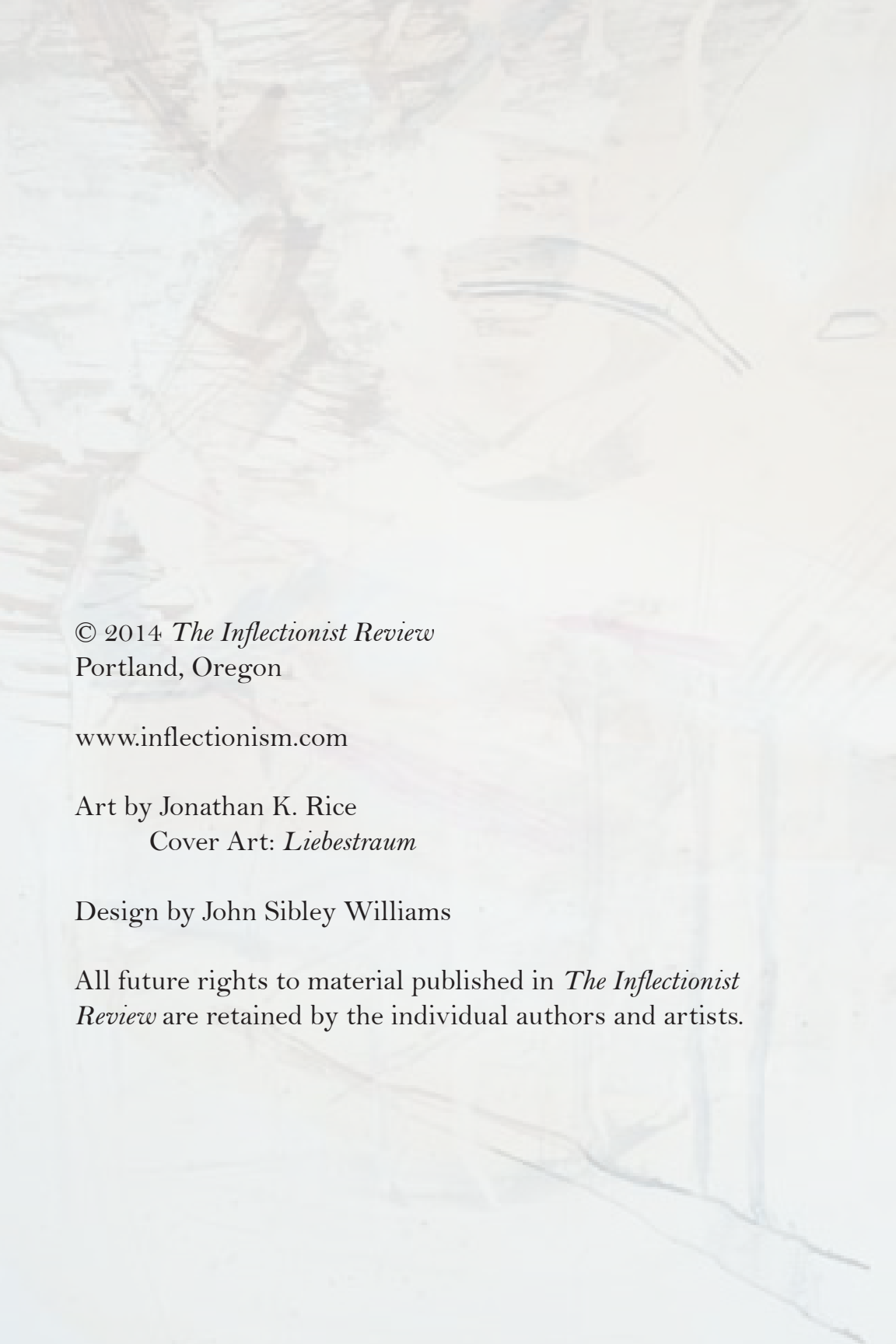


The
Inflectionist Review

No. 3





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Portland, Oregon

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No. 3

Fall 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

A. Molotkov
John Sibley Williams

info@inflectionism.com
www.inflectionism.com

from the editors

*Let each thing and all things show me
who I am. I trace this oversight
in the sky's own words. I have no others.*

Janis Lull's lines speak to the mystery at the heart of language. We must employ the human construct of words to describe the external, yet words seem born of outside influence. At what point do the sky overhead and the "sky" in our mouths converge? Or diverge? What role do objects play in our pronouncing and communicating them? Many of the poems in this issue strive to address the *if* and *how* of unreturnable communication with things. All of these poems live within the lack of answer.

We are honored to present the ambitious and evocative work of Vancouver, BC poet Daniela Elza in this issue's Distinguished Poet section, alongside the textured abstracts of featured artist Jonathan K. Rice.

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

Daniela Elza

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Jose Angel Araguz

First Night

No one recalls their first night
on earth, night like all others,
with words and darkness, cries
and stars, only you didn't
try to fight or count
them all. No part of you
recalls because no part of you
reached out. You at your most
hidden, unknowing but known,
fresh, a secret shared
for the first time. Like all things
secret, you quickly lost track
of where you came from. Darkness
and words, cries and stars.

Jose Angel Araguz

Blue in the Rain

The man gestured up the street again,
shoved the piece of paper back in my face,
blurred ink breaking the smile of the woman
sketched in blue. More and more I grew convinced
what he held was not a map, but a memory.

Jeff Whitney**Imago**

Light, we are told,
goes on forever.

Barbed wire snaked
through the fingers of heaven.

Blood rivered
into dimples of skin.

Like winter
and after—

flowers,
all the light left on earth

walking out of
the shade of trees.

Jeff Whitney

In Medias Res

bats like dark plums
on the fingers
of a tree



Beyond Reach

Jeff Whitney

The Gift of Shadows

I was standing in the dark to see
the experience of night.

It wasn't an ocean
through I counted many shores.

*

We have pain
so the consequential tastes
sweet, sweetness
so the consequential
might break us
beautifully.

*


We live in a house on fire.
It is as simple as that.

*

The gift of shadows is
you can always look away.

*

There is an utterance
that never grew wings
at the back of each throat.



The Gift of Shadows

*

The way the night is what is felt
and not seen. The way a house speaks
when everyone is gone.

*

Something is in the water.
It is very far away.

*

I don't know about the end.
I have heard
it has something to do with fire.

James Ducat

A Dislocation of Synapses

— *for S.*

She misplaced myelin,
tripped over the curb
of nerve ends,
slowed, slowly.

Statuesque flesh,
assembled elbows, knees,
a confusion of ligaments
braided in sinuous assortment.

To make sense of a thing
is to dissect, is to truss,
is to pound tender

until—unlike the deveined
semblance of tree,
of puddle—she sits,
unable to deform.

Anton Frost**Neuro**

As we walk up a dusty road
the trees end the light begins

my body narrows down
to an arc.

My body moves—

the way light doesn't move,
but exists as everything.

My brain remembers what you said:

“you live
then you
live then
you live.”

What's on my mind
is what never happens.

“Let there be dust,”
then your laugh turned to a cough.

