

Montreal International Poetry Prize

2011 LONGLIST

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Copies of the final *2011 Global Poetry Anthology* may be ordered in both print and e-formats. It comprises a selection of poems from this Longlist Anthology, and represents the poems shortlisted for the 2011 Montreal Prize.

The Montreal International Poetry Prize is a nonprofit organization offering the first major literary award based on a community-funding model.

Please show us your support by making a donation or by purchasing a copy of the *2011 Global Poetry Anthology*.

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Preface

On Global Poetry

This is a global English-language poetry anthology for the year 2011.

While it's relatively easy for poetry readers and literary historians to find annual anthologies of poetry divided up along regional and especially national lines, it is next to impossible to find an annual *global* poetry anthology. Indeed, we know of no attempt to publish an explicitly global poetry anthology that has met with anything like success.

From one perspective, this is not so surprising. There are deep and ancient reasons for dividing up literature along political or regional lines, many of them powerfully tied to a sense of history, to nationalism and war, and inevitably to identity, in all of its various and troubling aspects.

The absence of an annual global poetry anthology from the literary "world" may also reflect the habits and conventions of the literary establishment. In academia, for example, the regional categorization of literature is so ubiquitous it has become invisible. Thus it may be refreshing to some readers to find an alternative in these pages.

And in the publishing world, an inherently "democratic," net-based, crowd-funded, global poetry project like this one has to work especially hard to gain the respect and attention afforded to established anthologies compiled according to traditional publishing practices.

At the same time, in the rest of the literary world—the one lived in by everyone who reads and writes poetry; the one inhabited by more poets than ever, reading to more audiences than ever; the one comprised of hundreds of thousands of literature majors and creative writing students at universities and other learning institutions across the globe; the one brightened by the excitement of poetry slams and poetry readings the world over; the one populated by thousands of poetry journals and magazines, and of course by individual and community poetry blogs and websites; and most importantly, the one in which people living in conflict read and write poetry literally for survival—we are experiencing more international and intercultural engagement than ever before.

Technology, and specifically the internet, is what has made this kind of worldwide interaction, and this kind of literary project, possible. So the time has definitely come for global poetry, and we hope that this effort to contribute to global reading will be appreciated by all.

*Selection Process for the 2011 Montreal Prize
Longlist Anthology*

The poems in this anthology are from all around the world, and none has ever been published elsewhere. They were selected by a group of ten poet-editors from Malawi, Nigeria, Guyana, the U.S., Australia, Northern Ireland, England, India, Jamaica, and Canada. Each editor made his or her selections from a unique set of poems, meaning the selections herein represent no meeting-room compromises. Crucially, the identities of the poets were unknown to the editors at the time of selection. Consequently, there is a healthy mix of poems written by both well-established poets and completely new ones.

To reflect an emphasis on the poem itself, we have arranged the poems in this anthology alphabetically by title, rather than by author's surname.

We hope you'll enjoy travelling through the world of this book, which reflects the diverse interests of both our poets and our 2011 editors. All of the poems are written primarily in English, and none are translations. Producing an annual global poetry anthology representing many more languages would be a magnificent, but very different, project, and it's one we hope others will endeavour to realize in the future. And, of course, poetry in translation is a complex art unto itself, requiring a different approach from our own.

But in a very important sense, this does not mean that all of the poems in this anthology were written in an identical language. This is true insofar as poets often strive to create their own "language" in their work, and use poetry to challenge linguistic conventions. And it's also true in the sense that there are many Englishes in the world. The languages you hear used on the streets of Kingston and New Orleans, Lagos and London, Port of Spain and Adelaide, and throughout international cities like Brussels and Singapore, are all technically "English," but the dialects and cultural histories of each distinct form of English vary widely.

These poems were selected from those entered for the 2011 Montreal International Poetry Prize, a nonprofit, global, crowd-funded literary award. The Montreal Prize was founded for two symbiotic purposes: first, as an incentive to poets to contribute their best, newest, unpublished work to an unprecedented global poetry anthology; and second, to establish a major literary award on the basis of a crowd-funding model.

This anthology, which will only be distributed in e-formats, represents all of the poems that were selected for the 2011 Montreal Prize Longlist. From the Longlist, the Shortlist of fifty poems will be selected for publication

in our *2011 Global Poetry Anthology*, which will be published in print and e-formats. We wanted to publish the Longlist to give readers a sense of the variety of poems that our editors read through. And we wanted to give more exposure to global poetry in a spirit of adventure and fun.

Peter Abramowicz

Asa Boxer

Len Epp

About the Montreal International Poetry Prize

The nonprofit Montreal International Poetry Prize was founded in 2010 with two goals in mind: to produce an annual anthology of previously unpublished poetry from around the world, and to deliver a major, annual, crowd-funded poetry award. In an important sense these two goals are symbiotic: the \$50,000 prize provides an incentive to poets to enter their best work for selection in the anthology, and the prize is in turn funded directly by the poets who participate in the project. This dual nature is also reflected in the structure of our selection process: the ten editors select poems for the global poetry anthology, and the prize judge selects the prize-winning poem from those published in the anthology.

Significantly, our community-funding model inverts the ancient and venerable tradition of patronage funding for major literary awards. With the advent of the internet, poets and poetry lovers can now create major literary awards directly by building a global community of individual supporters. This is especially salient in an era of fiscal and economic recession, which is bound to impact all of the arts, poetry not least among them.

Our explicit commitment to “global poetry” is a deliberate response both to the opportunity for global reading presented by the internet, and to the deeply entrenched national or regional divisions usually applied to literature. We’re not yet sure what “global poetry” or “global reading” will mean, as the world becomes increasingly interconnected, but we do know it’s the right time to introduce annual global anthologies of literature.

The Montreal Prize is also the first major literary award to be based on a “blind” judging process. This means that the identity of the poet is not directly at stake in the selections made by our editors or our prize judge. For those interested in literary theory, this raises some pertinent issues, which we encourage you to interrogate. For those interested in writing poetry, this means that ours is a flat or fundamentally democratic structure. First-time poets and Nobel laureates are equally welcome to enter their work, and are naturally subject to the same discrimination.

For more information about the Montreal International Poetry Prize, and to show us your support, please visit our website at www.montrealprize.com.

Acknowledgments

This anthology was made possible through the efforts of a great many people around the world. Each of them devoted much of their time, energy, creativity, and insight to our efforts to launch a global poetry project, and to bring it to fruition in a relatively short period of time.

Along the way, there were many people who met with us, pointed us in new directions, and gave us their general support, each of whom we do not have space to thank here. To all of you, we would like to say that your participation will always be a part of the history of this project, and whatever future it might have.

In particular, we would like to thank the following people for their support: Carolyn, Gabriel, Greg and Michael Harris; Sarah Abramowicz; Ben Okri; Don Paterson; Julie Keith and Richard Pound; Jeet Thayil; Helen Fotopulos; Robert Ladouceur; Simon Dardick and everyone at Véhicule Press; Shreya Jalali; Leigh Kotsilidis; Lucinda Tang; Mirka Snyder Caron; Carmine and Jennifer Starnino; Anita Lahey; David-Antoine Williams; Matt Huculak; Nick Brunt and Ian Conrad; Eric Benzacar; David Drummond; Alison Chote; and those of our families and friends who have endured us during this time. We would also like to thank the members of our 2011 editorial board. It was very generous, and indeed courageous, for them to lend their support when this anthology and the Montreal Prize were mere gleams in the eye. Their early participation was crucial to making this project a reality. You can read their short biographical blurbs elsewhere in this anthology.

To the anonymous donors who also made this possible, we cannot thank you enough.

And finally, we would like to thank everyone who participated in the 2011 Montreal International Poetry Prize. You came together from all over the globe to form a new kind of poetry-funding community, and believed in our vision for a poet-funded prize and an annual anthology of previously unpublished, global poetry. Without your participation, this anthology would not exist.

Adorno

After Auschwitz, to write catalogue copy and billing slips is barbaric; to write post-it notes and erotic text messages is barbaric. To write recipes and form letters, instructions or ingredients is barbaric. After Auschwitz, to write gardening manuals is barbaric. After Auschwitz to write Xmas cards or press releases is barbaric. To write status reports, policy documents and progress initiatives is barbaric. After Auschwitz, to keep a blog is barbaric. To write funeral masses and federal budgets and film reviews and tenure applications and aesthetics lessons; to write comic monologues and tragic dialogues; to write about music or essays in medical journals is barbaric. After Auschwitz to put a message in a bottle and send it to sea is barbaric. To write letters to the editor or postcards to friends; to write home to mother is barbaric; the way pain is made manifest—by pen on paper or tattoo on flesh. After Auschwitz to tolerate Auschwitz is barbaric. And for those locked in the solitary cells of the civilized world, is there anything left but to speak
to their highly literate guards?

CHRISTOPHER DODA

After Cancer

And there they were
just under the surface of the water,
full of the meat of the body, taut and silver,
liquid with grace,

what I asked for
when I asked to feel again
my own breath.
In the quiet of night,
you beside me dreaming,
I attend to the cathedral of my body,
its scarred and saddened walls,
and what I thought scarce, even vanished,
swims beside me
shark-finned, salmon-eyed,
intent on feeding whatever comes their way,
and I've learned not to run to the thinning shore
but stand among them breathing;

and when still I can't sleep
I think of all the sleepless others
stepping in beside me.

LESLIE TIMMINS

Against Instinct

It's how the call and echo works, becomes rock.
The boulders, the pebbles beneath the water
we look down into, ripple-smooth.

Lying prone we must appear indifferent from above.
Two eagles ignore us and circle the moon, its cold heart
see-through in daylight. I open my mouth and 'Now!' comes out.

We slither in like eels with feet, or seals. This water
is shallow yet so heavy, it holds us buoyant and runs
circles round us before straightening out towards the fall,
water still clear but now riddled with human.

The salmon will smell it. They will pause mid-leap
and decide no, not this. We remember. No more.
Not this year. Not this backwards waterfall again.

ANASTASIA COX

Aluminum Beds

When he pulls up in a truck and hefts new beds
into the house to replace our camp cots,
we see the dark in a metal's dull sheen
is the dark displayed in his beard. The sound
rushing through the hollows of the square posts,
the frames, guards and rails, is the sound rushing
through the spaces he has made within us.
He sets them all down, the pieces he measured,
sheared, and welded together in the evenings
in his father's factory, while I, half hidden
in among the machines, gathered up scrap
fallen to the cement floor. The four beds
stand in our shared room, one for each of us—
with this he fulfills his unwanted office.
He leaves us soon after, and I keep vigil.
Nightly I allow not one of my brothers
to speak or even audibly breathe. I know
that the sound of any of our young voices
will distract the light trying to make its way
through the fitted substance of the metal. I know
at the same time that this light is my father
searching for his sons. He does not know it—
long before he left us, his love began travelling
to us apart from him. If I memorize him,
I will be able to see the love. If I cut
from myself all that is not my love for him,
the right set of rays will find us. My brothers
fall asleep one by one. I lie and wait
for my dream. There is no space not swirling,
no fire with its core of blackness not burning,
within the beds' angular emptiness
because of the love meant for us. Through the night,
the metal embraces me. It is a skeleton,
unending silver, pure and cold, and I become it,
the light of my father's love arrived at last.

RUSSELL THORNTON

Among Schoolchildren

For Father Edmund Harris

The one-story houses were painted aqua, violet, orange, pistachio.
I spoke to the taxi driver in broken Spanish.
I was becoming a priest, I told him, God willing,
as we drove over muddy ruts, pot holes, and alongside hungry dogs.
Much of the taxi's interior had been removed.
Time slowed that summer in San Pedro Sula.
Around the rotary, legless men shook their tambourines,
epileptics convulsed and the blind tapped their sticks
through donkey excrement. Blue mountains and fields of banana trees
shadowed the city's edges. There were the many poor
on the muddy river bank assembling huts out of rubbish.
I had come to work in an orphanage in Villa Florencia.
Inside the ten foot wall with barbed wire, behind the metal gate,
guards fingered their pistols like bibles,
and seventy orphaned girls politely greeted strident Christians.
One had been found on a coconut truck.
She had lived on coconut juice since birth,
had trouble speaking, preferred not to be held.
Two sisters had been left at a street corner on a sheet of cardboard;
their mother told them to wait, then never came back.
It was a landscape both porous and uninviting.
Half way up one mountain was an enormous white Coca-Cola sign.
Rain steadily fell against the tin roofs and colored the chapel windows to plum.
Sweat colored my T-shirt the color of a steeped tea-bag.
At night, grease on my cheeks shone, lit by the Coca-Cola sign
that would redden and whiten like the eye of an insomniac.
The clock on the night-stand was like a face I could not reach.
A world widened in me. But what of my Protestant professors rearranging
furniture in their well-appointed heads,
hunched in their sepia-colored libraries?
Was it true, what they said, that a priest is a house lit up?

SPENCER REECE

Arborescence

There is a longing when we look at trees,
alone, in clusters or in woods so dense
that light depends for entry on a breeze,
where atavistic tremors shake our sense
and conjure long-diminished deities.

For all the superstitions left behind
in fealty to a greater, modern good,
and all our depredations of their kind
to build our own dominions where they stood,
a view of trees still frets the human mind.

Perhaps we mourn an unacknowledged twin
somewhere—a willow with a dreadlocked mane
or Russian birch in ermine paper skin—
guarding a record of us scored in grain
as any blooded creature guards its kin.

The oaks that pin the plushness of a field;
a regiment of poplars outside town;
an orchard with its red recurring yield;
the last dynastic elm to wear the crown;
all stand in service to a bond repealed.

