interview. He is very interested in a poetry of exploration, what lies between and below words, use of metaphor to push outward where meaning/the thematic break down in favor of the mysterium, the shadows that surround us without rhetoric.

Jude Conlee is a West Coast writer with work published or forthcoming in *Nazar Look*, *See Spot Run*, *Breath & Shadow*, *Emerge Literary Journal*, and *Eunoia Review*. Conlee's approach to poetry is that of recalling thoughts and personal experiences, written so that themes of a more universal nature are exposed.

Anthony DiMatteo is a poet, translator, and scholar-critic. His poems have been spotted roaming recent issues of *Connotation Press*, *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Front Porch*, *Main Street Rag*, *Tar River Poetry*, and elsewhere. *Smartish Pace* branded one poem the winner of an annual prize for 2010, nominating it for a Pushcart award. Prose has appeared in *Renaissance Quarterly*, *Early Modern Literary Studies*, and *College Literature*. *Beautiful Problems: Poems* is forthcoming from David Robert Books. He bullishly professes the mysteries of literature, art and writing at the New York Institute of Technology.

Ellen teaches creative writing for Santa Monica College. Her latest book of poetry is forthcoming from Tebot Bach Press entitled *Sacrifices Have to be Human*. She uses the pen name "Ellen" as she has had a number of last names and does not identify with them.

Anton Frost has appeared in *Parcel*, *Verdad*, *The Bacon Review*, *Grasslimb*, and elsewhere. He lives in Grand Haven, Michigan.

Ian Gibbins is a neuroscientist and Professor of Anatomy at Flinders University. He also is a poet and electronic musician. His poetry has been widely published, with his first full collection *Urban Biology* (Wakefield Press) published in 2012. Ian's basic premise is that poetry can fill the gaps where conventional language fails us. Poetry can present complex viewpoints and simultaneous voices beyond the boundaries of normal conversation. For more info, see www.iangibbins.com.au.

Rae Gouirand's first collection of poetry, *Open Winter*, was selected by Elaine Equi for the 2011 Bellday Prize, won a 2012 Independent Publisher Book Award and the 2012 Eric Hoffer Book Award, and was a finalist for the Montaigne Medal, the Audre Lorde Award, and the California Book Award for poetry. Her poems and essays have appeared recently in *American Poetry Review*, *VOLT*, *The Brooklynier*, *New South*, *PANK*, *The Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide*, and two volumes of the Best New Poets series. The recipient of fellowships from the Vermont Studio Center, the Santa Fe Art Institute, and Kalani, as well as an award from the Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Foundation, Gouirand has founded numerous community workshops in poetry and prose online and throughout California's Central Valley, and served as an adjunct lecturer in the Department of English at UC-Davis. She is currently at work on a second collection of poems and a collection of linked essays.

Adrian Gibbons Koesters holds an MFA from the Rainier Writing Workshop at Pacific Lutheran University, and a Ph.D. in poetry and fiction from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her debut poetry collection, *Many Parishes*, was published in 2013 by BrickHouse Books. She is a fiction editor at *A River and Sound Review*, and her work has appeared recently in *The Gettysburg Review*, *Hotel Amerika*, *International Poetry Review*, *Saranac Review*, *Crab Creek Review*, and elsewhere. She currently teaches writing in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Laura LeHew is the author of a full-length book of poems, two chapbooks, and numerous articles. She has poetry published in *Anobium*, *Eleven Eleven*, *filling station Magazine*, *Ghost Town*, *The Inflectionist Review*, and *PANK*, among others. She knows nothing of gardens or gardening but is well versed in the cultivation of cats. Visit her at www.utteredchaos.org and www.lauralehew.com.

Patrick Meighan's poems have appeared in *Red River Review*, *Illya's Honey*, *Wilderness House Literary Review*, *Poems Niederngasse*, *Flash!Point*, and elsewhere. He received an MFA in Poetry from the low-residency program at New England College, and he currently teaches composition and a poetry workshop in the New Hampshire Community College System.