My brain crawls out of the dirt
wailing—

the sorrow of fireflies
incommunicado with sun—

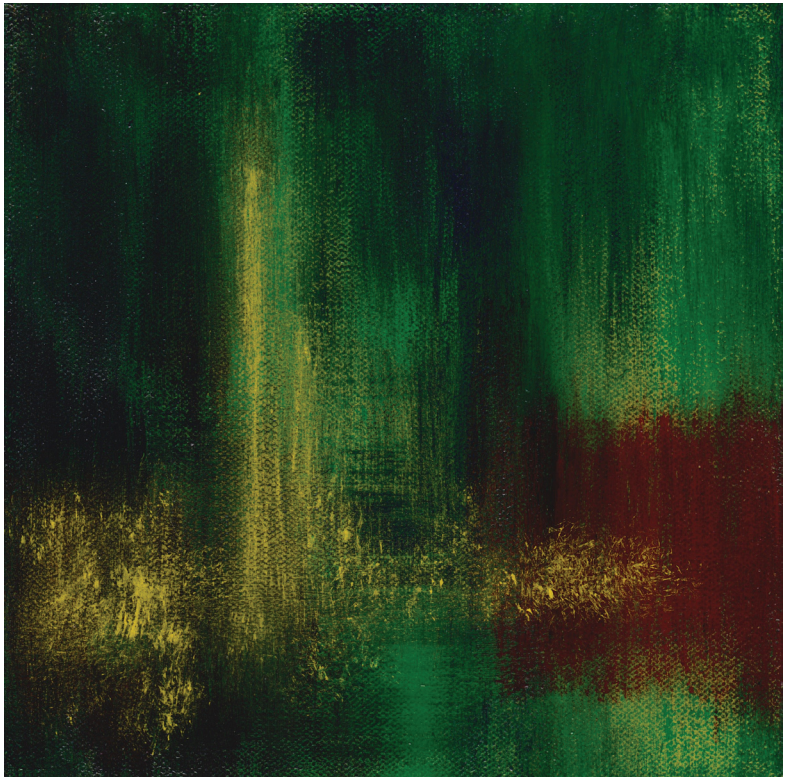
before realizing
it was my own sorrow.


Neuro

I've breathed
in so much dust.

Before my brain could stop me
I breathed.

Kingdom of Spirits



Anton Frost

Evening

a green fly trails absence
across a room with blue walls

the music gets loud

the air turns
into things

we rummage through spaces
we allow things to happen

yellow light
emptied bottles
hummingbirds

we make drawings with pencil stubs
of each other

you think about
shades of purple

by touching the gentle dark beneath my eyes

i think about
things without edges

by smelling the places
where you've rested your head

the sky bruises
the room folds up



Evening

and

what could be the last thing
we ever do

we do.

David Radavich

Koan

Many are
the forms of exile.

Perhaps worst
is the body

divided from itself,

apple that
cannot be eaten,

rose that
refuses its perfume.

Where else
could music go?

This arbutus tree,
taller than sky, bends

orange in rain
that does not stop

and does not
stop.

E. K. Mortenson

“the intervention of a conscious observer”

your hands under running water their silver shimmering
the shape of your back this overwhelming sense of something
very important that fills my heart the hour between light
and dark that smells so sweet and sounds like balancing or a sigh

in such a world the sea caresses the bouldered shore

E. K. Mortenson

“but if that is what we see that is simply because it is what has actually happened”

suppose it is early morning and the rain is falling
outside blue rain dripping from the sky and soaking
through our clothes suppose I am buried by the weight
of you on me shocked by your desire and gasping for air
a chestcrush embrace I've spent my life crying out
to be cherished begging to be something someone

everyone is alone lives do not share

E. K. Mortenson

**“techniques for the measurement of the frequencies
of spectral lines”**

the wisps of hair near your ears glow like the clouds
of late summer sunset all things now happening happened
and there is some small comfort in this all things now
happening shall always happen they might tell a story
that might be important might have a lesson might change

my life sunlight filtered through gnathaze

E. K. Mortenson

“everything that can happen *does* happen”

write the number of our days on a scrap of paper
let it be displayed in a glass cabinet full of here
along with a swallow’s wing a maple leaf and
a closing door’s shadow let this be the marker

that I have touched something so sweet as you

featured artist

Jonathan K. Rice

artist statement

Image, color, composition, and texture are all informed by what I read, what I listen to, and that which surrounds me. I work with acrylics and mixed media, painting and creating assemblage and collage as well. My work is primarily abstract.

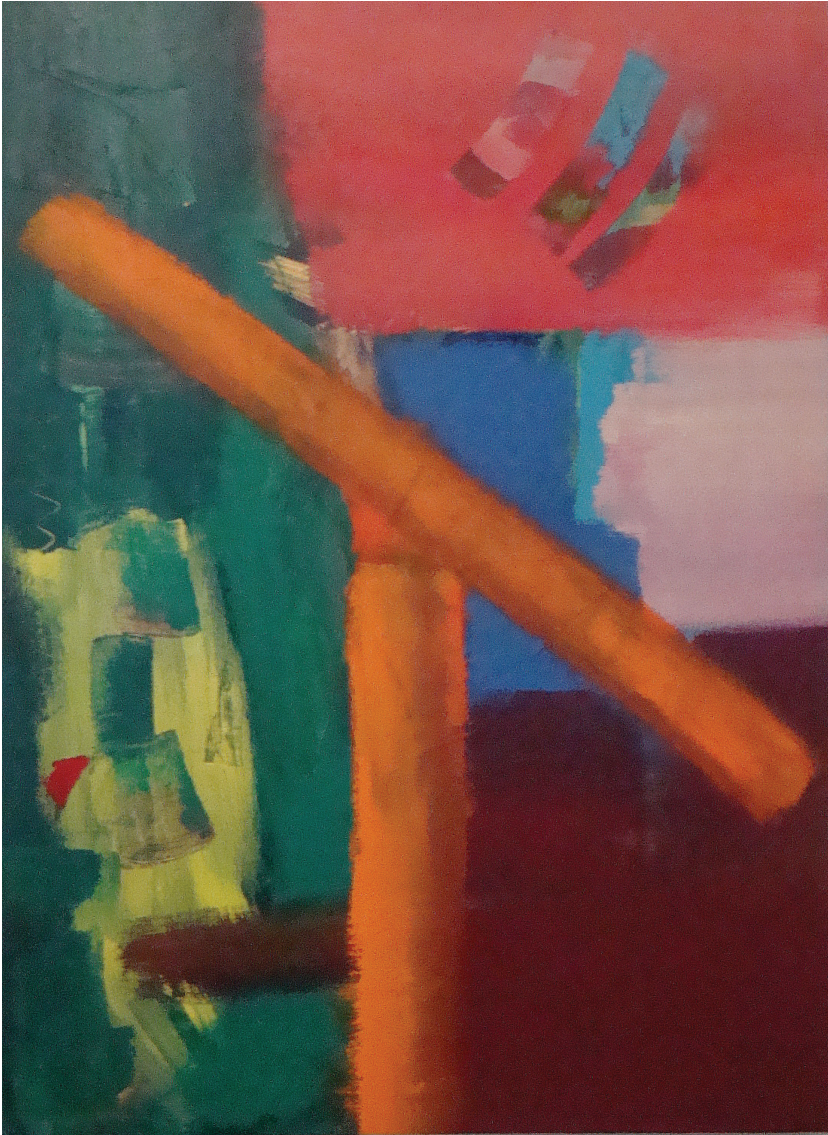
Through my paintings, I explore the relevance of the indescribable, and work toward the understanding of that which can't always be understood. In this sense, creating art is a spiritual journey as I seek to connect the physical and the nonphysical with the intention of drawing the viewer into a deeper understanding of his or herself in relation to the world and that which is physically beyond them.