With every brushstroke of their silken sound
they groomed our early reverie and play,
forewarning us that all the hours not found
for rooted celebration of the day
are ghosts to haunt us when we go to ground.

Our pillars are of steel and concrete now
and from their heights we rule a sunken world
of humble garden greenery below,
the banner of our mastery unfurled
announcing that we break but never bow.

We change. The trees stay as they've always been,
commemorating what they can't impart
—something perennial, lofty and unseen
which we now seek in columned shrines and art—
and whispering to look again, between.

BRIAN STANLEY

At a Restaurant with Three Childless Writers

No flinching when the subject arises.
It isn't for lack of wanting them; more
a matter of circumstance. One of you
has black leaves for eyes,
which I meet clumsily. The second,
untroubled, once had a stepdaughter,
a girl that came and then went.
And the last, like tumbling water,
you've mothered brothers
and sisters. You've mothered.

Guilt, like a rich woman. Embarrassment,
wolfing down the tapas,
for my suburbanity. Envy for the beefy,
marbelled conversations
you take for granted.
Comfort where my belly swells.
Under your curious gaze
I'm uncomfortably conscious that my days
are so everyday; still, I grant,
it's nice to be seen as exotic,

a cow among gazelles.
My little girl, I tell you,
three madonnas with empty laps,
didn't seem quite real
till the day I woke her from a nap,
licked her tears and found
they tasted different from my own.
I'm aware of being precious, and
of wanting to be taken for your kind, even
while the furnace
that moves your words across the page
doesn't light in me anymore.
All the same,
it was true. She tasted strange.

ADRIENNE BARRETT

At Swim Three Words

As my mother lay dying in a dark, cold room
where plumbing and ductwork were visible
overhead and cracks in cement walls sprouted
spider-webs and dust, I recalled the flume

that carried us pell-mell down, risible
in the extreme, at the Exhibition Grounds
in Vancouver, her mouth wide, kerchief
blown back, her body language quizzical,

as if laughter were verboten, out of bounds,
a thing unexpected, a joker outed
sans warning. When I stood by the bed,
my small hand clasped in hers, I had grounds

to wonder if she would die, though I doubted
this, of course, thinking only of myself,
my needs, days at the beach in English Bay
or Kitsilano, where I tossed sand, flouted

authority, sun-baked bodies, the air
reeking of seaweed, mustard, hot-dogs.
Some days I feel her speaking through me,
the few remaining strands of damp, brown hair

at sixes and sevens across her forehead,
lips pursed, facial muscles contracted
in a worry—ethics, clichés, beliefs,
each a clipped, forced whisper with its dread

finality. Resolute, I played the elf,
doing the dog-paddle across the frayed
linoleum, trying to make her laugh.
A tad of whimsy left on the back shelf

would suffice. She rallied briefly, half
alert, pulled herself into a sitting position,

the skin slack around her neck, eyes
closed from the effort. Grimace or laugh,

I know not, but she who swam kilometres
from Fisherman's Cove to Point Atkinson
managed a thin smile, patted my head
and traced on my body the necessary letters.

GARY GEDDES

Atocha 2004

The Caliph at Córdoba had a dizzying pool—
quicksilver from his mines at Almadén
sent glints and highlights wavering through the air
and set his guests and courtiers' heads to whirl.
It's ruined now—the palace's grand halls
unroofed and broken open to the sky.

On the all-night train from Lisbon to Madrid,
rumbling through the outskirts in the early dawn,
still gloomy, so the braziers flare bright
in trackside encampments and wrecking yards,
I think of commuters who check the time and yawn,
who'll be blown apart at the station up ahead.

There's a story that the bombs were to avenge
the last destruction of al-Andalus
which the Catholic Monarchs launched from Córdoba,
wresting Granada lovely from the Moors
five hundred years ago—its revenge
for Arab conquest, eight hundred years before.

When they bombed Atocha we were safe at home
but preparing our first Spanish trip,
and our friends asked us if we'd 'cut and run'—
crude words which mimicked the Australian Right
still glorying in the capture of Baghdad.
But not to go would feel like giving in.

At Barcelona there's a mercury fountain:
quicksilver ripples out across the bowl,
in memory of the miners of Almadén
who rebelled from despair in '34,
who Franco, soon a rebel, came to crush.
This shimmering device revenges them.

Now we're at Atocha six months beyond the blast.
Angry tourists wave their tickets in the air,

urgent to board the fast train to Barcelona:
as if there's no call for the guard and his gun,
as if six months ago those travellers didn't die,
as if bombers didn't die their murderous death.

We've run to see Guernica, ate our paella,
rushed to send emails home to our kids,
eager—Catalonia and France lie ahead—
but surrounded by all Spain's silent dead.

DAVID BUNN

A Basket of Water

The boy came back from school in tatters—
A March day; snow thin in all the hills,
A blue wind breezing the sun
Wild across hillsides, and sweeping it away.
The boy saw nothing; he had told a lie—
The teacher had belted his hands until they bled.
I want to be good, he told his grandfather,
But it never lasts. I always have to start again.
The old man ruffled his hair. *Take the coal basket,*
Go down to the river and fill it—
But hurry, run for all you're worth.
The boy went, the basket bumping the backs of his legs,
Fled down the hill, wind grazing his face—
Plunged the basket deep, swirled sky water upwards,
Rushed with it splaying, up and up the hill,
So it gushed and splashed, hopeless.
He came back with an emptiness that shone—
The words in his eyes spoke dark.
The old man knelt beside him:
It wasn't useless. Look at the inside of the basket;
The coal dust's gone, it's washed away.
Just the same with you. Put good things
Deep in the heart. They'll bleed away,
But the light they give is always left behind.

KENNETH STEVEN

The Bay

The morning is a hand-
 tinted photograph torn from *Life*
 Magazine late one afternoon in 1956. In which paradise
 Decomposes sweetly beneath the mission brown boards of a hut,
 And a man sits, remembering too thickly and breathing too thin,
 And the bay, in the shining robes of a Siddha, finds shore
 and finds it again. The sea at its karma
 Along the coral beach is the fierce blue mind
 of the kingfisher, making plans
 on the powerlines even now.

The sky here is a mile
 too big for the bay's boots. Savusavu—
 This flooded arena in which nothing much, on the surface of things, ever happens,
 To the enormous delight of the cava-mellowed mob of semi-superannuated
 Mountains in their green flak jackets
 and their greener fatigues—Savusavu
 Is morality play in countless acts of cloud
 And itinerant weather. It's where the water cycle of
 the whole wide world comes to dress

Rehearse. At evening, the coconut palms
 crane their crooked necks to watch
The sunset turn water into wine. They're still there,
Leaning at erratic, companionable angles, when,
 backlit by the bawdy moon,
The clouds compose a frantic tectonic map of the world, and then map it all over again.
In the darkness, the susurrus of the bay resumes, and the blue boat drones sheepishly home
From oyster grounds,
 and fruit bats and geckos pick up roughly
 where the weavers and mynahs left off

In the dusk, and on the deck, the man paces.
 He's spent the day in books and birdsong,
And he's come away with nothing to show for it. The amber-eyed kitten,
 too late to do either of them any good,
A stray and infantile muse who's found him here,
Bats wildly at mosquitoes drawn to the violet neon light, downs a moth
And swallows it alive. The green bus passes
 on the road from the resort
 like an infantry battalion, flags of conversation
Streaming from its windows. Given time, he thinks, everything,
 even the saddest thing, will be recounted in the bright idiom of love.

MARK TREDINNICK

The Beauty of the Middle

As you lay dying, too weak to talk,
you groped for pen and paper
and scratched out these last few words:
*As this earth will suffocate me,
I beg you to have my body opened
so I may not be buried alive.*

I, too, Chopin, would like my heart
sent to some distant place I love
for a sincere, separate burial.

When they bore your coffin
up the aisle of the Madeleine,
that autumn, all Paris vibrated
with the heavy, solemn chords
of your Funeral March in B Flat Minor;
yet, only a few may have heard
the sublime in the song of suffering—
the beauty of the middle
in that Third Movement.

I want to waltz even now, in spite
of the scherzo's doleful repeated chords,
and I would have them all waltz
at my graveside, twirling themselves
as ribbons round marble and granite;

my heart will finally be in the middle—
not here, where I am now, scratching out
words early on a Saturday morning
after hearing the winds of night
sweeping over churchyard graves.

Confident and disciplined in your music,
delicate, often passive, in your life...
You were a superb mimic who could make
any role convincing. I would like to understand—

I who know only the extremes,
never the comfort of restraint, never
the solace of the middle. I seek it out
in places you inhabit, your music, your fear,
I will sing my own final solemn song:
I fear this earth will suffocate me;
I plead to have my body opened.
I do not want to be buried alive.

RINA TERRY

Beethoven Walks (Field of Sound)

I remember the day when I heard my last sound,
it was gentle, a soft tap on the window,
Looking up, I felt the seal close.
That was it, rain the only soldier at my farewell.
The same patter that began it all.

In Teplitz, the faces of villagers
gaze up at me like raisins, try to dismantle
and reconstruct who I am, plant a flag in my arm.
They say that I am not one for journey,
though I travelled for Mozart.

Each mile took me further from mother—
the earth pock-marked, the carriage rain-shuttered.
Full symphonies cramped my throat,
fields crowded with racket, white hot lilies
dampened by a fist of clouds.

I walk dirt paths, now, a farmer finding
wildflowers to cull.
I never thought to seek ballet in the arch of a tree,
melody worth memorizing in river's wander.
Everywhere full cups—on the table, by the door

the first time we sat together at the piano,
my shoulder learned by rote the smell of your skin.
All of a sudden I understood mathematics,
found a metronome in your laughter,
something to tap my hand against.

Everything too bright, loud in colour,
like focusing the eyes on a field of roses.
The world is a tapestry of elevation. I on top, looking down.
I chase echoes, copy notes on my skin,
open my mouth and awaken on the floor.

I am travelling, always, between the life of my eyes
and the journey of my eardrums, each sight brought back
to a workshop deep in the heart of me; I cut up and down hills,
light carried in buckets, to be forged into sound,
a choir in the fingers of one hand.

LARA BOZABALIAN

Biarritz

A lighthouse on a distant bluff
scraped its paddled light on the rough
stucco of a white hotel.
On a tasselled cushion sat a gilded bell
where a liveried porter's ancient mop
of hair lay across the counter top.
While we debated, he awoke.
Where a face had been, there was only smoke.
But we were tired and he had a key
that you received with more courtesy
than I had known of late.

Galleries in a double line
retreated into shadow where
you took your room and I mine
although it was the same repair.
You bathed and promptly went to bed
while I stepped out to clear my head.
I leaned against a gallery rail
and lit a cigarette and thought
of what had become of what we'd wrought.
A fountain plashing on the stones
of the court below gave out a groan
and I saw a woman, head in hands,
weep by an overhang of fronds.
I thought that I might intervene
but it wasn't clear that she was real,
at least in the normal way of things,
for it seemed that she was draped in wings
like Dürer's *Angel of Melancholy*
and wept for us and all our folly.

DONALD MCGRATH

boat talk

strange syntax
hard to hold
in the mouth
rolls hesitant
over refuged tongue,
spills out into sanctuary of
the Goulburn riverflats
languidly throwing
mirror-image of cicada'd gum

a heartbeat away
Christmas Island
holds court in
Flying Fish Cove
sweeps protest swiftly
under righteous surf—
stories stilled
one breath from asylum

and we pause in our day
to witness the truths
so carefully framed
in the 6 o'clock news

ROBYN BLACK

Borges at the Biblioteca Nacional

this voice that touches each thing to verify exactly where it stands
–Peter Boyle

Blindness my new notebook, blank pages
opening

inside me. My dark thoughts the ink
I lay down

for nobody to read. Blindness now
my country

of exile where all landscapes turn
inward;

every bird, bough, tree assumes
my name. I am

translating the history of darkness,
its shapeless

unnaming, its open mouth
closing

on silence. My ears grow blind,
blind my hands,

my arms. The overblown scent
of roses

becomes a woman I once knew.
A warm shaft

of sunlight now a half-forgotten
summer.

The ticking clock insists
I've taken

a wrong turn, losing myself
in the infinite

library. No matter. Like a bat
I find my way

by call and echo, each author's name
locates me

in relation to their book. Title
by call number

I find my way.

Note: Afflicted by blindness mid-life, Jorge Luis
Borges served as director of the Biblioteca Nacional
in Buenos Aires from 1955–1973.

JILLIAN PATTINSON

A Branch of Bees

I fiddled with the radio's static
boiling over *Moonlight Sonata*
as my father drove us up the mountain
to check on the hive. A turn
through the trees and there it was:
the valley's thick haze, the winding Fraser
a turn after that. He told me of the sturgeon
found in the furrow of a farmer's field
weeks after the river rose up its banks.

"Alive?"

"Yes."

"How?"

Up the road, his friend waved off dust
from his tennis whites. He leaned in. A laurel
leaf, pipe smoke. "A swarm is in the orchard."

His friend dipped a kerchief in kerosene,
snapped a silver lighter and blew oil-thick smoke
up the tree. "But they were calm," said my father.
He cut the buzzing branch.

As he churned, they churned.

I moved closer to his branch of bees
that trailed like a tattered flag as he walked
to the white stacks and lifted the red lid.
A bee disappeared into his black hair. Then more.
I yelled to be careful. He didn't flinch.

Later, while merging to the highway home,
I said it was a wonder he was stung
just once. He said the honey would be good.
I glanced over at his swollen eye
and thought of the sturgeon, if it had been
hooked often. And lived. And lived on.