Aside from a four-month sojourn in Comoros (a little Islamic island nation in the Indian Ocean between southern Africa and Madagascar), **Gregory Moore** has lived his entire life in Southern California, including the last eight years in Long Beach, where he has written for the *L.A. Times*, *OC Weekly*, *Daily Kos*, *L.A. Record*, and the *Long Beach Post*. His first novel, *The Use of Regret*, was published last year. Previous publications: *Pif*, *Happy, the 2ndhand*, *The Dos Passos Review*, *wigleaf*, *Aura*, *The Great American Poetry Show*, *Black River Review*, and *Still*. For more info: greggorymoore.com.

Clarke W. Owens, aka C.W. Owens, lives in rural Ohio. His short fiction has appeared in the *Cimarron Review*, and his poems have appeared in a number of literary journals, including *Amoskeag*, *Bryant Literary Review*, *Cape Rock*, *Coe Review*, *Karamu*, *Oyez Review*, *Pinyon*, *Plainsongs*, *Poem*, *Slant*, *White Pelican Review*, and others. He is the author of *Son of Yahweh: The Gospels as Novels*.

Thomas Piekarski is a former editor of the *California State Poetry Quarterly*. His theater and restaurant reviews have been published in various newspapers, with poetry and interviews appearing in numerous national journals, among them *Portland Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *Kestrel*, *Scarlet Literary Magazine*, *Cream City Review*, *Nimrod*, *Penny Ante Feud*, *New Plains Review*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *The Muse — An International Journal of Poetry*, and *Clockhouse Review*. He has published a travel guide, *Best Choices In Northern California*, and *Time Lines*, a book of poems. He lives in Marina, California.

Sam Roderick Roxas-Chua has read for Oregon Poetry Association, Windfall Reading Series, Isangmahal Arts Collective, NW Poets Concord, Talking Earth, PoetsWest, Brigadoon Books, Fault Lines and Word Lab in Manila, Philippines. He is published by *Vena Cava*, *Word Laboratories*, *Mixer Publishing*, *Concord*, and *Parv Print Publishing*. His most recent work appears in *Motionless from the Iron Bridge: A Northwest Anthology of Bridge Poems* and his three-poem poster to promote his first collection, *Fawn Language*, is featured in the 25th Anniversary Showcase at Poets House in New York City. *Fawn Language* will be published by Tebot Bach in early 2014. He works at The Poetry Loft.

Penelope Scambly Schott's most recent books are *Lovesong for Dufur* and *Lillie Was a Goddess, Little Was a Whore*.

Adreyo Sen, based in Kolkata, hopes to become a full-time writer. He did his undergraduate work in English and his postgraduate work in English and Sociology. Adreyo has been published in *Danse Macabre* and *Kritya*.

John Sweet, b. 1968, work has been appearing in assorted zines and literary publications for the past 25 years, including the late, great *Lone Wolf Review*, *Cer*Ber*Us* and *Scars Publications*. Among his published collections are *Human Cathedrals*, *Ash Wilderness*, and *Famine*. He is a firm believer in writing as catharsis.

Brenda Taulbee currently lives and writes in Portland, Oregon. Her first collection of poems, *Dances with Bears ... And Other Ways to Lose a Limb*, attempts to unravel the tangled knot of emotions accompanying the intricacies and difficulties of intimate relationships. Current collaborative efforts include a visual art project with Missoula artist Sarah Widhalm.

Kelly Terwilliger's poems have previously appeared in *The Atlanta Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Hunger Mountain*, *Poet Lore*, *The Comstock Review*, and other journals. A chapbook, *A Glimpse of Oranges*, was published by Finishing Line Press. She works as a storyteller and writer-in-residence in public schools in Oregon.

Sarah Brown Weitzman has had work published in numerous journals such as *America*, *The North American Review*, *Rattle*, *The Mid-American Review*, *The Windless Orchard*, *Slant*, *Poet Lore*, *Potomac Review*, and elsewhere. She received a Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her latest book, a children's novel titled *Herman and the Ice Witch*, was published by Main Street Rag in 2011.

Jennifer Wheelock's work has appeared in many journals and anthologies, including *River Styx*, *North Atlantic Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Comstock Review*, *Mississippi Review*, and the online journals *Blaze* and *Garbanzo*.

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The time we made a fire
on the creek bank and
studied the flames
to invent a future.

— Doug Bolling

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