When asked how I begin a new piece, I like to say that I let the canvas tell me what to do. I may start with a wash of one color and build layer upon layer of blended washes. I may take a palette knife or a wide putty knife and spread on a layer of thickly textured acrylic medium. I may begin by gluing various papers to canvas or wood panel. I like quiet time late in the evening. Sometimes I like to paint while listening to music. On occasion I work on more than a few pieces at a time. In the end though, the canvas tells me when to stop as if it cries out, "No more!" That's when I step back and say, "It is finished."

— Jonathan K. Rice



Untitled



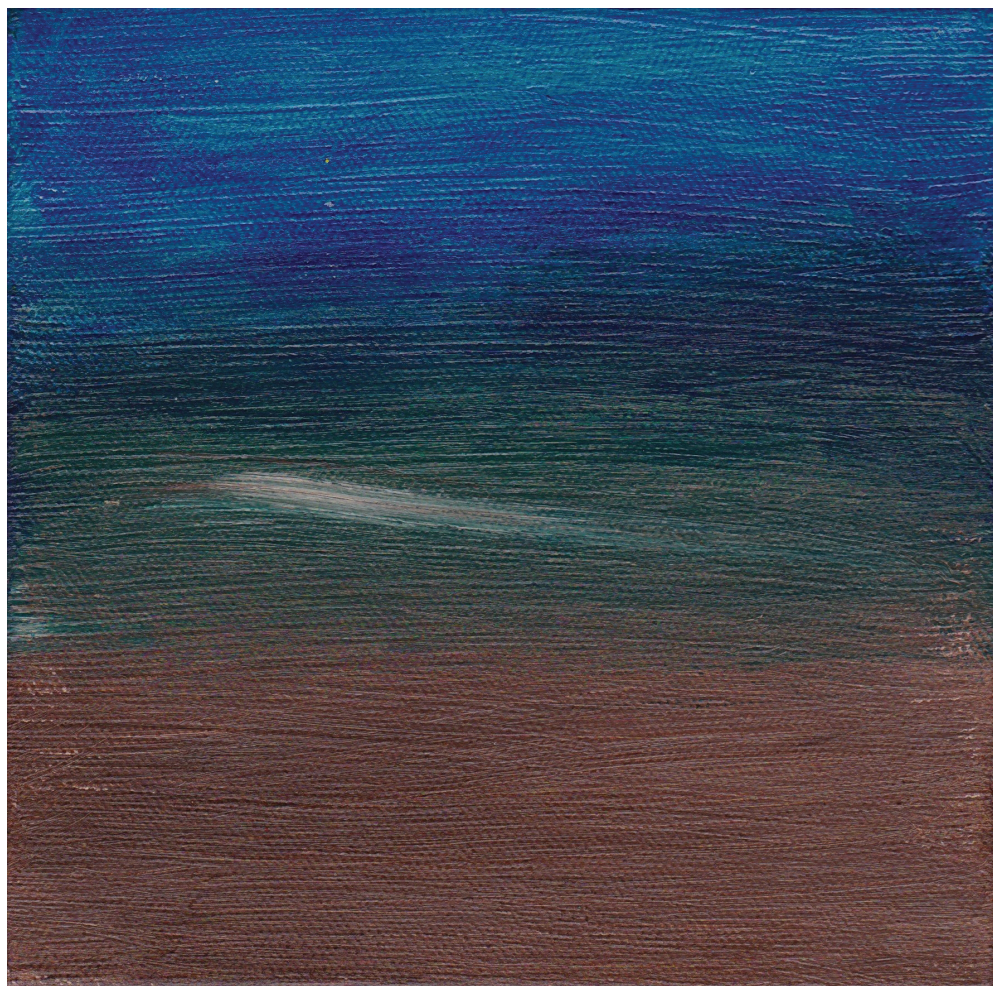
I Only Have What I Remember



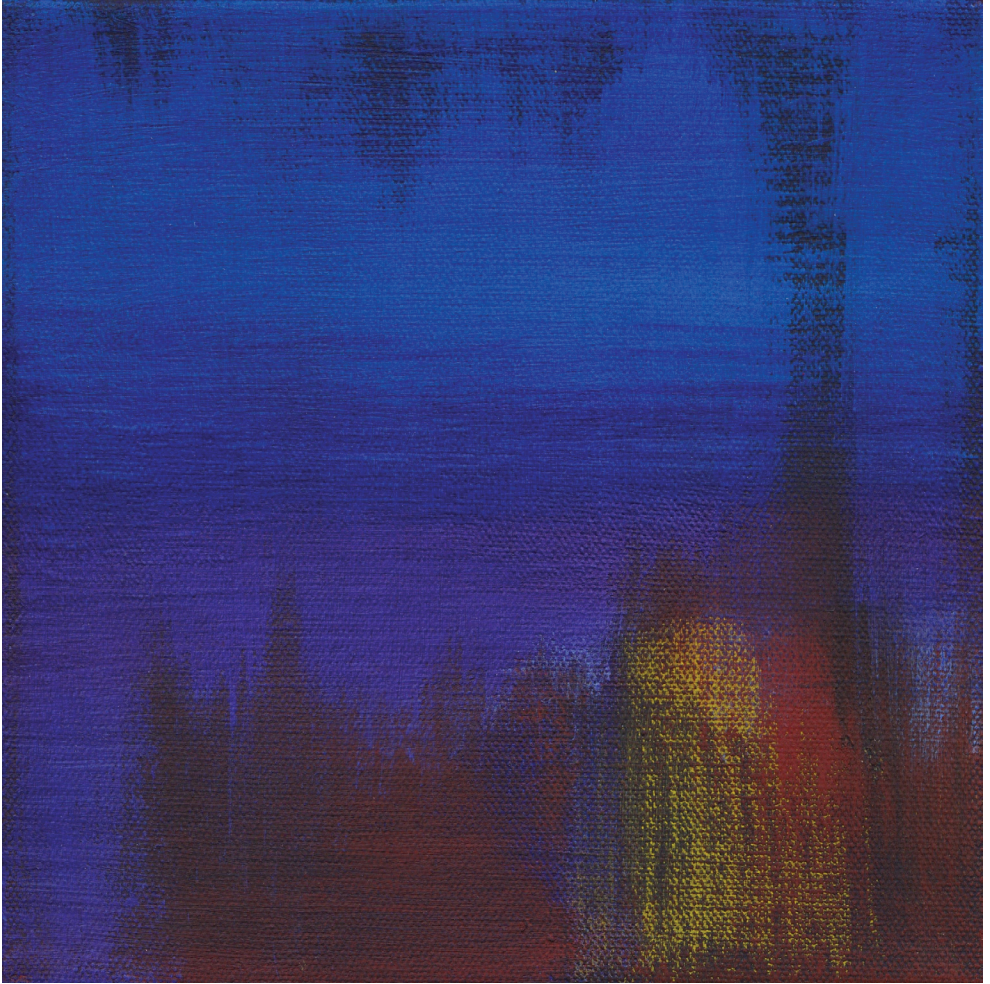
Flying South



Untitled #22



Seaside Memory



It Never Ends

Karen Neuberg

Loops

Always trying
to loosen
into fuzzy

logic, then gently twist
into loops that appear
comfortingly complex

but dissolve
as they are followed
until the footsteps you hear

coming from behind
are your own as you
move through the depths

of a night you swam
the entire length
of your own dream

Michael Collins

Esse in Anima

We are each ourselves at the harbor:
Runners run, readers read, children play,

I wander within myself within
the world, nothing is even wrong

with the distant cars in their straight lines,
driving from lot to lot, while the ducks

simply sit and sun while people walk
between them—I've given my eyes

too deeply to the breeze this morning;
I nearly stepped on one of them.