JEFF STEUDEL

Breakfast at the Friar Arms

You say you'd like to move to St. Palendra
and kiss the stone we St. Palendrans kiss
on holy days on our elbows with a wick
burning in front of us at an altar. Well,
entering what looks like a badger hole
at the back of a fenced-off local cave,
you'd feel your rented helmet tapping
the underside of the Ralston Boulder,
named for one who preserved the site
by choking himself on strips of cloth
while his torturers were on ale break.
Once through, though, you'd relax.
Your eyes would adjust to a round
chamber banded with pink granite.
It'd be worth it, back at your hotel,
to say you'd received the blessing
as if it were your chance for fealty
to a toothless hag with a stone-axe
while a bearded furnace mechanic
conjured the names of fifty rebels
tethered to their ox-carts and hung
in pairs from trees along the roads
of St. Palendra—start and finish for
seditionists on their dirty hustings,
detested shire, blot on the imperial
shield, though nowadays promising
with our storm-watching weekends
and timeshare condos. What's that?
Your wife wants to tour the harbor?
Amble along the quay? I'll be here
if she should change her mind about
our discounted tour for barrow buffs
who contemplate a cottage on the bay.

PETER RICHARDSON

Bury

1. Bears

After his body was carried downstairs,
driven to the funeral parlor,
washed pure, shrouded, and we had
gazed on him there, his eyes weighted shut
with blue ceramic shards, we dreamwalked
our own living selves, stiff-shoed, jelly-
legged, swathed in the bristling fur of loss,
downtown for milkshakes. The villagers
drifted away like extras or ghosts and hushed
their tongues and hands, even when a wind
gusted, seething through the day's teeth,
puffing their hair into nests of twigs and curls,
brush and blossoms. They stayed gauzy slow,
eyes stuck in fear or awe on the family of bears
galumphing down the bricks,
reeking of fresh blood, graceful, growling,
gleaming dark claws and moving to the perfect
surreal grief that either renders hearts human
or is what unmakes them so.

2. Kaddish

After a long time, Papa died and we stood stiff
in the woods around the hole and lowered him down with ropes.
My brothers dug into the mound, flung dirt down
thud on the box until the sun sunk deep into the blue ridge.

I stood so still the sky went pink and drums and stones.
I looked down or up only, not at eyes, not at faces.
Clamped my teeth the way I do when I'm being strong.
What are roots but legs buried in the ground?

We carried his box through the trees and said Kaddish.
The words and the hum of the words, their rhythm,
their bodies held us, as arms, as rivers
thick with moss and silt bear you.

Bear you up as blood beats in the temple of the head,
though blood beats none in Papa's head,
who gave me life,
who turned it in his hands and made it this life.

MILLER OBERMAN

The Cactus Army

Look at a desert long enough, you might conclude
a desert is a desert because it is always dry.
But if you ask a cactus, it will tell you otherwise:

love and water are ubiquitous—
where there's water, lovers thrive.

The story goes the desert had no problem
with the lovers, until love turned them
into fountains. The desert had a fit
because the lovers got water on everything!

Shaking and wet, the lovers fell.
Where they fell, the clumsy things,
acts of love made clumps of mud.
To a desert, mud and love are no different.

So the desert hid the water by sucking it in.
It dried out all the lovers
and then, the desert exiled them.

A desert is a desert because it is always dry.
A desert has no lovers, no fountains turned on high.
But ask a cactus and it will tell you otherwise:

where there's water, lovers thrive—
where they thrive, water rolls down their backsides.

The story goes that it started with one cactus
then the army came into view—
this is how the desert knew
the lovers had returned.

This time, they were armed.

DIMITRA XIDOUS

Centipede

Clicked the light on. Shock!
centipede alone
sunning itself in the dark

LYNN SMITH

Children's Stories

The War was popular, with alluring cruelties:
at bedtimes, pressed, he might manage
some grim anecdote, small and
strangely lacking in heroics or apparent purpose:
the cold or some long dead soldier's rotten luck,
the terrible grinding of an engine
that promised death or
the Sten gun's many failings;
nothing any kid would ask for
and all of it given reluctantly.

But that head of his was full of stories
though we only got them later, told by
other mouths than his, mouths not stopped
in turn by reticence and earth:
the great sheds packed with tiny shoes,
the railheads and fences and him,
his weapons jammed and his tongue tied
while ghosts in legions, little groups, wagons
and rusty garments followed him down roads
and occupied the corridors he had to be in,
pleading in babels and when he woke
to smoke a sweat drenched cigarette,
lined by the bed, their fingers trembling,
reproaching him for lateness, for his failure
to fetch their children safely from the gates
of schools he couldn't name in streets he couldn't find,
in towns that tanks had ploughed away
and left to rot beneath the rain and failed harvests,
schools whose keys, in any case, were melted,
or crumbled in his fingers as they closed
around his nightly promises of rescue.

Meanwhile we dug garden camps, liberated Normandy,
fought hard at Arnhem, died over and again to overthrow Berlin
and made him join us in our victories, dragging at his sleeves
to make him come

until he sat and watched, fag on, tab end cupped for snipers
and commented on military technique
as you'd speak of something vain or sinful:
the forms of pride, perhaps,
or some vast gluttony.

PHILIP NUGENT

Cold Pastoral

In Athens, where your dentist might be named Dionysius
and the toothless widow in black hawking gardenias at Syntagma Square
goes by Aphrodite, the dead are comfortable.
They lounge against white pillars of cloud observing the transactions
of their descendants, whose lineaments (Attic nose, black hair, shoulders shrugging
at the immutability of fate) are so familiar, DNA linking the generations
like a decorative motif winding around a red-figure vase.
For storing food, amphora; drawing water, hydria; drinking wine, *kantharos*;
pouring libations, *lekythos*; carrying water for the bridal bath, *loutrophoros*.
In the old days all was order and ritual, even when it came to pottery,
the least vessel having its proper signification.
The dead like that too; they appreciate things staying
where they belong, people who remain in their familial villages,
countries that preserve their boundaries.

At Mycenae I palmed a four-thousand-year-old shard
of Yellow Minyan ware, typical of the Middle Helladic period
and of that location—a petty theft I do not regret. After all,
bits and pieces were everywhere, the soil a rubble of ancient crockery,
as though Clytemnestra had merely flung dishes at Agamemnon
when he came whistling home from the wars with pregnant Cassandra in tow
instead of murdering him in his bath, the location of which
is clearly indicated by the plumbing under those mighty walls
first described by Homer.

According to Pliny, portraiture was invented in Corinth
when a love-sick girl sketched her beloved's profile
from the silhouette he cast on a wall
and her father filled in the hazy outline with clay.
That father's role is as doubtful as his reputed name, Dibutades,
for what man seeks to immortalize
the bloke who stole his daughter's heart?
But I understand her impulse to trace shadows;
to record and hold what can never stay still.
We moderns never stay anywhere for long.
Though we long for stability we'll find it only
in the grave.

SUSAN GLICKMAN

Communion

He puts the dead in this tree, to keep them.
It has always been like this: Papa wanted it so. *Give
the idiot some farming hands, callous him up.
Just get him out of my sight.* So Mama gave
the seed, marked the plot in the bee-dripped yard
where the lilac bush bled goutts of scent
into his stuttered brain. That's when she showed him

the way to find wisdom: coal-rich loam broken
free of caked lumps into beds for songbirds
crushed in clumsy paws, carstruck mutts
and beetlerot. The fruit won't grow without the dead.
*We are all here, boy, in the ground. This is the Lord's hand,
the tree of life—you feed this soil, you feed the tree, the tree
feeds you.* When he dug his fingers down into earth, he heard
the fleabit kitten he had found sick and mewling
under the porch, breathless by morning and resting
beneath the roses. Mama had said it slept forever there,

but now he knew its tiny shell would grow
to petals filled with nightkeen sight
and sweetness. He would hold it again, take it
into him as he would have done Mama, only she fed
the hill grass in the county graveyard. He had lost
her kitchen-raw hands holding him through nights
that lit the blankness behind his eyes. He could not lose

the ones who filled his empty spot. Twelve years now,
and soon the smell of citrus would outyell
the lilacs, loaded down with the wormrich flesh
of presence. Papa was left, and fed his son
cracked knuckles and blood to stop the blubbing,
never wept and kept the fields flush with green.
There must have been many bodies there for Papa
to gorge himself so full of the wrath of heaven.

Before the orange flowers dropped and sun
plumped the bitter nubbins, he saved his father
for himself, swung a shovel to break free
the brain, and buried the mangled skull
tangled in roots. Now he waits for the day
the fruit is ripe, so he can rip the rind away
and eat and eat and eat until he knows the mind of God.

RACHEL LINDLEY

The Contortionist Speaks of Dislocation

The trick is not to care about connections. Then there's no pain when ligaments twist and the shoulder pops from its socket, when ribs accordion intercostals or heels bump against the base of the skull and toenails scrape skin from cheeks. The body is abandoned so clavicles can bend backwards and the spine can arch to carry crown to coccyx. Tendons forget and never know how to hold their brother bones. Just a light nudge can push their lax grip to anarchy. They slip away from woman into an avalanche of buckled scaffolding, a game of pick-up sticks, a car crumpled around the Pisa lean of a streetlight, a cherry stem knotted in a closed mouth, a crushed spider. The crowd cheers my collapse.

Once I was frozen. A shoebox under my bed holds photos of a girl who tensed between the steel of family on porch steps, stood stiff at the gate of a Catholic school with books mooring her to the cracked cement, and lay like a stone in the snow. Each shutter snap clipped the same command from the secret face behind it: capture a girl beaten into hands without fidgets and iron-tight braids. Nothing could be out of place. She is always out of place now. Each night before muscles coax flesh to fold inwards and cameras flash to catch this endless metamorphosis, a square of memory is tucked away between the skin and skintight suit. It lies below the left breast and counts the heartbeats of each change. I need it there, I need it after I let go, so the girl braced against picture clicks can remind this body where the bones belong.

RACHEL LINDLEY

Corpse

This cannot be called
death
death is too soft a word
it is warm and gentle
this is not gentle

He is unlike himself
he is withered
veined, sucked in
grey
no, grey is no good
for grey too has a softness
in grey there is light and dark
there is movement
in him there is none

He is hard
like stone
yet stone still holds warmth
if it has slept in the sun
there is no warmth in this sleep

This is the absence of light
this is cruelty
a slap
but not pain, for pain varies
this is a fish eye
this is neither love nor hate
but ambivalence
this is a hard cruel slap in the eye of a fish brought on by ambivalence
this cannot be called death
death is too soft a word

TONI GORDON

Coupon (or, Experiments in Suburban Necromancy)

Fifty cents off a bottle of my dad's favorite juice,
a cran-apple swill only he could stand to drink.
The scissors forget and the coupon is clipped
and my father is dead a year now come August.

When he was four days gone, I wept while the cat
licked the last of her food from the last paper plate
bought while he was alive. A lunatic's relic,
sold in bulk, precious as the final dispatch from
a burning city. I swam the symbolic depths
of postmortem paper goods
and wondered at the sheer weirdness of grief.

Because it is never the expected thing,
not the visit to his grave on his 83rd birthday
or the grace he'd likely not have said
had he lived to eat another Easter brunch.
It's the stolid march of the every day
that offends. The steady flow of ketchup, wine,
fabric softener. The new jar of moisturizer,
the eleven half-gallons of two-percent milk
bought, spoiled, dumped down the drain,
in spite of the fact that my father died horribly.
How can I explain that it's the second changing
of the kitchen light bulb that breaks the wound wide
open on an otherwise unremarkable Thursday afternoon?

It is this business of business as usual: this eating of olives,
this mopping of floors. This coupon, blank-faced
and black-bordered, cold as a Victorian mourning card
that reads "You will never buy Ocean Spray again."
And there, born of the purest inconsequence,
a space for ceremony opens at the local Kroger,
where I purchase cranberry cocktail at considerable savings.

Understand, it is never the expected thing.
Tonight it is fruit juice, thick with corn syrup and dyes,
and an old blue basin he used to dress greens.
Homely things gone holy; heartbreak writ small and plain.
I think of Ulysses, pouring out his tributes,
working through the rites, coaxing the blind seer
back from the cool quiet of the underworld.
I pour the bowl to brimming
that the dead might drink their fill.

LESLIE DANIEL BATTY

Dark Skin

I was an embryo in my mother's womb
When Night slipped in with her khol-pot and brush
And daubed me. A gift. Her blackness for my blackness.

I am Draupadi, so dark I appear blue. Krsna, they call me.
The other, he stole my colours and my name.
A fanatic fan. An impersonator.

As Kali, I rejoice by rolling in cremation ashes
And half-dried blood of those I slay,
Oils and creams that best condition my skin.

But I am Surpanaka, turned against my skin,
Become a delicate, wheatish creature to seduce
A northern prince, and he saw through me.

He cut off my nose and breasts. I curse him:
Suffer birth as a south Indian, a die-cotton Dravidian,
With this same disdain for your dark skin.

But I am Parvati. The myth they tell of me, how
I plunged in a thousand-year tapas to change my skin
From brown to beige, to seduce my dark lord

All over again. The skin that bears impressions, like a written page,
Of my travels through the worlds, riding close to the sun
On white mountains and burnt sea shores.

Why change it to look like some woman from a cloud-roofed country
Who lives in a tent of thick clothes?
A thousand years in a worm-hole cave under a mountain

Bleached my skin back to that of a womb-housed baby.
As to my lord of the dances, he was glad to see me.
Even with his three eyes, he's colour-blind.

ANITA SIVAKUMARAN

Davenport Cove

It must've been in a place as violently unholy as this
that Prometheus, punished by Zeus,
first learned to pity his own stubbornness
while a low-tide winter swell bullied the cliffs.