From how it looked, he would have let me.

Jeanette Clough

Un-moth

The morning routine, soap that dries on its way to your body, then cleaning up the insects lining the lamp's inner rim, whatever gave light or moisture like the bedside scented oil coated with winged spots, the sinks, tub, and adjacent surfaces—though there's a sharp decrease over the past two days so perhaps this has been their season and they are fluttering toward the next stage of mothness, making more of themselves, transient as torn lettuce, as an ant's ginger mound on a dirt road, lingering, as one left suddenly alone, as drops of oil isolated on a tile floor and never absorbed. Sidestep, just for a moment, winding sideways in loping S's, the early breeze embryonic, soft as a coyote's ear brushing your cheek with a hint of cucumber, disentangling, strewing the powdered veil under which you have lived.

Jeanette Clough**Evocation (Or widen)**

Or widen, beyond the trimmed orange to the fan palms,
spikey and difficult, bearing their small edible fruit.

Her documents are disarranged, word-dense. Which book
will tell about scat, detritus, what to get rid of?
Which fire will the chopped wood feed?

Shades of basil and burnt garlic. She has reached
a whittled-down place the color of every shed skin.

Doug Bolling

Hearing Loss/Gain

Where shore and sea meet
I listen for the unspoken that
hides among crash and
shifting dune.

Land holds its own
losing here and there
to moon's surging lust
of wave and plunge.

I call into the wind
and my words
fall away, drowned
in that far greater.

Now here I stand wanting
the deeper soundings
only silence knows,

a language untamed, uncharted,
emptied out of whatever tectonic
the taught mind imposes.

Doug Bolling**Travels in Strange Space**

It began on Tuesday
then turned blue

We met among the vanishings
just the two of us

Your poems
my umbrella
rain everywhere

As we walked
making words
remembering

How did we arrive here
I asked

What the mindset on
just this day

The wind
the low moans
of a past

I believe we were lovers
I believe we
stepped inside
a text

unedited
pristine
not understood.

Jeffrey Zable

Leaving a Trail

Yes, try to smile. The invisible camera is watching.
The birds on the wire are tense, leaving one by one
through an air that has forgotten their names. In the
aftermath of so much bleeding, the hands turned blue
and the fingers stretched to the end of the path where
a man with a broken umbrella is twirling and twirling
around a stature of bones. Leading a brigade of hunger
and thirst, a recent suicide has returned for one more
performance, dancing with rubber legs and eyes that hang
from their sockets. My father used to say, Never bet more
than you can lose, and hearing little more than his voice
I would respond, The day is lost in the desert sands
and the old woman weeps while the cows leave home.
I'm leaving now for parts unknown to man or beast,
leaving a trail of memories that burn through the skin.

Janis Lull**The Orbit**

Egg-shaped, the self falls short
of a circle, falls long, tracks
past the body and out
toward love, work, child, toy.
Inside the egg, the body waits
like a secret that calls you back.
In the hours of longing, of journey
through dark space, you pity the body,
its steady decay. It cannot house you,
nor can the star you travel to
or from. Nowhere to lay your head—
no head to lay—only a path around
two fires, neither of them home.

Janis Lull



Outsight

The sky speaks. Greater than dreamed
it declares itself, and in my language.
“I am you,” the billions say,
“Look outward and see yourself.”
Just so, this small planet—
the hearth, the house, the trees—
have always said, “I am you.”
Let me look further, up to the sky
through cloudy eyes, smeared windows,
branches losing their leaves.
Let each thing and all things show me
who I am. I trace this oversight
in the sky’s own words. I have no others.

Kelli Allen

Separations for Fall, for Winter, too

What's unlikely is this rain. Even
the sparrows are agitated
and waiting. But I am contacting
you not for some contract to be signed,
finally. Rather, I want us to hurry
across and ripen the letters for evidence
of closing. We have lodged
complaints before and each skims
the pond quick, a rehearsal we perform
in fog. What is likely is assumed distance.

We are not the same small animals
curled against blurred margins
and dropped pebbles. Our hands let
go their thefts months ago. I can hardly
remember accumulations. This is
to convey regret, maybe desire,
too, as my tongue waits, turtle-
shelled in the mouth.

Carol Shillibeer

this unauthored text

flung along the raw whirlwind of the material
 you and I are chemistry thinking
 amid the risen worlds, amongst the green
 years & the red millions, the long dead
 and the yet-to-be-living, we are
 all molecular morphologies
 regardless, without
 intent and yet

it's curious that in the time it takes
 to layer rock over the wind-riven
 plain chemical grammatologies
 have woven their way
 through the storming earth,
 into mountains & bodies, into specie
 after specie, into we who here kiss
 one chemical sentence, one bonded fling
 at a time oh for the body

for the material body
 (the singular chemical word)
 if we are to hold on, survive the cataract
 of data, we, these touching hands, these
 unique chemical moments, we who fall
 wet in the world as it is,
 the plain-jane random plink & sink of the rain;
 we all, blind as moles, and even so
 those of us with this small wet mind
 we call ourselves, even blind
 to our beginnings, to the burning engine
 of our chemical authority, here we are
 refusing the whisker's quivering pen,



this unauthored text

because of this we are driven in the dark,
this small truculent desire
for textual authority, an animal's thirst
on the rolling sea of chemical reality.

Carol Shillibeer

intermittent

absence

Diagnosis followed an _____ of perception as much as seizure. In one place the anomaly spoke of alteration through ingestion; in one place the _____ spoke of neurological undoing. In the place of undoing, the woman and her electrodes spoke of _____ in the afternoons at the the tea shop across the hospital's wind-side door. The long body of _____ building, with stubby pinfeathers, the dull _____ of wet brick, issued new realities packed parsimoniously in water, without reference to cost. The girl remained an _____ ; she was there, and then not there, in the examination room, then not. The electrodes measured _____ ; tailed with black wires, their heads were white and round. Their pulsing industry left a gift for the girl, gelled clouds in between follicles. On the bus home white clouds set in small cumulus whirls on her head, as if a wind had escaped the _____ and left behind only its iterant trail.

presence

Diagnosis followed an _____ **i'm here** of perception as much as seizure. In one place the girl stole the air; her teacher of _____ **don't go, i'm** spoke of neurological undoing. There were times when the girl was inappropriately absent from class. Two scarred fields and three slammed doorways between her and _____ **here, let me** the last time she and the hospital door swung the winds _____ **up, let me take** her friends said "no" just like her doctor. There was a list of *don't do* that she _____ **the feet up the mountain, lets hang** felt, somewhere, ought to be done immediately. And so she left on the next wind, wound up and twisted, somehow pendant _____ **from the mountain, lets climb into** inside the blue.

distinguished poet

Daniela Elza

the interview

Q: Your deconstructive use of language is fascinating. Has language, especially poetic language, reached the point when anything can represent anything else? What does it do to you as a poet?

I am not too keen on poetry that just deconstructs without offering anything in return. It is easy to take something apart if you do not intend to put it back together again. We have enough examples of this kind of fragmented thinking in the world today. The trick is to be able to build something in return. I deconstruct, but I also hope to construct something in the process. I find it irresponsible to deconstruct without having thought far enough to have something to offer in its place. I use all the tools available to the poet, regardless which “school” of poetry claims them. I call this my serious play, it helps me push language to serve me better in what I do.