The men of lesser mythologies are punished
elsewhere, pick losing fights at the village bar,
swim pitchers and drive home to glory.
Their lives are as plain as the threepenny nails

skirting the lips of the lidded ferryboats
they crash with great effort into roadside graveyards.
What simple men know of stubbornness
couldn't fill a quatrain. The gods, even less.

TRAVIS MOSSOTTI

Day Out from the Dementia Ward

He hung between us
testing the ground at the estuary's
edge, the road-end where the ferry
used to dock; we stumbled off
on tide-wrack, lardy bones—
he counted some, nine 'straps'.
We turned back
at the 'jooniss'—grass perhaps, the links—
a sibilance was all he found,
each noun tried only once
then dropped:
an urchin shard,
a cockle come apart.

My father would have
given us the earth:
the holes in gorse, the whitening
heaps of gutweed, scurvygrass;
he puzzled over what was
friable, dried up:
sheen on sheep's crud, driftwood, wool;
a part-brick stamped with arcane words.

We broke the long ride home
to walk in sitka.
All we saw was ground:
sphagnum curding on a ditch-floor,
sparks of mica, puddles
ghosting into sand.
Our road—provisional—blurred with rush—
slunk to its terminus,
a rubble monument where lorries
must have backed,
a sunny rink of coltsfoot seed and chitin,
tiger beetles goaded by our feet
to running, flight and landing; running, flight.

SUSAN HOLLAND

Dead Sea

(a requiem for the Gulf of Mexico)

It is the image of solace ever in my mind; my deepest regions of understanding: all that lies beneath this clay facade, this flosferri blossoming. Each petal clanging to the floor, rusted memories washed up on your shore to arrive now here, your spiral formed tabernacle; my sanctuary bleeding rust—red where we pierced your side. I who have sung your splendor no words for you now no words

forgive

Can I regather these old recollections, scattered barnacle-cruised eroding on white sand like washed up barges, their kiln forged rib cages jutting up like some lost race of leviathan that once ruled the sea?

1. What of those summers meandering the old sea wall, catching ghost crabs by the light of fireflies in a jar? Papaw on the horizon fishing in low tide from the sandbars, his image elongated to strange proportions like the end of some old western movie at sun set. High stepping the surf to reach him, walking on water together, watching the tigersharks circling the stinking chum.
2. Dolphin Island, and Virginia just a toddler, bobbing in amber waves like some selkie washed up, head submerging trying to glimpse the 'merlmaids' she says swim here. Sara, naked, golden on the beach, laughing always laughing. Daniel and that blessed adhesiveness of brothers too long departed. The old Confederate fort, Walt Whitman wailing at its wall for wounds the salt won't heal. The sting of that jellyfish wrapped around my waist.

3. That long stretch of elastic city ever expanding, old things passing being made new. The elasticity of wayfaring nights stretched bare by sleeplessness, strange faces, strange bodies. That abandoned castle made desolate, where kids once came to play video games, race go-carts; amused for a season in this Zion of imagining. Now a graveyard of broken booze bottles, used heroin needles, graffiti art depicts the story of its fall. Some still come to seek its shelter, a place of rest in a sleepless city.

Enter the black clouds, the legions of daemons beneath the low regions of your eternity's deep roots; the womb that has carried me so long. I a primal babe among your boughs waiting on the limbs to birth black wings, hollowed bones to perceive of feathers, flight, shifts of wind. Lifted like shrouds, swift and elegant as night's descent. Await the climb—the fall—eternal as the earth, its law

forgive

*O Ariel O Ariel. There shall be heaviness and sorrow
your voice will whisper from the dust as the hungry who dream and awake
to find their soul still empty. How I would hold you yet you slip away.*

4. What of these days to come? Dolphins flocking southward to escape genocide. Black rain, dead fish on every wave, dead egrets slouching in black mangroves, black manatee rotting in the St. Marks river—the Mississippi. Black greed that wrings and squeezes every drop into barrels to fill their black economy.

This great harvest finally released. Is this not that great american dream—a sea of oil for the gathering?
and when that last whalesong resounds its lone aria over your black water and departs, what then?
No words for you still no words.

Can words restore this temple? Will time apply its healing balm? What is a thousand years? Where does hope abide?
Why this long solitude? As it has been so it will be. The circle folds into itself. We will be joined again at last.
A new beginning is only another circle round the sun. The Earth purifies all things. The Earth purifies all things.

JONATHAN CLARK

Delenda est Carthago

I too come from Carthage. I was there
as the city burned, as Scipio Africanus
came in from the sea—a bloody sunset,
a fiery night, six hundred years of city
sundered blood and rubble. Scipio
Africanus came in from the sea,
implacable with his legions, came in
from the sea implacable with his mission:
Carthage must be destroyed, must be
rendered void. Rome will have no rivals.
The ancient people, heirs of Tyre
and of Phoenicia, sold into slavery, those
that lived, or buried beneath the rubble.
A victory bloody and complete. I was there.

A victory bloody and complete. Carthage
must be destroyed. Citizens of Rome turned out
in force to cheer the murderous legions home.
A three day triumph through the city and Cato
vindicated. Carthage is no more. But Rome,
what of her, now master of the world?
The Senate in its celebration saw a future rich
with loot, its last rival gone. Instead it got
a hundred years of civil strife, of factions
fighting over African entrails. Assassinations,
riots and the death of the Republic.
I too come from Rome, I was there
in its martial glory and its slow civic
attrition born of triumph. I was there.

RON PRETTY

Devil's Pool

In the middle time, the White River ran
clear and free and fast.

The Tall People of the Osage lived freely their wandering ways close upon the earth.
For a time, they took their rest on the shores of the river keeping vigil
until the very last.

In the long years Devil's Spring welled up and spilled out a blue water fountain,
rippling sweet and cold and clean,
a gift of Earth to the Tall People.

In the last years the dam sprang up high and hard pushing power
thundering into the hills
for those who might find fortunes in the new time
while casting powerlessness
over those who would live without it.

The Ozark moon gave witness to that first Night as Devil's Spring and the White River
rolled upon each other,
each becoming one with Table Rock.

The Tall People called to the waters of the deep Spring for a cup
to quench their thirst.
But the waters of new-born Long Creek lay still and warm,
no longer sweet nor cold nor clean.

They called to the spirit of the Pool.
"Let the deep waters rise up."
But the spirit slept and the waters did not stir.

The Tall People looked upon the water where the Pool lay deep in darkness,
their reflections becoming shadows,
the shadows becoming smoke,
the smoke drifting higher to evanesce, becoming nothing.

The Tall People pass by here no more...

From the bridge perched high above Devil's Pool,

“minicapi mahetuya,”
I frame a picture in my mind’s eye.

The green leaves of the trees hold tight against the rising bluffs,
trapping close the water in the glade,
a living border under an Ozark sky so blue.

In my picture there is no memory of the Tall People or their deep blue Spring.

Yet, here it is that I choose to take my rest
gathering comfort from the view.

JAMES THOMAS WILLS

Ditch-Digger

Robin song rolled over the cloven red-orange clay, but I did not dread this first robin of the day. He cocked his head. Cheerio, I said. *Cheeriup*, he burst,

all tarsus and toe clutch on his fence slat perch. Thigh-deep in the earth I dredged half a worm in the dirt, swatted gnats, tossed worm half to the fence. I edged

my ditch deeper with shovel and pickaxe, paused to free what I had cleaved. Chin on hand, hand on hand on pickaxe butt, I squinted in the bleached-

out light, through the air's humid glare. *Cheerily cheerio*. Chest heave and sweat roll. *Peek-and-tut, peek-and-tut* he blared. *Peak-and-tuck, teak-and-puck* we dueted

as the sky seemed to fill with spread-out wings, the sun cloaked in feathers. I kept digging and singing to that red-red breast, that yellow beak. Together

we weathered the pings. Water filled the ditch, shoveled dirt leveled to mud. This far-flung fortune is what we build, friend. Out of flash song. Out of flood.

MATTHEW HITTINGER

The Dog-Eaters

In the Philippines, drunkenness is often associated with the consumption of dog meat.

Drunks! Dog-eaters!
We are never brave enough
For these whispered curses;
We merely steer clear
Of them in this tight-knit
Town and swear in secret.
Each night they gather
Under dark awnings
Of a street-corner store,
Drink like thirsty reptiles.
Not the old folks nor nubile
Women escape their torsos
Exposed, the shadows of their
Tattoos: Christ with a crown of thorns,
Or a pair of feral snakes.
They surprise passers-by
And ask for small change,
All for alcohol and victuals,
The broken strings of their
Guitars, or else threaten
Some crime or bodily harm.
We suspect them of something
Just as forbidden,
Devourers of what might as well
Be their children:
What else could keep them
Going, night in, night out,
Under the influence of gin,
With audacity so insolent?
This secret fuel gives them
Fire, words in the night
That will consume us all.
In the silence of vespers,
They sing and preside like

Exterminating angels,
Their words slithering
Out of the deepest corners,
And more terrifying
Than the wildest rumor,
Recount our darkest secrets.

NOLI MANAIG

Domestic Violence

The way you warm up the coffee cup first, for example,
before serving me.

We are talking about the movie we saw last night,
specifically the scene where the mother
throws a TV down a flight of stairs
trying to kill her daughter, and then stomps back
to watch TV, only there isn't any.

Isn't that just like us? I want to say,
and you'll say What? Of course not.

Because literally we don't even have a real TV,
just the DVD hook-up, and no one throws things
except words sometimes. Which can hurt like hell,
as we all know, but still.

Now you're bending the E string on the guitar watching to see
if I get what you mean by the music,
when all I want is for you to fill this unfillable
hole in me.

But you won't. So pretend it's later. Pretend
I never said anything. I'm down on my knees, in the yard,
digging bunchgrass out of the roses.
The weeds hang on by tough white threads; everything alive
wants to stake its claim. Inside the house
you're working, composing. I said I'd protect your solitude

if it killed me, and sometimes I think it will,
but these are the promises we make when love has its way with us,
when it throws us down the stairs of our own will
and watches us stagger away bruised but hopeful
into the new world.

ALISON LUTERMAN

Driving to Children's

On the road out of Guelph. Black. In the back,
he's belted in the carseat, choked, rigid, then slack.
You sit with him, sing Wheels on The Bus.
The snow comes down. What is it with us?
That pain is a kind of unity? Rearview mirror:
lights and your faces, in love. I want to stop the car,
walk off into the forest, and come out starving, pure,
with a cure. But the thought doesn't last. I drive
knowing that I took my chance. I have nothing else.
And so we go to another hopeless wilderness.
I hate this sound: his lungs on a tether. Stopcock tongue.
The cabin light on in case he goes blue.
Where do we find our saviour? Is he two,
capable of visions, of my looking at you
when all the pediatric neurologists are asleep
and seeing the manger light seep
into your cast-out eyes? Do not look at me! And in his stupor know
just what I needed? The wilderness arrives,
or we to it. Give me prophecy. He is alive.

SHANE NEILSON

The Earth Moves and Bright

Hold on, the mother sings to herself
in the rain, holding her infant child
above the floodwaters. Hold on,
the orphan who sleeps standing up
will not let go of her doll. For one
hundred and one days they've been
waiting for the toxic waters to release
the souls of their loved ones. For one
hundred and one days they've been
praying for the children left behind.

*We are a prehensile species, holding onto our children:
mothers giving birth in trees, remembering the lessons
of our simian ancestors, mothers holding on through
earthquake, hurricane and plague, when the earth
moves and bright angels, their bones bleached white,
the colour of mourning, fall through the cracks.*

Now, after one hundred and one days,
the trees are receiving the voices of
souls come back. Does water polluted
by death without blessings, *le dernier
priye*, release the voices of angels or devils?
Who is it that speaks when the wind of
savage gods whispers in leaves watered
by innocent blood? Do not question the
mothers and children with the world in their
hands, just praise them for holding on.

LINDA ROGERS

Earthquake Light

March 11, 2011

Earlier tonight an owl nailed the insomniac white hen.
She'd fluttered up onto a fence post to peer at the moonlight,
to meditate in her usual way on the sadness of the world

and perhaps the hundreds of vanished eggs of her long life here.
I was watching from the porch and thinking she ought not to be
where she was, and then she wasn't, but taken up, a white hankie

diminishing in the east, one the owl would not ever drop.
Now an hour after, the new night wind spins up a leghorn ghost
of her fallen feathers under the moon and along the meadow grass:

corpse candle, friar's lantern, will-o'-the-wisp chicken soul
dragging its way toward me, that I might acknowledge her loss
and her generosity, and wonder again about her longstanding

inability to sleep on certain nights. There are sky lights
beyond our understanding and dogs whose work it is to scent
the cancer no instrument can see. On the nights she could not sleep,

the hen Cassandra Blue perched herself with clear view to the east
and studied the sky, every two seconds canting her head a few degrees
one way or the other. What she saw or if she saw it I cannot say,

though it seemed that something always somewhere was about to go
badly wrong. Then again, it always is. Now there's a swirl
of wind in the meadow, spinning three or four final white feathers

west to east across it, and there's a coyote come foolishly out
into the open, hypnotized by feather flicker, or scent, then seeing
by moonlight the too-blue shimmer of my eyes, and running for its life.

ROBERT WRIGLEY

An Embarrassment of Riches

I

Our first full day in Zambia, a family in an old oil-burning Beetle called to welcome us to town. While the grown-ups talked, I opened crates

and boxes: found a pile of Marvel Comics, scale model die-cast toys, the Field Commander Action Man with life-like hair and gripping hands

I'd got for Christmas. The shoeless, wide-eyed neighbour boys stared openly, stood mesmerized, as if suddenly exposed to works of alien

pornography, or posing in an amateur tableau evoking Sodom, Lot's defiant wife. My new friends left with borrowed Beans, dog-eared

Famous Five adventure books, a stack of Captain Britain weeklies—said they'd pay me back. That night I slept uncovered, left the light

on in the hall—awoke to a cacophony of crickets, croaking frogs. In the shadows, tailless geckos moved sure-footed on the walls.