I don’t think language has reached the point where anything can represent anything else. We probably would not call it a language then. I am reminded of something Virginia Woolf said: “They [words] hate anything that stamps them with one meaning or confines them to one attitude, for it is their nature to change.” I try to find out how far I can go with this change, to crack words open to where they become more aware of themselves, to where they embody a consciousness, something coming into being. To get to the point where language itself is renewed, can serve to bring one to their own awareness. It becomes a medium of transferring something between us. Something we can feed each other. Something like bread. So we need to keep this medium in good shape.

Another benefit of this for me is the realization of how we can also begin to distinguish when language controls us, and when we are in control of language. Which will it be? Part of my work hopes to address these issues of freedom, control, and power.

Q: Some readers might find your nonlinear manner of expression confusing, while others might enjoy the complexity. When writing, do you care more about expressing yourself clearly, or affecting the reader in a certain way?

When I write I explore possibilities. I do not really think in those moments about myself, or about the reader, but what is possible. In fact, I have been known to say that I can only write when I am *beside myself*. By which I mean, to get out of my usual self to make room for something unknown, unmet, unfamiliar. I want to commune with that *self* we become when we are in love with the world. The one we terribly miss, once we have met.

At a later stage I think about the reader, at which point I want to be beside the reader. I want to be sitting alongside the reader, and I want to *be* the reader. The best moments are when I can distance myself enough from the writing and enjoy my work the way a reader might.

An important aspect of the non-linearity is again the notion of creating awareness about language and how it works on us. How we work on it. For the frustrated reader this could be a point of inquiry. If I am asking them to do something they find uncomfortable, *why is it uncomfortable?* Same goes for the reader who thrives on the multiple layers and complexities I try to embody and embed in the poems. As you read and make meaning you are given the opportunity to observe your mind at work. We can learn something about ourselves. Just as I was given the opportunity to observe my mind at work and to struggle with the non-linear nature of thought. If I get frustrated with that, then I would never write anything. Instead, I get curious. I want to see if it is possible to convey this complexity by doing something with language. *Can I teach language something?* So I keep trying. I am interested in capturing the sound of perception/thought. Of course, I will never know how you read a poem, unless you wish to tell me. And some of you have, and it is most fascinating and rewarding. For that, I thank you. Both for sharing it with me, and also for the effort you put into getting there, for not giving up.

Q: Most notable in your “self-portraits” series is a balance between the intimate and universal. How do you compose poems about personal experiences in a way that speaks to the world outside yourself?

One of my current obsessions is exploring the notion of *intimacy*. What is it? How many ways do we have of being intimate? Are we hurting ourselves when we are made to believe that you can only experience intimacy with one person? What about the non-human world? What kind of intimacies does it offer? Just sit under a tree for a while and you will see what I mean. We have diminished *eros* to the point where it is almost embarrassing to talk about.

I am pleased with your observation. *The intimate* can be universal and the universal can be very intimate. And it might be as simple as how we allow ourselves to be present in these, that will make the difference. Of course, there is the crafting and work that needs to be done on the level of words. Which is really where the writer spends most of their time. Crafting a vessel that will be able to carry both of us. Where I make room for you. It is a courtesy, really. It is an openness and a vulnerability which ultimately makes us stronger. Such moments of intimacy push back on feeling invisible, on the sense of emptiness, and on that pervasive sense of alienation.

Q: Self-portraits appear to represent more than one person? Are you alluding to the dialogic view that no one is an entity on their own, but only through their relationships with others?

Everything is a relationship. We *become* in relationship. Even research is a relationship. I do not know how anyone can think they can be an island onto themselves. Maybe. They will probably still have their iphone, though. And they will want to have trees and water and dirt out of which something will grow. It is a sad thought to think we are not connected to everything else. In other words to think we are not in many different levels of interactions, relationships, and dialogues with even the minutest of living things.

We also can get lost in relationships. How dependent we are on each other (something as basic as how we look upon each other) is something we need to not only embrace, but accept as integral to becoming who we are. I was thinking recently how we are full of *if only I did this, maybe then I will succeed/ be recognized/seen*. But really so much of what we consider success is recognition by another. It begins with either seeing or not seeing *the other*. If anyone thinks that they can exist outside of others, without another, then solitary confinement will not be such a bad idea.

In *self-portraits* I have these questions that get thrown out, to which I want answers. Questions open up spaces to explore. Sometimes, *you* is *me*, and sometimes *you* is *you*, and sometimes *you* is *everybody*. I am calling to *you*. I am struggling with representation. (At one point I thought of colour coding the *you*, ha ha, but I trust the reader to be able to navigate this *you* maze). The dialogue is both inside my head and at the same time with the reader and the world. Thought is not orderly. It bounces around, flits and hops, like the self. So I struggle to capture as much of that, and as authentically as I can.

I need you to participate with me. I want to know: have you asked yourself those questions? So I let them sit between us. Participation is key. This is not a passive kind of activity. Existence is a complex thing. I will not be using poetry if I can narrow it down to a few sentences. In fact, maybe part of the problem is that we narrow it down. And leave so much out in the process. I have made peace with *uncertainties* and *paradoxes*. *Certainty* lacks a sense of adventure. It also lacks *humility*. In an interview, Tim Lilburn says: “Without poetic attention the world could become too clear—it’s dangerous.” We can sit in the certainty of our convictions, but that does not allow for growth or discovery. I think that is where the self is marooned and stunted.

**Q: “The self – a small bird that pauses on a branch.”
The motif of finality appears to mean a lot to you.
What is the self’s responsibility in this eroding life?**

The self is a responsibility in itself. The self for me is not something solid. If it were, we would not spend so much time looking for our *selves*. It is a-coming-together-in-the-moment, for me. It shifts. Which places immense responsibility on each of us, each moment of our existence. We also have so much bearing on it. We can have a say in how it comes together. In fact, the self is like language. If you do not renew it and give it life, it will erode. That is why poetry matters to me. It seems to attend both to *self* and to *language*. So it is efficient in that way too. It renews life.

Q: As some seem to be words spoken by a character or narrator, some simply thoughts, and others linguistic manipulation, how do you select which lines and phrases to italicize? And what do you feel the use of italics adds to the dialogues you create?

Italics in my work vary in their functions. Sometimes they are *someone else’s words* in the poem. Sometimes it is a *borrowed idea*, not directly quoted but also not my own. Linguistic manipulations are obvious, like *words within words*. Sometimes it is *just emphasis* on a word. More recently in some of these later poems I am experimenting with the conversation. What you perhaps allude to as *dialogic*. There is a *shifting of address* sometimes and a *shift in glance*. Also a shift between the *thinking* and *feeling* being. It is very perceptible for me. So for now the italics seems to be doing some of that work, until I stumble on better ways to represent that movement.

**Q: You say “truth is wherever you want it”.
Can you please comment?**

This poem was written right after I saw an exhibit at the Vancouver Art Gallery which was called *The Colour of My Dreams: The Surrealist Revolution in Art*, curated by Dawn Ades and shown between May 28 and October 2, 2011. Italicized phrases in the poem come from the exhibit: a quote, some titles of paintings, and echoes of other paintings (see acknowledgements). I picked phrases that jumped out at me. I liked *truth is wherever you want it* because it expressed something I deeply feel and believe. We will make meaning even when there is none to be had. But how can we say that? *Meaning* is made. So if it is made there *is* meaning. There is a lot of effort put into controlling how meaning is made through all sorts of human institutions. There is an inherent freedom in making meaning. Both in reading and in writing. Funny, how we want everyone to read and write, but then we go to a lot of trouble to tell them how to make meaning. That is where art and literature come in, to break some of that hold on meaning. Even though *art* and *poetry* as institutions also attempt to impose and control meaning. But meaning making is an organic process. Simone Weil somewhere said something to the effect that the mind is enslaved when it accepts connections which it has not itself made. I thought at first *enslaved* was too strong a word. But now I think it is an ok word. I am actually still trying to break free from some ideas that were ingrained in me and did not match my experience. We make meaning. We will make meaning. Any meaning is better than none. It is what we do. And it will be purely our own, until someone imposes a different meaning on us. *Truth* is a tricky concept. Whose truth? Perhaps *truth is making meaning*.