II

Food shortages were commonplace. Rhodesia cut off milk and meat, blocked the open trade of cocoa beans, preserves and packaged sweets.

Cars were much the same—my father searched for weeks to find an old estate, bought a third-hand Morris Minor crank start off of Jimmy Crabb,

a Scotsman fond of crimplene, garish stay-prest slacks—short-sleeved shirts and belted jackets in the style of early African explorers. Along

with outsized hedgehog flies and bees came painted locusts, mixed varieties of lizard, praying mantids, raids of army ants—our garden

was a lush and unspoiled paradise of sub-Saharan fauna flanked on every side by cyclone fencing topped with razor wire. A neighbour told my father

that the local Bemba children often shimmied underneath to steal ripe fruit—
claimed he kept a rifle in the kitchen, said it put the wind up thieving munts.

III

The motionless agamas found on rooftops, wide-trunked mango trees
and flowering acacias often plagued me in my dreams, freed fight-or-flight
anxieties, released inchoate feelings of aversion, fear, hostility. Blue-throated
alpha-males would bob their heads aggressively, engage in combat—use
their armour-piercing tails as deadly weapons. When chased they reached
alarming speeds. The one I chance-encountered after running to retrieve
an errant cricket ball was monstrous—hissed like a corn snake, made
my muscles seize. Though charmed, I kept my wits and backed up slowly,
called for the garden boy in Bantu—found him underneath the shade trees
rubbing wax on our estate. Once murdered the agama lost its colour, left no
ornament to decorate its death—just lay there flattened in the dust. We left
it belly up, went in—ate pickled beets and tinned ham sandwiches for lunch.

PHILLIP CRYMBLE

The Etymology of Freedom

when stars hang from the ceilings of rooms full of books

“Stars,” the infant says, looking up.
She can almost hold this small
constellation in her hands—libra,
the seventh sign, balanced between
virgo and scorpio. She lives in a
house without walls, stacks of books
that reach from here to never, the sky
open, revealing the biggest screen
ever imagined, a portal for every
pixel of wisdom curious children
discover in the binary universe.

*She stands on the edge of the world, her feet in the ocean
that divides continents, and, in every city and village on
this side of the mountain high enough, the valley low enough,
the river wide enough, the world is her library, a word made
available when bark first peeled off the tree of knowledge.*

On the far side of the world, other
children reach for the same stars,
repeating their own words, *seba*, in
Egyptian, *setareh* in Farsi. The sky is
their limit, even when the ancient
street of book-sellers runs with blood,
even when the library at Alexandria
burns again. The words for love and
liberty, bound at their roots, most
beautifully in K indertotenlieder, songs
for the love of children drawn to justice,
the small arrangement of stars in the
Southern Hemisphere, remain as
steadfast as the fire that gives us the
words that define civilization: library,
liberty, enlightenment, libido. These
are the lights that can't be turned off,

morning or evening on both sides of
the world. In rooms without ceilings
and walls made of bark peeled from
trees in the Rainforest and Elsewhere,
it is their human right to learn that
the etymology of freedom is reaching
up to touch stars that never burn out.

LINDA ROGERS

Four Trees

As you narrow your eyes and focus
I follow the line of your sight
to the prospect of order before us:

four trees in equipoise. The thrust
of it—symmetrical, plumb—excites
you. I narrow my eyes and focus

on colour, nonplussed
by this arboreal (your favourite)
prospect of order. Before us

were water-lilies—all blooming fuss
and clutter—but right
now you'd rather all eyes refocused

on this long-extinct border—this locus
amoenus, you call it (lost overnight
on a prospector's orders). Before us,

I say, the proof of disorder—life on the cusp
of loss. You save that fight
for later, and narrow your eyes. You focus:
the prospect of order before us.

DONALD GIVANS

Fusion

a man of science
my uncle Babu views the world in black
and white
a distinction drawn early on

cackling crone cousins compare
my mother to her newborn brother
she so fair—imagine! golden hair? The Other
regrettably dark

no wonder he believed the West
was winning
deserted that boiling point of no return
for this freezing one

yet now he chases colour
for purity's sake
insistent that we speak a mothertongue
that mother hardly speaks
british black magic

was it the sudden
drop in temperature or the slow
freezing out by those already here
that triggered this reaction
shifting him, and them, substantially?
or did the coldness merely
congeal in all an elemental rigidity?

a radical then, as now
only now he clings to roots that once
wrapped him too tightly
home is frozen in his memory
he forgets that colour matters
there, as here
that our people journeyed there
as here
that his children feel as uncertain there as here

that a freezing point is also a melting
place where fusion happens

AMINA DANIAL

The Garbage Truck Trashed the Sunflower

It had just overtaken the fence, springing
colour over the grey-flecked cedar boards
that enclosed the small garden and yard.

I imagine its big head hit with a thwunk
on the lane of compacted gravel and dirt.
Of course, nobody heard it, and the chances

are nobody saw what were the pincer-like
hydraulic arms side-swiping the tall stalk
during the dust-up of high-pitched stops

and starts forking from bin to bin. I don't
blame the driver—there isn't much time
to collect all that garbage. What's the life

of one sunflower? Sure, I planted it there
and it grew heavy-headed until it leaned out
into the lane a little, but I didn't want to tie it

to the fence. Besides, a magnum opus of sun-
flower centres the yard like the tuba's high
note blasting the brightest yellow of the year.

Its six-foot stalk stands straight against gravity,
but its hunched neck bends as if it'll break
under the weight of its seedless head peering

onto sweet peas, salad blooms and the carrot
leaves that dance in the gentle breeze. For some
time now, carbon has questioned many things

green. Though the end is certain, the sun will
only shine through the spindles of red maple
that way this time. The fractured light will stay

on the gold band of petals like fire licks only
so long. If I look long enough, I feel happy,
even laugh. And the light has changed already.

JEFF STEUDEL

Gilt

I am who he chose
my angel he said
and caressed my boy cheek

I am who stood for days
in the winter of Tuscany

I am who he dressed and left bare
running stained fingers through curls
the colour of heaven's fire
a rage that drowns the mists of hell

I am who is meant to surprise
with empty eyes fixed
on unseen distance
wrapped in gold and hushed red

I am who he plucked
from my mother's breast
my angel he said

I am who he lost his mind over
recreating paradise
with wings of wax and goose feathers

I am who knew truth is richer
than holy imaginings
he called me his angel

I am who he would paint
the one form angelic
finger skyward suggestive
glory here

I am the one, poser immortal
rapture's gift to gilt-edged canvas

It is all gold and
I am captured in oils

RUTH E. WALKER

Glosa for Loss

*Where my white nights of those years whisper
About some love grand and mysterious
And everything glows like mother of pearl and jasper
Though the source of that light also is mysterious*
—Robert Pinsky, “Akhmatova’s Summer Garden”

Black ribs of wreck lie in the sand at Sevastopol,
gulls peck at the pale gray barnacles.

Ghosts rise from the tidepools, crabs clinging
to their toes, reeds tangled in their hair and
everywhere the scent of seaweed and moon.
The dead leave no footprints in the sand only a blister

a bruise in the shadows as they beckon us back
to the sea. We are made mostly of water, the gleam

of pearl is a mother’s memory—I miss her
where the white nights of those years whisper

of loss, of a time when I was young and green,
and the garden in its prime and vigorous.

I imagine the peonies and poppies, night blooming
stock that spilled a scent of unbearable

memories, the pot of roses I took
to the cemetery, red and luxurious

against the wall in the fading sun light.
Ancient oak trees shade the dead

resting there, quiet, no longer furious
about some love grand and mysterious.

The tombstones are old, pockmarked
and crumbling, overgrown with moss.

Hard to decipher who lies there, enemies
or friends, husbands or lovers,

their kisses and quarrels are silenced.
They will lie in peace until after

the last trumpet rouses them to follow
the procession to the doorway of the palace

where light enters halls of marble and alabaster
and everything glows like mother of pearl and jasper.

Reflections of the Hermitage and its rooms
of turquoise, amber and jade

glowing on the banks of the Neva. I remember
the long white nights, how the still waters

of the canals drift under bridges bordered
in gold—beautiful, decadent, luxurious.

Shades hover, benign, beckoning
towards the water

where there hangs an aura that's luminous
though the source of that light also is mysterious.

MARGARET MALLOCH ZIELINSKI

Grandma was a Tea Kettle in the Kitchen

Grandma was a tea kettle in the kitchen. The tunes of hymns puffed through the rift of her lips—a whistling soprano vibrato. The sound scattered all through the kitchen air. It inflated the walls. The notes navigated the steep climb upstairs and down. Over time her cheeks began to swell with something other than those notes. And, eventually came the day she lost my name, or my face escaped from her words.

How

do

faces

wander

off?

Her lips could no longer hold these strange notes that had entangled the old hymns. They began to billow from her easing cheeks. That composition, like all song, diffused into the air.

ANDREW J. KERBEL

The Grasshoppers' Silence

Listen to the story the prisoner's wife
hears in the Bengali darkness: the
one he'd told her about a grasshopper
he'd caught in his sweep net at dusk
and taken home in a glass jar with
breathing holes punched in the lid.

*"Why do boys catch insects?" she'd asked,
and he'd answered: "Because they are lonely."*

He told her the alarmed grasshopper
fiddled, rubbing its leg against its
belly. In Bangladesh, as in China,
ancient violins have one string; and
they sing in minor keys. "Why is their
music so sad?" she asked him, even
though she already knew the answer.

"Their music is sad because grasshoppers are sad."

In Bangladesh, unfaithful women are
called "grasshoppers," because the
adulteresses jump from leaf to leaf
in monsoon swamps. "Don't ever leave
me," her husband had ordered his
captive insect, pulling off one of its
legs before he made it a suit of rags.

"Did it ever sing after that?" she'd asked.

His wife was a curious woman who'd
gazed past the Chittagong Hills to praise
the sunrise, its clamorous golds and
vermilions. "Don't you ever leave me,"
he'd said to her every time she opened
a book or looked out the window, her
eyes astonished as water lilies opening

to the first light of dawn. And that one last time, “You left me,” tearing out her eyes and leaving them both alone in the dark—her in a room without windows and him in the prison he’d made for himself, listening to the grasshoppers’ silence.

LINDA ROGERS

Grateful

The sun's maid comes out to play
in the garden of our futures

with my son who is autistic.
He plays with her. Our son's maid

teases him in our garden, darts him in
and out her shadows; trees make shapes

on his face, anchor him in
and out of shadows, push tears

from the backs to the fronts of our eyes.
I don't release them,

only released them once, when he was new-born.
Now I, well, we, my wife and I

are grateful for him,
grateful for the sun's maid, our son's maid.

NOEL KING

Guglujom (*goog-lou-yom*)

Google is conjugated in Polish:
they're googling, they googled it.

Family friends say their kids
don't know what to do with their kids.

If the baby pukes or sneezes,
they Google it.

High school English teacher argues
that Elie Wiesel is dead.

I shook his hand two months ago,
but she says it's true, it's what she taught her class.

She reminisces the days when iPhones
didn't have a seat at Christmas dinner,

when Google didn't solve debates,
when it wasn't conjugated in Polish.

LIZY MOSTOWSKI

Heading Home

Bundled for the slog, we scuff at slush
and think of heated places. Grains of grit
scattered for traction wheedle under tongues,
tormenting feet. We gripe and dream the boot
turned upside down and shaken.

I am trudging a well-worn rut
between grey banks. My stride's a kind of twitch.
I watch the boots ahead for path and pace.

I will board a city bus, its windows made
opaque by grime. Shadows of poles and wires
cross its length, backlit, players on a screen
of crusted silt and salt, their simple scene
perpetuated till the light expires.

PETER NORMAN

HeLa's Cells*

after I died, leavin' five babies
Doctor took some of my cancer skin, sliced it thin
as spirit, *got cultured*, they say such little bits of me
living immortal in saintly sterile white labs
big as cathedrals

holy heaven's a freezer. must be so, though I been hot as hell
as well, what with curing polio, HIV, HPV and all those other diseases
traveling to space even (me! who'd only been to Baltimore)

testing time, always testing: tubes, pipettes, agar plates
but oh, the pain, their litanies
eternities

hurt more than radiation, the poisons and top secret, privately-funded
experimental cloning yet I've been slowly makin' connections:
everytime you gets—*no, get*—a vaccine, I spread out
everywhere, in air, in Russia etcetera
and I'm learning from you, what else to do, I listen

close to everyone & thank god for osmosis
but I'm no goddess as some say
for if I was I'd shout out now:

other than the weight
of sleepin' babes in arms
only one thing She be missin' these
sixty years on, I'd tell 'em if I could:
Henrietta Lacks oblivion

*Henrietta Lacks was a poor Southern tobacco farmer who, in 1951, sought treatment for cervical cancer at the Johns Hopkins medical centre in the U.S.A. Without her knowledge or permission, doctors took samples of her malignant tumour cells, successfully grew them in cultures and distributed them worldwide for research purposes. It's estimated that the number of "HeLa" cells bought and sold for billions

of dollars over more than 60 years could circle the earth three times. When Henrietta died at the age of 31, she left five children, many of whom cannot afford health benefits. This ekphrastic poem, the first in a series based on Henrietta's story, was inspired by Rebecca Skloot's book, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, Random House, 2010.

LM ROCHEFORT

Hibernation

An aluminum losing brightness a bird
suddenly wipes away the light flying towards
an old woman greets herself at her end
herd of hearts wedged under grey pants
and the huge hole behind the setting
I hide it from everyone
a ball in the space-white
an interruption.....a
joy..... is heard
in the middle of a lost-deep space
everyone hibernates

An apparition closes on another
and again on another...
no one cares
I transform into a plastic toy
a society within bubbles
I am not yet alone
I became a line
an eye a whole
a gap non-organized
everyone is in deep hibernation

'this is your abacus these are your eyes
everything is ready for you
you can start walking now'

one twooo three... I can wake up
I can close the eyes of all given slowness
slowness and convenient silence

I am now harmless as your scentless plants.
The difficult image of the curtain
withdraws into solitude
when I flourish
I leave.

ELIF SEZEN

The History Test

This teacher flirts. You were warned.

You don't mind, he doesn't go near
you

The guys all hate it, jealous.

He talks tough, walks macho, gels his hair,

Boasts of past carnal conquests,

You're entertained.

He's certainly more engaging than the book

Dull black cover, frayed spine, tiny gold words

The uninspired title. Inside is no better

Outdated, faded, a biased History that stops
at the 80s

You've already studied it and you know there's nothing in there for you

To learn from the past. From these ageing pages, chapped and
impotent

Because nothing ever changes. Your peers know too; they study the clock, awaiting history's end.

It's afternoon, the shutters clenched, and the room awash in indolence.

The teacher's full of energy. Consider what history you've learned, he booms. Wake up.

Alright. Uh. Achilles. Julius Caesar. Henry the 8th. Hitler. Yawns.

He says, can we identify the most persecuted, downtrodden social group in history?

No hands raised. Stupid question. Everyone gets screwed at some point. Even the Americans.

It's still happening. Um. Darfur?

It's half the class.
The Jews? Not a bad guess because half the class is Jewish.
No, not the Jews.
Blacks. Asians. Haitians? Gays?
What the fuck people, come on. Think of everything you've studied.
We don't know. It's pissing us off, too. Finally
Women.
Women? Shame and the clock forgotten.
Women. Easily the most abused social group in history to this very day. Everyone's history, everywhere.
Everywhere? I flicked through a few pages of my history.
He sees, says, you won't find it in the book.
I stop. He says, be careful of the book.

But how will I study?
Six years later I remember that conversation more vividly than anything
out of the textbook. It never came up again on official tests, but it was
One hell of a history lesson.
Lucky I got it at all. Both a lesson and
The only History Test I ever failed.

ALICE ABRACEN

The Infinite Library

There's a man climbing the book stacks, all he's read behind and beneath him, part now of the firmament on which he balances his ladder. He has been a long time climbing, reading as he goes. He remembers it all, no need to down-climb, backtrack, reread. Long as his years of climbing, his recollection of all he's read, hands, eyes and feet all fluency, economy; deft and steady his ascent. He keeps to hard-bound literature. Anthologies and well-read authors make the soundest steps. From time to time he stumbles upon a slim volume of obscure origin, whose weight belies the name. These he carries with him, letting go only when the burden of whispers buckles his legs, sending a tremor through the edifice. Like feathers they drift into darkness, no echo returning to tell of the fall. Even as he climbs, reads, climbs, the stacks grow taller, yet he never tires, each shelf firing his attempt at the next. No lack of oxygen in the bookish air and ever the chance of a fresh breath, something not quite new but sharp enough to raise a gasp, release a sigh. Quiet as a dust mote circulating in a light shaft between the towering stacks he climbs, directed by the voice of every author, accompanied by every character. All his life, it seems, he has been climbing, paragraph by paragraph, page upon page, book stacks growing ahead and behind. Never enough time, never enough light for so much yet unread. Still he climbs, having come so far, unsure now of the way down, knowing how deep the silence that greets the fall.

JILLIAN PATTINSON

Its Shine and Struggle

The river is thick with whale-herded salmon;
eagle scoops bright coho, slow swoops
his heavy cargo low into the sheltering firs.

I fish from estuary banks stitched in sea grass—
arm sweep, wrist-flick, glint-whip of the line.
Sudden bite of a Silver, quickened breath

and hauled-in rod, leaping fish sun-lit.
Its shine and struggle. I beach its death
on an altar of stones and kneel,

drop heavy rock and still its foil eye,
tug hook from pleading mouth,
stroke the glossy belly, poise the gutting knife,

slit clean from tail to top,
spill pink milt sacs smooth as custard—
this male's procreative silk—

slice free the delicate gill, geisha fan,
plum-red; tug out the organs,
his finned heart.

I grate my thumbnail along his spine,
loose the jellied blood
from firm-boned flesh, sluice

in our shared river and watch
the long dark threads
spin out with the sighing tide.

Far at sea the trawlers
scour the ocean floor,
drag the last blind fish from its cave.

CYNTHIA WOODMAN KERKHAM

Jackie Gleason

My father was always angling, always trying to get something for nothing or something for cheap. At restaurants he'd sneak airplane bottles of booze in his trouser pockets, order a Coke, and when the waitress had her back turned, he'd spike his drink with rum. A relationship with his daughter, which he didn't particularly want, could be turned into a maid service for twenty dollars a week. He paid me to clean his one-bedroom apartment—the white rundown building with the outdoor pool beside Whiteoaks Mall. It was across the city from where I lived and took an hour by bus to get there after school. There was a Hasty Market beside the building, and I would buy a bag of sour cream and onion chips before letting myself into his apartment. The place was easy to clean; I just had to vacuum, change his sheets, dust, and scrub the bathroom. Having recently left the woman he'd left my mother for, my father didn't have very much in the way of worldly possessions. All furniture was utilitarian: a bed, a couch, an end table, a kitchen table, chairs. There was no art on the wall, no books. Everything was beige. The only trace of an interest was the golf magazines in the bathroom and the tees and balls absentmindedly left on his dresser top with his pocket change. While I cleaned, he made spaghetti or ordered pizza. He'd say, I'm not going to ask you about school and then he didn't bother to ask me anything at all. We ate side-by-side on the couch watching *The Andy Griffith Show* then *The Honey-mooners* on his old black and white TV. The shows made him laugh until tears formed in his eyes. But I wasn't laughing, so he'd explain each joke after it was delivered, trying to make me see Jackie Gleason's god-damn genius, his bloody brilliance.

KATHRYN MOCKLER

Jetsam, Detritus and the Gaps

I've been thinking about lexical gaps:
those important things that don't have words.
The name for not being able to smell cake any longer
in the dark bedroom just after your sixth birthday or
when you feel something so strongly it seems
like you must be projecting that feeling outwards

onto everyone around you. Just lately I've been thinking
about lexical gaps, that word for when you're reaching
for a word. But perhaps it's the reaching that matters,
not the word itself. When you find a lexical gap
it means you're searching past what you can name
into the room that smells like cabbage and fireplaces,

the smell that makes you feel, or into the sewing
box filled with name tapes belonging
to dead people. Is there a word for the pieces the dead
leave behind them, the drawings and shopping lists
and books and detritus? Is there a word for that moment when
the lukewarm water you bought at the beach finally

quenches your thirst? It would be wrong to say
the really important things don't have names,
because, here, I could name them. I could give
you a list. But when you're reaching, holding the
sewing box, longing for a word, it's important too.
It means you're looking. So look.

ROSAMUND TAYLOR

Just So Story

This is what we did: packed the whole family into a compact car and drove three days through the mountains just so my father could pet a dog; so he could reach out from the wheelchair he's belted into with a bolted belt, and pet the dog we brought into this building that will be both blessing and curse to him if it's the last home he knows. They've sedated him pretty well, and we can hardly hear his voice. It's the voice of a tiny being wandering in the catacombs of his bones. In its smallness, it sounds the way I imagine the voice of hope aching from within the chest after Pandora slammed down the lid. Once the door was opened, all hope wanted was an even break, the chance for as much life as all the troubles were going to get. He didn't give up, my dad, and he can still joke that the drool that falls from his lips makes him most like the dog among us all. And though my mother hates it, I love the story of his escape from the ward. He's suffering from short-term memory loss, but he's as clever as he ever was. He watched the visitors and the staff key in the code to open the door until he got it from afar. But by the time he wheeled himself over to the keypad, he'd forgot. Finally he just bulled his way out one day when the door opened. He got out of the chair—because he could still walk back then—and he pushed past someone's guest, and he was gone. It took them twenty minutes to figure that he'd made it outside, and he was caught in the street by a nurse who chased him down the sidewalk pushing a wheelchair and calling as she pushed, "Ralph! Come back! Come back!" With his family around him now, Ralph's fingers curl through the pleasing fur of my dog's neck like a magician passing a coin across his knuckles. One of the staff at the Home stops and takes a snapshot, which she will send to us when we get back to our place. We've driven three days over the mountains for this, and it is the picture worth a thousand clicks.

RICHARD HARRISON

The Kenmare Occurrences

My Dublin betters summoned me for this:
A magic-lantern show, an Irish 'Lourdes'.
For this, my Roman tailor said goodbye,
And I was sent from all that I held dear.
Obedient, exiled, kissed and on my way,
'Appointed to Kenmare'.
They told me I was needed there
To regulate the faithful in their frenzy,
The Marian hysteria of those girls.

'Tell his Lordship what you saw',
They sent me back for this!
'I seen the Virgin Mary fourteen times',
This tribal, voodoo nonsense.

What is worse,
Those oafish men colluded with the peasants,
Like medieval friars intent on shrines
And relics, splinters of the holy cross.
Shambolic, servile, stiff-necked, balding priests,
Temperance-mongering fantasists.
I must contain myself.

I longed for Rome, the sunny, marble refuge
From all this, the avenues and incense-laden glory
I'd loved and almost owned, until that Cardinal
Had Judas-kissed my cheek and sent me back
As Bishop to that ancient, stagnant place,
That pagan, rural wilderness and kingdom
Of the dull and superstitious.

That day, that very day when I set forth
In 1964 from Rome,
To take possession of my dismal See,
The nuns were grooming children for my reverence,
And 'fairest flowers'— those Marian apparitions—
Began to bloom.

I could not cut them down.
I could not irrigate the sludge and sand
Of those dark minds with Roman springs,
And who was I to stem the supernatural?
The Virgin sighted in the windy fields,
Or plaster statues said to move at night:
How could I vouch for these occurrences
Or even understand them, try as I might?

HARRY WHITE

Kibbutz Hazorea

On days off we change colours
on Haifa's Carmel beach;
final resting place of the Mediterranean.
We gamble with ear-marked cards,
throw down 10 shekel bills for large
mixed drinks of fruit and milk
and compare Hebrew expressions
culled from restaurant napkins and friendly Kibbutzniks.
We watch the waves crawl to sand on torn knees;
exhausted from splashing with Spanish fleets,
diving under French bathers' legs,
being kicked by Italy's boot, sliced to shreds by Greek islands,
and trying to pass a floating wall of Istanbul trade ships.

I'm sitting to the side of the group
a guitar protruding from my hip,
Pia's lips curling around the edges of my song.
Grooves line her brow. There is a trench between
her upper lip and nose that deepens when she eats.
The pale skin under her eyes always has a veiny blue hue.
In short, I'm in love.

Pia, why do you have a boyfriend tucked away back home
like a bookmark to your past?
The size of Canada makes me shiver
as I rest on this sliver of a country.
An invisible tug of responsibilities back home
is everyone's elephant on the beach.
The sea breeze reeks of hummus, cheap vodka.
Behind Pia's shoulder, the sun topples.

JOSHUA LEVY

The Kingfisher

For Maureen Harris

And so each bird throws the idea of herself
 ahead of herself, up the river—
A line of spiritual thought without a sinker—
And flies after it. As if the actual could ever hope to reel the ideal in. But so it is
That awareness of the azure kingfisher—a dark electricity, a plump
Trim elegance of intent—reaches you on the riverbank
 that last warm Sunday of autumn, split seconds
Before the bird; so that when she passes you at light speed, her name
 is already a bright blue phrase on your tongue, is already
 the unresolved cadence of your second self.

MARK TREDINNICK

Last Dance

Some of them up-cycled, value added,
re-purposed: new ways to describe
lamb dressed as mutton, old girls with
short skirts and skin pulled back so
they never stop smiling, mouths open
wide as Wild Woman, the virago who
swallows sunlight and stolen kids.

In Japan, they nurse dolls in the park,
their silk kimonos open revealing their
wayward breasts. In rest homes, mouths
slack, eyes hooded, they spit out the pills
of forgetfulness, endure second life on
television, watch out for who and when,
the subliminal message; dream in slow
time, wait for the last thing to happen.

This is their season of vigilance. Now
they are nurse-logs rotting in the forest,
smelling of compost and incontinence.

They stand in the rain, take perfumed
baths—dress for redemption in old lace,
the night-gowns they wore for their
bridegrooms, sleep with eyes wide open,
soldiers on sentry duty, waiting for
Valkyries: maybe the Sultanahmet
spice merchants who left saffron prints
on their dresses or the tango instructors
who raptured up when they decorated
their paradas with calfskin soles. They
are half in love already, remembering boys
who crossed those gymnasium floors
with doughnut glaze on their lips (they'd
been bribed), their tiny wings trembling
in white shirts, or the girls who'd asked

them to polka, their stiff crinoline skirts
going round and round 'til they all fell
down out of breath, their hearts tumbling
like roller pigeons, the good news angels
of California and Capadoccia, wondering
which one would ask them to dance?

LINDA ROGERS

Late Breaking News

We're in Wally's Renault, driving
south in Provence, the car radio
harvesting disaster, swaths of it,

and the fields bloody with tulips,
a brash statement stretching
to the low hills of the Luberon.