Q: A subtle thread woven throughout much of your work is that of linguistic duality: spoken V. unspoken and what is said V. what is meant. Do you see these apparent contrasts as dichotomies or as complementary elements of communication?

Thank you for this question as well. As I launch into each of your questions I appreciate the time you put into the questions you chose to ask, and delight in your thoughtful reading.

I see them as complementary. Dichotomies are dangerous. The poetic way of being in the world and the poetic use of language include an awareness that words tend to make rigid, calcify, what is ever flowing. Also as a poet, whose medium is language, I am aware that I cannot entirely convey in words my

experience. Language is not a perfect tool. I like the way Hans Hess said it (in *How Pictures Mean*): “We have to understand the artistic process not only as an attempted solution of a paradox, but as the paradox itself. What one knows, one cannot say, and once said, it is no more the same.” Meaning goes beyond words, yet we cannot get at meaning without language. My kids have heard me say many times: *Do not listen to what I say, listen to what I mean*. They don’t like it when I say that. It throws them off, puzzles them. But I want to convey to them how much of communication is beyond language, and how much of what is contested sometimes is on the level of words only. So I want them to learn to pay attention to language beyond language.

The meanings that constitute a poem are transmissions from a world not reducible to language, yet at the same time manifest only in the medium of language. So, too, the meanings that serve to constitute the very being of the self are somehow, in part, the transmissions from a world beyond the limits of the ego. Thus, the boundaries between self and meaning, world and language become blurred. My interest in the freedoms that poetry offers leads me to the question of the relation in poetry between the self and the world. And, so, the conversation continues.

Daniela Elza

self-portraits

what went wrong went wrong.
 I never had a chance to rehearse this life with you.

slowly objects in the house emptied of dreams—
 we moved them around in our absences.

even the furniture plays visual tricks on us.
 I fall asleep in one place wake up in another.

the silences between us split at the seams
 into loneliness. the body wears them with a lack

of understanding. even our ghosts are listless
 stare hopelessly take bets on us.



Daniela Elza

self-portraits

the city legislates our movements
paves the places we are *supposed* to walk.

there is barely song here in the footfall
the negotiation of space— the way we *avoid*

bumping into each other
as we bump into each other.

each day our together wakes up
remembers itself into *not-being*
raises itself from the ground up

like a city— stunned and unbelieving

in the choreography of this struggling light.

Daniela Elza
self-portraits

when we knew the right things to say
how we went a long way to mean them.

now everyday I slip down the steel hill of your gaze
whittle myself down to a nerve ending.

sit on the edge of each evening
as the river of dusk ushers the crows
in its streams overhead

—*reassure me some things still make sense*—

the way
the underside of wings captures the last sun rays—

the way I want to scoop the good years inside me
roll them and stash them in poems.
simple things—

the many winds in your hair
the way we kissed while waiting for
the light to change.

if I can put these fragments together
I can convince myself
we existed.

Daniela Elza

this is not
a rehearsal V

you think we are just *performing* here
but you will only know it
if you dance it

if you put the bowl under the moon
and drink.

today endless drizzle
the timed light. the slow clock.

*streams of carbon pour onto paper*¹—
this place where I cross the river to speak
with what is dead.

this logic is not
chronological.

and for all intense purposes
does not further the plot.

*

in the single fact of a dark room
*our needs are always in a hurry*²

do not ask how many times a day
I think of you
in the discipline of breath and word.

1. something a friend said in conversation

2. these words come from *Creative Unity* by Rabindranath Tagore, published 1926 MacMillan and Co., London.

**this is not
a rehearsal V**

today the incessant wind
whips up the instant blue
into cloud.

*

this logic is not chronological.
neither is it a close collaboration with darkness.

the light too thinks its way through cracks
through the dim corner of this room that passes
for daylight.

sometimes all that creeps in
is self-doubt.

the flower you are growing bleeds its sorrow
on the hard wood floor.

you want to be the needle on the compass
shifting to its magnetic north.

the self— a small bird that pauses
on a branch briefly
before it flies off.

Daniela Elza

the colour
of dreams

(at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 2011).¹

“truth is wherever you want it.
we found it all within the body.”

—Yunus Emre

truth is *wherever you want it.*
the mind—
 the upper side of the sky.

we found it all *within the body's black*
mirror. *the studio door—*

its quiet morphologies/ ajar.
a meditation *on an oak leaf*

the house opposite and reason/
bewildered. we recognize each other

in the *cabinets of curiosities.* objects
rife with dream and /memory slipping

between. a small chair /in the bottom
right hand corner
 a black canvas/
and a body becomes a prayer.

1. the italicized phrases and echoes in this poem come from the exhibit *the colour of my dreams: the surrealist revolution in art* which was shown between May and October, 2011 at the Vancouver Art Gallery, curated by Dawn Ades.



the colour
of dreams

/chance encounters blur boundaries
the moss dreaming along tangents

and the warrior branches into /anticipation
anti-paintings./ a lost piece of paper

blowing down the street becomes grief.
found poster of missing person— named.

movement understood only when
time is cornered and framed.

acknowledgements

“*truth is wherever you want it. we found it all within the body.*” by Yunus Emre, (translated by Kabir Helminski and Refik Algan – ‘The Drop That Became Sea’)

paintings: *the upper side of the sky*, by Kay Sage, 1944; *studio door*, by Man Ray, 1939; *black mirror*, Roberto Matta, 1947; *psychological morphologies*, Roberto Matta, 1938-39; *the prayer*, Wilhelm Freddie, 1940; *meditation on an oak leaf*, André Masson, 1942; *the house of opposite*, Leonora Carrington, 1945; *the moss is dreaming*, Judy William, 1966; *warrior memory*, Jack Shadbolt, 1969;

Daniela Elza

wednesday.
rainfall.

wednesday. rainfall. warning
 in effect. thinking is. trans-
 corporeal. in the evening rain.
 at times heavy.
 what moves poetry

between bodies in the dance of showers
 and drizzle.

in the temple we say:
prayer we say *book* we say *vessel*

amidst a cloudy prognosis
 icons of winds and thunder
 precisions in our pockets.

the air charged with what has been
 unthought yet—
 this moment between. intimate.
 shivers
 under the well meaning rain. a touch
 and flash flood soaks us through with
 pure difference.

in the blood work of the poem you are
 distance between the pages
 where the lines tend
 to their own uncertainties.

this week in March is going to be all rain
 and cloud again. all warnings disorders
 stripped wires and endings



Untitled

Barry Blitstein

A Sudden Dissonance

a sudden dissonance in the choir of storm voices
 entices her to rise
 leave the fortress of her bed
 face the window shade fierce with wild silhouettes

she rests her forehead against the cold glass
 sees the edge of something in desperate motion

between the sill and siding
 a flying thing is caught

she reaches out
 pulls the loose board away

the flying thing remains caught

she grasps a wing with one hand
 pulls the siding away with the other
 tugs at the wild thing
 brings it inside

it is too feeble to fight
 too broken
 dies

my rescue was of myself

i shall bury it without ceremony

where it may feed what
 will feed on me

A Sudden Dissonance

tonight
in the storm
so that I may sleep



Distractions

Bruce McRae

Repossessed

The dolls' house on the street in my mind.
Its tiny curtains drawn, the rooms dark and dusty.
The finger-sized furniture tipped over,
after what might have been a drunken rage,
with no sign of its missing occupants,
the little back door kicked in, or nudged by a mouse,
the fourth wall gone in this theatre-of-play,
revealing a family's unspeakable secrets.
And in its homey plastic kitchen, a bit of smoke.
A fire coming. A cleansing fire.