Later, in the hilltop fortress
with its catapult and trebuchet,
I ask my friend what happened

to monks, to sanctuary, places
where little pain sears the weary
breastbone, where envy's rare

as gourmet meals, where even
the spirited horse, grown
accustomed to lassitude, nudges

the pitchfork's worn handle until
hay falls like manna from the loft,
and where prayers are crafted

in lieu of weapons. Eternity
is long, Pascal has written, so
faith is worth the gamble.

The soul sets sail for a distant
port. Tears mark its departure,
but what marks its arrival?

Planks resound with footsteps,
deep water parts to accommodate
the insistent keel. Wally, amused,

dismisses these speculations,
insists there's romance
in neither monastery nor rose.

Solace, perhaps, though skimpy,
and only in what the moving pen
inscribes or the stiff horse-hairs

of the brush render permanent
and lovely, those moments, all
too brief, when the anchor holds

and the sea blooms resplendent
with all manner of kelp and with the
scrubbed tulip faces of the dead.

GARY GEDDES

Leaving the Island

We've all gone now, left the place to the sheep
and the gannet, the puffin and the wren.

For decades only a mailboat of whalebone and oak
came and went from here. Then the tourists

arrived to see if we were more than myth in the Outer
Hebrides. We sold them tweed and spotted

bird's eggs, let them look in on prayer meetings, count
the stones in the walls we built to keep out the weather.

When we prayed it was for a cease
to things: the wind, the war, the plagues.

In the end, the land choked us out, carcasses
of sea birds and layers of peat moss turned to lead

the constant fog, the solitude, the slippery grass
by the cliff's edge, that impossible winter of 1929.

We left our Bibles open and handfuls of oats on the floor.
Locked our doors behind us. From this vantage point

our home was just a sketch of land that shrank into the sea—
the island's sharp crags impossible to understand.

This land, so angry and so peaceful now, without
us. The feral sheep bleat into the evening.

Nothing to bother them but old age and the wind
that made us all walk like bent trees.

TALYA RUBIN

Leopold

It's alright Leopold you can relax now
There's no need to plan another tour
Everyone can see you weren't exaggerating
Everyone agrees your son's a star
And you don't need leave from Salzburg anymore
With the Prince-Archbishop gone from power

With Colloredo gone (relax) your son's the power
Who's taken all before him so that now
Your surname's not your surname anymore
(More ways than you could advertise on tour
Watching and hearing the child star)
But a byword for music and mastery past exaggerating

For beauty and genius past hope of exaggerating
The whole world knows his power
And follows the Mozart star
Even to praise or blame his father now
(Don't laugh) for attitudes or incidents or risks on tour
To royal houses that don't matter anymore

Leopold it doesn't matter anymore
What anyone or Wolfgang tries exaggerating
In home town service and on European tour
You've done your best with your employer and every other power
So prodigies and parents then till now
Can hate or hail you as a guiding star

From your first joy in your infant star
(The play of fear) till after you couldn't teach him anymore
As child or adolescent or as adult now
With warning and advising and exaggerating
Dangers of travel and marriage and power
By letter when you couldn't be on tour

Like when your wife instead of you on tour
Died past planning in Paris leaving the young star
All alone and all grown up to power
Leopold you just can't do this anymore
With the Prince-Archbishop dead and no exaggerating
You and your son more than two centuries dead now

Leopold the tour is over you can rest now
With all your family with the star raised to a higher power
Needing no strategies for exaggerating anymore

DAVID MORTIMER

Let'em Eat Kibble

Around here the writing's on the walls.
Zbiv, PSC, Wolf, zigzags, smears.
Those who can't spraypaint, psshhhwrite:
Singularities in Revolt. Fire to the State.
Reality Sucks—Chantal, too.
Love Hurt Boys Lies.
Merry Fucken Xmas.
Enos est un grand pédophil.
I Miss Pogroms. Thanks for the Buff.
Coherence is No Virtue.
Eat The Rich. The Rich Eat.
Deterritorialization. Separatists Go Home.
Revolution for the Joy of It.
When All the Whiskey Runs Out, We'll Drink their Blood.
Or Kool-aid.
Votez. Shit. Fuck. Piss.
Louise is a Whoor.

MATT RADZ

letter to an unnamed lover

I did not steal quietly
into the long, deep, silky, swallow-swooped
bend in the river at the end of the road.
There was no sweet, sinuous hold
in the embracing arms of its clear water, dark
and wakeningly cold, and the keen
ripple of its voice did not absorb me. I was not
lifted, nor turned, nor stroked by the smooth
swirling eddies at my feet, my hands, nor my torso,
nor at my neck, nor my limbs, nor my amber-dappled head,
and my hair did not follow the coiling swell.
The wind neither kissed nor caressed the clean
skin of my cheeks or the curve of my lips,
nor carried, like creatures above me, the white, plummy seeds
of thistledown, seemingly weightless, hung like my own
buoyant mood... There was no wide abandon. No light
frolicked on the wings of dragonflies
as they flew in the near-evening sky
under the half-face of the pale, paper moon.
And if I am gone tomorrow, when you visit
with your arms full of oranges and snow peas and
sweet tomatoes, think not
of where you will find me and do not come
to the deep bend by the outcrop
rising east of the house—the road
will not lead you. Believe me...
you would see nothing... a dry
dam and the wreck
of an old Holden.

KRISTEN LANG

Lise Meitner Leaves Berlin

Born into a Viennese Jewish family, physicist Lise Meitner helped to discover nuclear fission in Germany before fleeing the country in 1938.

I'm taking off my lab coat
for the last time.
Each piece of apparatus stands in place:
cloud chamber, electrometer,
a web of wires to trap lightning.

Today I'm saying goodbye
to Frau Professor,
the Jewess with the worthless brain.
Tomorrow I'll leave my flat
with nothing but a jacket,
an address in Holland
I might never find.

For too long, Otto, I've worn the white
of this sanctuary for science,
possessed, like you, by the prize,
my head filled with atoms.
Do we know, even now,
what demons' eyes we've lit?

One neutron and a chain reaction,
one word to turn a crowd
and shatter the world.

When I could take the tram home
I'd see young women in the Tiergarten
pushing prams,
boys chasing round trees
waving wooden guns,
girls with ropes,
men reading newspapers.
Even then I could guess the headlines.

They say Vienna waltzed after the Anschluss.
Everywhere people are dancing
to the music of broken glass.

I'm saying good night, Otto.

My lab coat hangs lifeless
behind the door,
notes on my workbench
a muddled epitaph,
the electrometer's needle
back to zero.

VICTOR TAPNER

Lucas

Martin's body is delayed
for snow in Germany
and Lucas does not notice
flicks a button on the x-box
and Afghanistan spreads across the screen
scrub landscape and barren sand
a smoke cloud that shadows a tank
"used to be two insurgents" planting a bomb
Lucas laughs
power guns, no ammo, provide scope
peeling potatoes, the hoard piled inside green plastic
"they don't feed us on Tuesdays"
the sun goes down, the tank turns tawny
Lucas looks grown
this boy, his hair bleached blond
over his forehead
because there is no barber
his expression serious
not like now
a merriment of Christmas creases his face
Home for the Holidays
the image in the photograph
thoughtful
as if we see what he sees
over the desert horizon
Martin, 150 like him
I gaze at Lucas now
Lucas then
the "Lest We Forget" tattoo on his arm
And see what Lucas does not notice

SALLY MOORE

Maze

The maze at Hampton Court (do you remember Jerome's 'keep turning right?') is at the centre of my labyrinthine years. So many hedges have grown up since those days, but I've kept going and played at knowing that the only exit was laughing at us. Seriously, who'd give up

and have to say it's true you did give up, though tempted when you saw such thinning hedges, to squeeze through, cheat, a short cut to the exit, to hell with that old yew? But I remember the path's repeated mantra to keep going forward, distraught or narrow: *Find the centre,*

the puzzle's cool, green, slow-unfolding centre, not like those unicursal routes that give up all at a glance (no crossways to remember), where one can trace a clear line to the exit, turf mazes, pre-historic, without hedges, for chasing virgins down. I see us going

round Wing and Saffron Walden with them, going to cast the devil out in Hilton, exit intrigued but unamazed. 'Where was the centre?' they ask as we drive on, and don't give up till Longleat and that Alice maze, remember? Then, always, on the far side of the hedges

the families who know the way. A hedge is no looking glass, and that I do remember: the one I pulled her out of that was going to swallow her, a monster at its centre, whose silvering would close and never give up her youth again, the double doors an exit

to a theme park with a mirror maze whose exit
is to the same theme, endlessly, no going
back on yourself, like pawns who can't give up
because there's only black or white and hedges
greening on either side. Shall we find the centre?
I have a reel of golden thread, remember:

we're going this way, yes, through these dark hedges,
we'll not give up, I know it says no exit,
the centre's down here, sure, I do remember.

JOHN GREENING

Melons Sprung in Dirt

It began one Easter past, my love affair
with dreams of Eden fecund with dappled shade and secret places
sweated from clay within a western Sydney remnant of a quarter acre block
privetted with abandon—an unlikely place to find heaven,
a good time, according to my Uncle Tom who knew these things
to tear out the wild and weedy, entomb seeds, wait for life.

The yard became a sanctuary, a gallery for saints who settled in
geraniums from Mum, a rose remembering Dad, an aunt's chrysanthemum
Paul's fig tree, glossy potted gifts and brown-bagged cuttings.
Suzie, Kimberley and Jack splashed make-believe and giggles
over seedlings, growing with the garden
as they trampolined their heads above the neighbours' hedge to say Hello.

Then a year of desolation: dereliction sculpted
in withered shoots, forgotten fruits, dandelions bent by aphid-blighted buds,
prosperous docks and thistles. Contrariwise, I cheered
and hoped my cries might prompt some notice, some divining intervention
breezed from the Buddhist prayer flags down the street as blessing
rained upon the arid place, my love.

I gave my garden over to a workman, an earnest man
who ripped out romance running wild as violets
trampled vestal daisies guarding boundary walls where weeds kept stealth,
cast out tomatoes burst as bounty from the compost
and in the final desecration—my betrayal—cut down
the purple blooms which, finally, had tiptoed up to peer above the wooden fence.

Another autumn came. On a day so still
I heard a myna flutter in the spiky khaki of the silky oak
and turtle doves out-croon the rumble of a silver speck of Qantas heading west,
peppercorn leaves shimmered yellow green above the tightrope of a single
strand of cobweb.
And as the blue-grey pendants of a gum tree sighed beside a blaze of liquidambar
the quiet of the garden called again. I heeded, and lying down

in burnished feathered fountain grass I was entranced again.
I weeded, pruned, unchoked the weaker plants, was bloodied by the sterile spurs of lime
determined not to give the garden's soul to anyone—except perhaps to poets, artists, clowns
who know that gardens (much like heaven) live between the ordered and the wild
and need to nurture rampant pumpkin verve, tarragon, mint intoxications
and astonishment, when we find ourselves, like melons sprung in dirt, alive again.

ANNE BENJAMIN

Miners' Wives

Her face clean as a hosed statue.
Under her coat an apron, blue and white checked,
no lace. From a bib of shade near
the entrance to the mine, she walks
to the others, fits to them.

In their catalog coats—
Hunter Green and Navy—
touching sleeves
these women gather strength.
These women are royalty.
No one dares look at them.
They do not look at each other.
Under a threadbare Kentucky sky
they refuse the night, keep turning
it down with their not looking.
Each of their breaths finishes
like a potato peel
dropped on newspaper.

March in the garden
she plants rows of marigolds
and beets. Kneeling wide,
she can see beyond
yellow tulips, satin and wet,
into the earth to his upturned face
his lips parted, his eyes asking.
She knows that day's shirt,
blue plaid, and that day's overalls,
the body now drawn up,
his uncasketed thighs.

Past peeled bulbs, stripped as teeth,
she reaches in deep, touches
his hair, where bristled, where soft.
Lowering, she warms the earth
with her cheek.

DONNA REESE

Moon River

I was so young I thought she made the song;
I thought it arose full-blown
from her mind and mouth as it was being sung.
It was the streetlight or perhaps
an over-abundance of moon
leaking in through the window-shades
in the kids' bedroom,
and our babysitter Valerie, all of sixteen herself,
her silky brown hair hanging about her face like curtains,
would sing Moon River to us,
if we begged her to, if we were good.

I was so young,
it was before poetry had sunk its gilded claws
into my mind's skin
and her voice climbed the silvery ladder without faltering,
until I could smell and feel
damp midnight grass,
and see the glistening track laid out across black water.
(Though I didn't know what "two drifters" were,
maybe snowflakes?)
"Off to see the world," she crooned.
"There's such a lot of world to see..."

Even now, decades later,
when I watch candlelight flicker over your face
as the pure sounds of a girl's chorus
stream from the speakers and enter your body,
I swear I could steal away like that,
not caring if it was music, or love,
or the river finally taking me.

ALISON LUTERMAN

Morel-Floored Forest

Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks
so longeth my soul after thee . . .
—Psalm 42, *Coverdale Bible*

O
mushrooms
so epicurean,
as knights their grail,
shepherdesses their lambs,
thus I
search
for you
morels,
grown up
below oak—
fungi that jut from leaf-mulch
ground that fosters musty birth
of such saintly/earthy fleshpots

O
the paroxysms
of my disbelief greet
fist-fat conical hats (on
cream-bottomed stems) which
strive to achieve tower height
such that
my basket
black masses—
gargantuan drowzers to be plucked
from their beds: the mushroom sheep
take up plump and bulbous positions

Morels along the paths of forest floor, when one kneels to them, always bestow an annunciation (sometimes seconded by sunbeam, dappled through tree-crown) upon the seeker of their lift-of-sorrow essence/their lichen-sprung luscious pungency/their undeniably desirable spongy glory.