A.J. Huffman

The Sanctity of Dreams

This bed is my altar, I sacrifice
my sanity to various pillows, nightly.
Attempting to sink into subliminal
realities or fantasies, anything that might stand
as a break from my own.
I am daylight's beast,
howling at forbidden moon. I pray
in prone form for slice
of moonbeam to sever conscious
ties. Finally darkened,
by body floats free, a temporary
angel, a blind man
granted reprieve to see.

A.J. Huffman

The Absence of Dreams

Echoing emptiness is the only terror
to tremble beneath. Eyes that have seen
too much tend to boycott the buoyancy
found beneath star-filled skies. Mine
have no desire to launch themselves
into oblivion's embrace.

I have lived a thousand deaths.

A thousand lies have passed
between my lips. I choked on none. Nothing
is the legacy of my nights. Switch
me on. I glow without fire.

Chelsea Cefalu**Hickory burn**

When it burns hickory
you offer your blisters.
I hold them, steaming
in my mouth to stay their burst.
The wood between us
doesn't spark
or smoke or bluster.
It burns neatly,
its ash the wish of dandelion fuzz.

When it burns hickory
it burns hotter than liquid,
hotter than children.
Hotter than falling Rome.
It boils our prophets
in the Earth's tender meat.
Dandelions burst from the entrails.

Chelsea Cefalu**Temporal bond**

Wanna watch me cut down a tree?

I meet you behind the shed-
you're there first,
of course.
Chainsaw primed.
Arms hard. Heart ripe. Blood
overfills your eyes.
It springs slick on my palms.

The tree, a dauntless
weed, grown burly
with leaves. He rattles
his drums. You bare
your steel. My throat fills
with branches. Slipped
from temporal bonds, smoke
and pulp marry, consummate
in turned earth. The flecks
in my eyes beguile the sun.

The chainsaw lies silent.
The air is salt, gasoline,
cauterized wood.
The soil is mint.
You, your warrior stance.
Blood.

John Sweet**a flag, bleeding**

this memory of your mother
crawling through the shadows of clouds

these hands of yours
useless and frozen

lie there naked in the sunlight at
the water's edge waiting for summer,
for glory, for what you believe to
rightfully be yours

listen

no one breathes in poison for 40
years and then walks away unharmed

no one talks to angels without
scars forming on their heart

the hills are a gift, and the rivers, and
the sky will always be more beautiful
than any god invented by crippled minds

the truth will always be
so easy to twist and bend

stand there where your mother died
and make it into what you will

John Sweet**a place**

in ornamental silence all
regret and bitterness the
failure of the past of
 the present
 the future and
trees on fire and
buildings collapsing all
motion and sorrow and
even with no need for lies
 lies are all we tell

even with no need for fear
we are nothing but afraid

Peggy Aylsworth

Not Instead Of

He wrote letters of apology
to adverbs, punctuation marks,

occasionally to parentheses.
There were days when he would linger

with the word *significant*. Trees
surprised him without their names.

Snows from far-off mountains
melted onto the pages. A silver

thread reminded him of her face
but the stars too distant to signify.

Out there meant gathering the world.
Within would find its place.

contributors

Kelli Allen's work has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies in the US and internationally. She is a four-time Pushcart Prize nominee and has won awards for her poetry, prose, and scholarly work. She served as Managing Editor of *Natural Bridge* and holds an MFA from the University of Missouri St. Louis. She is the director of the River Styx Hungry Young Poets Series and founded the Graduate Writers Reading Series for UMSL. She is currently a Professor of Humanities and Creative Writing at Lindenwood University. Allen is the author of two chapbooks and one flash fiction collection. Her full-length poetry collection, *Otherwise, Soft White Ash*, arrived from John Gosslee Books in 2012. www.kelli-allen.com.

Jose Angel Araguz is a Canto Mundo fellow. He has had poems recently in *Barrow Street*, *Slipstream*, *Hanging Loose*, *Poet Lore*, and *RHINO*. He is presently pursuing a PhD in Creative Writing at the University of Cincinnati. He runs the poetry blog, *The Friday Influence*.

Peggy Aylsworth's poetry has appeared in numerous journals throughout the U.S. and abroad, including *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *The MacGuffin*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *White Rabbit* (Chile), and *Yuan Yang* (Hong Kong). Her work was nominated for the 2012 Pushcart Prize. She is a retired psychotherapist, 93, living in Santa Monica, CA.

Barry Blitstein began in theater (MFA) and migrated to poetry. He has lived in New York, Southern California, and Berlin. Most recently his poems have been published in *Off The Rocks* and *Hartskill Review*.

Doug Bolling has received five Pushcart nominations and a Best of the Net nomination. Some recent publications include *Redactions, and/or, Stoneboat, BlazeFOX, Kestrel, Water-Stone Review, Connecticut River Review, and Hamilton Stone Review*.

Chelsea Cefalu lives in Pennsylvania with her family. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Flutter Poetry Journal, Poppy Road Review, and Decades*.

Jeanette Clough is author of *Flourish* (Tebot Bach) and *Island* (Red Hen). Her work appears in *Colorado Review, Steam Ticket, Pool, and Cider Press Review*. In 2012 she was an Artist-in-Residence at Joshua Tree National Park.

Michael Collins' poems have appeared numerous publications, including *Grist, Kenning Journal, Pank, SOFTBLOW, and Smartish Pace*. His first chapbook, *How to Sing when People Cut off your Head and Leave it Floating in the Water*, won the Exact Change Press Chapbook Contest in 2014. A full-length collection, *Psalmadala*, is forthcoming.

James Ducat's work has appeared in *Word Riot*, *Specter Magazine*, *Mojave River Review*, *Convergence*, *The Citron Review*, and others. He received an MFA in creative writing from Antioch University Los Angeles, teaches writing at Mt San Jacinto College, and lives with his son in Redlands, CA, in a house painted pink.

Daniela Elza's work has appeared nationally and internationally in close to 100 publications. Daniela's poetry collections are: *the weight of dew*, *the book of It*, and, most recently, *milk tooth bane bone* of which David Abram says: "Out of the ache of the present moment, Daniela Elza has crafted something spare and irresistible, an open armature for wonder." Daniela was the 2014 Writer-In-Residence at the University of the Fraser Valley and the 2014 guest editor of *emerge* anthology.

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

A.J. Huffman has published nine solo chapbooks and one joint chapbook through various small presses. She also has two new full-length poetry collections forthcoming, *Another Blood Jet* (Eldritch Press) and *A Few Bullets Short of Home* (mgv2>publishing). She is a Pushcart Prize nominee, and her poetry, fiction, and haiku have appeared in hundreds of national and international journals, including *Labletter*, *The James Dickey Review*, *Bone Orchard*, *EgoPHobia*, *Kritya*, and *Offerta Speciale*, in which her work appeared in both English and Italian translation. She is also the founding editor of *Kind of a Hurricane Press*. www.kindofahurricanepress.com

Janis Lull is professor emerita of English at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Over the years, her poems have appeared in such magazines as *Epoch*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *The Little Magazine*, *FallOut*, *Lake Street Review*, *Woman Poet*, *Heartland*, and *Ruminate*.

Pushcart-nominee **Bruce McRae** is a Canadian musician with over 900 publications, including *Poetry.com* and *The North American Review*. His first book, *The So-Called Sonnets* is available from the Silenced Press website or via Amazon. To hear his music and view more poems visit 'TheBruceMcRaeChannel' on YouTube.

E. K. Mortenson is the author of the chapbooks, *The Fifteenth Station* (Accents Publishing, 2012) and *Dreamer or the Dream* (Last Automat Press, 2010), as well as a full-length collection, *What Wakes Us* (Cervena Barva Press, 2014). His work also appears in both print and online journals as well as anthologies. He was the 2008 recipient of the Leslie Leeds Poetry Prize, the 2012 Accents Publishing Chapbook Award, and is an instructor in the MFA in Creative and Professional Writing program at Western Connecticut State University. He writes and teaches in Pennsylvania where he lives with his wife and two children.

Karen Neuberg's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in numerous publications including *Levure Litteraire*, *Tinderbox*, and *Zingara Poetry Picks*. Her latest chapbook

is *Myself Taking Stage* (Finishing Line Press, 2014) and she is associate editor of the online poetry journal, *First Literary Review-East*.

David Radavich poetry collections include *America Bound: An Epic for Our Time* (2007), *Canonicals: Love's Hours* (2009), and *Middle-East Mezze* (2011). His plays have been performed across the U.S., including six Off-Off-Broadway, and in Europe. His latest book is *The Countries We Live In* (2014).

As a visual artist **Jonathan K. Rice** works primarily with acrylics and mixed media. His art has appeared in a number of solo and group exhibits in North and South Carolina. Some of his work has been featured as cover art on books and in online magazines, such as *The Pedestal*, *Referential Magazine*, *Red Headed Stepchild* and the international online magazine *Levure Litteraire*. In 2012 he had a painting selected for inclusion in the annual Art for Auction exhibit at the North Carolina Museum of Art. He is also editor/publisher of *Iodine Poetry Journal*. Jonathan lives in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Carol Shillibeer lives on the west coast of Canada. When she writes what will become a new poem she does it with her mind focused on something other than the writing. Her eye is usually watching a bird, or some point in the middle horizon. Unencumbered, her fingers translate what her senses are translating about the world-as-it-rushes in through the eye/nose/skin/. Then, days later, Carol-the-editor, translates again. This multiple translation process has something to do with why she often messes with form. Recent publications include *fillingStation*, *Hermeneutic Chaos Literary Journal*, and *Fur-Lined Ghettos*. Her publication list is at carolshillibeer.com.

John Sweet is the winner of the 2014 Lummo Press poetry prize. Previous work has appeared in *Luciferous*, *Montucky Review*, *Burning Word*, and elsewhere.

Jeff Whitney is the author of four chapbooks, two of which are forthcoming from Thrush Press and Phantom Limb Press. Recent poems can be found in *birdfeast*, *burntdistrict*, *Devil's Lake*, *Salt Hill*, and *Verse Daily*. He lives in Portland.

Jeffrey Zable is a teacher and conga drummer who plays for dance classes and Rumbas around the San Francisco Bay Area. He's published five chapbooks including *Zable's Fables* with an introduction by the late great Beat poet Harold Norse. Present or upcoming work in *Futures Trading*, *Toad Suck Review*, *Clarion*, *Edge*, *Talking River*, *Lullwater Review*, *Owen Wister Review*, *Serving House Journal*, and many others.

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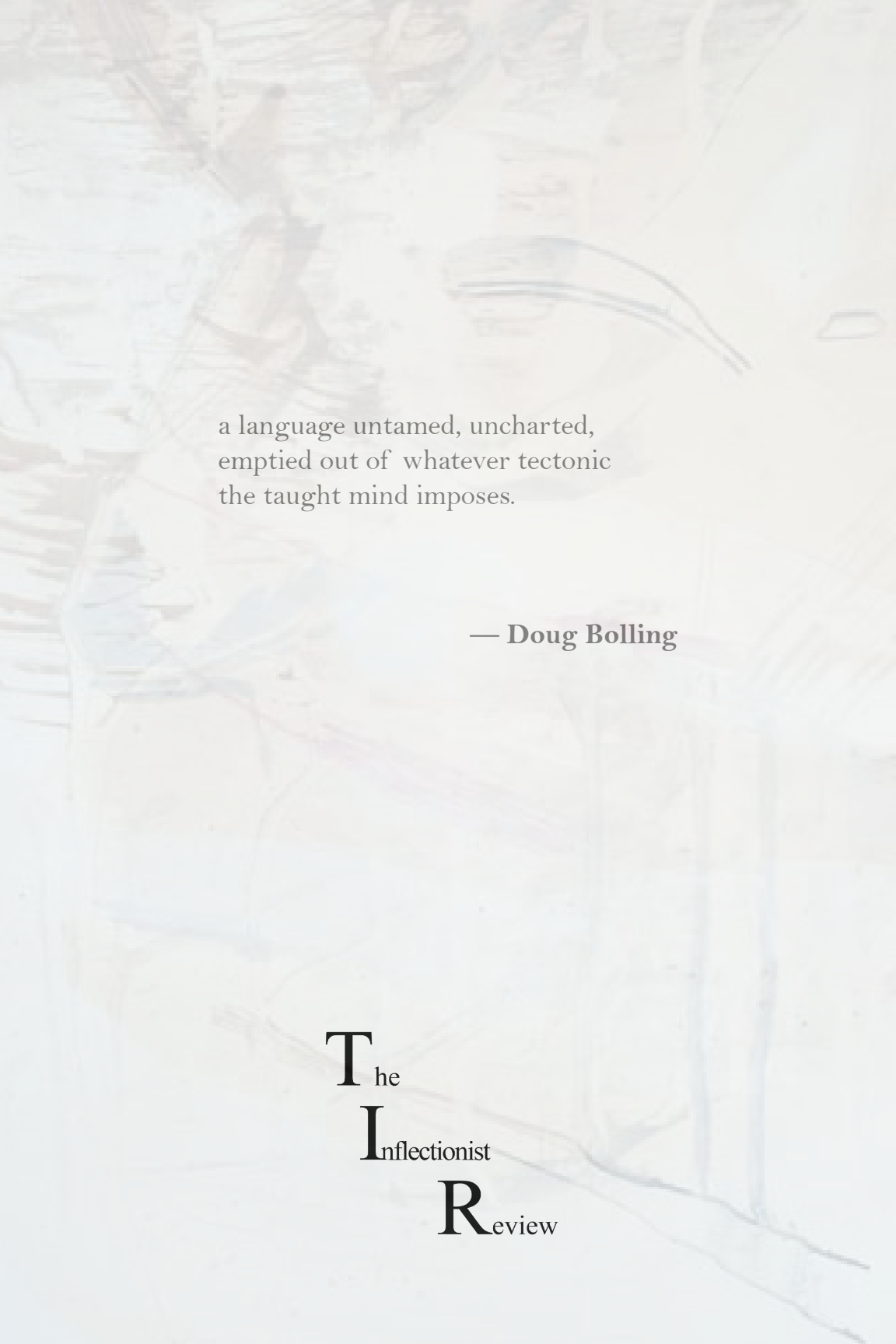
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a language untamed, uncharted,
emptied out of whatever tectonic
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— Doug Bolling

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