CAROLYN HOOPLE CREED

Mosaic

This is how you kiss me,
hard, your hand on my throat.
Your tongue slides along my teeth.
It feels like the wing
of a small bird on my lips.
Your mouth moves over my skin,
and like a magnet
brings to the surface
the parts of me that are real.
My body in fragments, the pieces of me wet.
You put me back together,
a mosaic you design from my remains.

This is my offering.
I kneel before you, no longer broken.
Your body, the curve of your arm,
the tightness of your thigh,
is the altar where I learn to pray.
Take it, you say. All of me.
I take the part of you
that is unforgiving and hard,
the part of you that carries
the secrets and dreams
of the women you have loved.

I feel your chest rise and fall,
at first slowly, then fast and deep.
You become still,
the way lake water calms
before a windstorm.
My voice breaks, Come, I whisper.
I am baptized, a sinner cleansed in holy water.
You are the wafer on my tongue.
You taste like warm rain and salt,
something the spirits created
to tempt me and keep me thirsty.
I find redemption in the way

the taste of you lingers,
and in the outline of your mouth
when you smile.

POLYXENI ANGELIS

A Movable Mountain

Imagine this dark and bloody ground Kentucky
as it may be some years from now. I see
the veil of tree mist lifted from the hillsides
dynamite ripping the tops from the mountains
removing their black hearts to fuel the cities spreading
like cancer across the old trails the Boones blazed
through the forests now the desolate limestone stripped to bone
the face of Golgotha staring down the last remaining hills.

This is the legacy that would be told of those who would control each mountain
bring it down to rip away its power like those who came before to kill the buffalo.
From this ruin comes the dawn from the blood soaked clay the undergrowth
may sprout anew and purify what we would not.
I see Appalachia rising from the wreckage of lost dreams
like the ghosts of all those buffalo like the sins of slaughter offered
up in sacrificial smoke. Rise on over our backs Kentucky climb the steeps all those
who would sing the future kingdom like the old slavesongs that once shook
all these hills, old songs of Zion that fell on deaf ears but were never silenced.
The song is still the same—we will be free!

And then I see the kingdom rising as it were the sun,
its golden light spills over these old Appalachians
bathe in gold the fields where ten thousand bison lay dead and tongueless
to keep their silence their tongues cut out to keep them silent. Now they sing
the kingdom rising from the naked bodies of new bohemians bathing
beneath flat lick falls—in the cries of marchers seeking
an end to the destruction of our little mountains singing
Jean Ritchie songs singing songs of freedom redemption songs
all I ever had these hills. Like a thousand trees planted by the old Kentucky River
they the true mountains that will not be moved the true believers
in the Loretto prayer chapel at sunrise in your eyes
I see the future kingdom rise.

JONATHAN CLARK

The Museum of Loneliness

If you think that the Museum of Loneliness uses subdued lighting to show off its artifacts, you couldn't be more wrong. The Museum of Loneliness is given to reflective surfaces, so that everything is amplified and everything presents itself, for your pleasure, at least twice.

A soundtrack of secrets and predictable advice loops the rooms and bounces off black lacquered walls and ceilings made of Venetian mirrors and stars that are available for nominal sponsorship.

If you expect the Museum of Loneliness to be, well, lonely, you're in for a surprise: day and night, it is thronged with visitors who scorn its comment-book 'literalism' and mock its 'threadbare glitz'.

In one room, a litter of unwanted gifts has to be negotiated before you approach an atrium choc-a-block with letters, notes, emails and texts and, on loan from the Museum of Disappointment, the silence that greeted them all.

Then it's off to the House of Rings where you may try on as many as you like, and if you should find one to fit, feel free to call it yours. Wear it throughout your visit and hang it back on the Hook of Hooks in the niche next to the Exit, sign-posted, 'The Future'. (Our labels are designed to offer light relief: determined laughter tends to be a typical response.)

After the Hall of Photographs, when you have identified your own, remove your blindfold and, using the scissors and glue provided, paste it in the interactive scrapbook to your left.

In the corridor connecting the Cubicle of Prepositions with the Chamber of Automated Replies, the need to Move On is emphasized. Do not linger at the diorama of busy windows with their families lit, so tenderly, from within.

In the Gallery of Backer and Hammershøi prints, please do not mistake the painted for actual panel doors. Adjoining rooms will offer identical colour schemes, matching curtains and tablecloths, and your very own impression in a single dining chair.

Once a year, on your day of choice, there is a thirteen-minute indoor firework spectacular, culminating in the release of thousands of perfectly-recalled names.

Afterwards, the entire collection is de-accessioned to make room for next year's hoard. Donations are invited; bequests particularly sought. Unslept-in beds, new email accounts, phone-calls and sulks make for typically popular shows. Death is a reliable. Lies are always required. Fantasy (as-new only, please), is in constant demand. (Please note: more small hours are usually received than the Museum can display.)

Come back soon. The Room of You will be still here, arranged so every previous visit projects a visit yet to come. Meanwhile, live between them. You'll find them company.

VONA GROARKE

Mustang

We were children, a whole mob of us
in Lime and Mission streets
near where the river turned,
when a blue Ford Mustang
careened off the highway
and fishtailed down Bell Road
into Caterpillar swamp.
The Council was going to pull it out
but it was nearly Christmas
and maybe the paperwork was lost
or someone went on holiday
because it mouldered,
half buried in mud and water,
its number plates sunk
but its front bench seat
shining as if just polished.
We learnt the trick of casting logs and branches
across the mush of waterweed
and climb-walking our way
to an open side window, sliding in.
We'd watch the day become blank
in the stand of drowned trees
that a hundred years ago had been forest,
stowing magazines under seats,
making gauche declarations,
drinking sherry we'd filched from our parent's flagons
as candles guttered, scorching the vinyl.
One by one we moved away,
our families broken by divorce
or seeking a better district.
The Mustang remained: a carapace
rusted-through with recollection
of skinny, absurd children
standing on the bonnet
playing at pirates above floating weed,
growing towards
what they would know
imperfectly.

PAUL HETHERINGTON

My Love's Little Porthole

He has the night shift.
He says he's getting back into the swing of things
but that he has tendinitis in his right hand, that it creaks
when he makes a fist. He didn't sleep, he said,
because he liked the view.
What is the view like?
The view from his porthole is ocean
and sun and birds.
These three things.

In photographs of the ocean, the water is one third
and the sky is two thirds, on top and rectangular.

Birds mess up these proportions. And the deck.
And clouds come. And wind comes, invisible
but filmy, like chalk erased,
and this wind messes with the birds
and their own secret arrangements.
Nothing is ever still the way the heart is never still
unless you're dead. Lying like a wet rag
on a clean counter.

My father once said that watching a kitten
is like watching a fire: you can watch both for hours
and never feel bored.
The same is true of my love's little porthole
and the things arranged within its lens.
There is no line. There is no difference
between sea and sky. There is no distance.
Today he will stretch his hand,
he will cover his porthole, he will rest
and while he rests, nothing will go still around him.

SOPHIE GRIMES

The Need for These Things to Be Said

For Donald Woods

The baby grand, its mouth gaping, is robbed of children's practice books.
The police retreat with pens, pencils, and sheet music.
Donald Woods, leaning his elbow beside the keys,
faces the one-way night window.
Wendy, his wife, stands away from the glass, mimes
the daily inquest proceedings—fingers, leg irons, fists, police trucks.
Donald wipes a finger under his glasses,
nods.

For this editor, the Restricted Persons Act tapes his mouth shut,
fuses this writer's fingers with law.
Upstairs, his children fall into sleep, his wife reads.
Across the keyboard, from a childhood Christmas, his uncle
draws on a postcard the three movements of a sonata.
Woods stalls at the keys, a writer with no pens learning
Chopin with no books.

The bullet that entered the living room window last night, that hush
bullet wrapped in the scowl of the neighbours,
made a hole the size of a rand.
Now the wind-filled smells of cooking come in, and go out, in breaths
—a strange asset for the house-bound—a glass tracheotomy.
Donald loosens his tie, heels to the ground,
right foot brushing the sustain pedal.
He centers himself on the stool, back to the window
while they dare not shoot him.

Ninhydrin!
For lifting prints at crime scenes is lifting the skin from his five-year-old.
His child is sedated, but he is awake.
Writing is lifting ninhydrin from his hands and pressing the keys violet. He types:
“No fear can outweigh the need for these things to be said.”
The poisoned t-shirt is in the bag, but
not the one they're packing.

At New Year, the watchers go on the nod, the piano falls silent.
For this escape, each word is learned by heart.
The music has been called up and stored—
a deep breath for an underwater swim. A cassock, the editor's mantle.
Fireworks spark from the watchtower into the night and fizz.
The international audience sits, legs politely crossed at the ankles, waiting for
Woods to play freely
for Biko

MARGARET MCCARTHY

Night on the Dark Earth

Feet pad black air down the Scriggeen
road, laying a velvet trail beside my own.
A stoat trawls in and out of holes
in a stone wall. Lives between
the earth's core and the shores
of four thousand years ago.
What does the stoat know of time?
Night is salt and the blood of earthworms
bruising on the rain-damp floor.
Sniffs the air, flashes down its dark hole,
where time is stunned asleep
beside a pile of bloodied feathers.
Dead languages of birds, archaic,
leap out into the frozen night,
call the old call to earth's shadowed cell.
Night birds flicker through the passages
of old men's sleep. Nothing changes.
A goat's gold eye strips a hedge.
The ivy grows thick. Trees are lungs,
gills dripping rain, loneliness a fog
to see through, a rain-torn path.
A heron lifts its wings, rows
through blue-black sky. Slowly,
the dark earth turns.

KELLY NORAH DRUKKER

Night Thoughts from Somewhere Past High Noon

Roadwork everywhere, jackhammers nattering on
like mosquitos escaped from a drive-in schlockflick.
Call it a day the late sun says but then lingers
lightly on the western porch like some bright-eyed guest
reluctant to depart and you can see why, having
been all day struck by its riveting midsummer
rise, the light insistent on its own absolute
rectitude, poised for hours against that slow plunge
towards the smoulder of old midwinter moonshine—
that the sky god will rise again—as yes it will,
unlike me, say, whose turn comes only once,
no matter what our phallic fables might pretend.
I solve the sphinx's riddle merely by living
the answer, hoping to carve my initials *scritch-
scratch-scratch* in the thick-skinned world I happen through,
thinking hell they'll last like eximious dinosaur
shit, but knowing the numbers tell a different tale.
Midsummer's where I am and lingering on the porch—
downhill from here, the easiest leg, though hardest
on the knees; their bent gets awkwarder all the time,
but nothing that good shoes, aspirin, and surgery
can't delay till Hamlet in hiking boots mutates
into this slow-mo Lear doing Tai Chi barefoot
on the heath beside that nipped and tucked and still (thanks
to pharmaco-chemistry) well fucked Tony and Cleo.
You go gently guys! the heckler in my brain yells,
teenaged even now, addled with its own juice.
I love my life like sunlight, oysters, and the dulled
pain of dental surgery, but know that the fat
hump of irony which adorns my hairless back
will not keep the coffin lid from closing down, down,
or stop the hearse's jaunt the way roadwork just might.

IAIN HIGGINS

The Old Man and the Beanstalk

Three beans in the clay pot,
one for each hope left to the old man.
A week passes with soil still bare,
watered by thick hands,
until the morning a single stalk
bends its neck to the sun.

Noon. He waits for his son,
beef stew cooking in the pot,
rises, once, to check the slight, green stalk.
The night smells of burnt onion. The man
does not eat and the door handle
does not turn, too shy to bear

his steadfast gaze and bare
itself in turn. The morning sun
unrolls its slow heat a handbreath
across the sill, limns the clay pot
and the table where the old man
sleeps, restless. The beanstalk

seems no bigger, lacks more stalks
for context. Dream bares
its throat to waking. The man
finds a brief message from his son,
who is sorry he forgot. A pot
of coffee later, the shaking in his hands

has faded. He soaks the soil in handfuls
of water, tender of the brown stalk.
He is sorry he let the pot
dry. A story then, low-voiced, of a bare
field that grew a sturdy beanstalk and a son
who climbed it and became a man,

or maybe a thief. Where is a man
who can reach that high, hands
giving instead of taking? Too much sun—
the old man is baked as dry as the stalk.
He spills out two dead beans, the stalk and the barren
earth, then walks away from the empty pot.

ALINA WILSON

Old Men on a Bench

Of the ability we still have of walking on slippery ground
to where the boats are moored; of levitating,
not in cultivated gardens but, against all advice,
on the fishing dock itself, its smells more uplifting than yoga;
of imagining our children helpless in foreign cities—
our excuse, through subterfuges of anger, to ruffle
travel agents, hurry the issuing of visas—we speak,
carefully, pressing another's hands should the need arise,
counselling patience, as though drawing up plans
for a new building we're certain, one day, to share.

Our words may seem to you, eavesdropper, to skip over surfaces,
like today's last dragonfly before it's absorbed by shadow,
and some things may be clearer to you later,
much later, like, as every evening darkened, we imagined
we'd lift off the bench without effort
and sail home as steady as herons.

ADIL JUSSAWALLA

On Finding a Copy of “Pigeon” in the Hospital Bookstore

I prowled up and down the rows of the hospital bookstore with a fevered intensity; “fevered” because it was a hospital, “intensity” because I was perplexed by the mysteriously ruptured tendon in the middle finger of my right hand in sympathy with which the whole hand had cramped so that I could scarcely hold a pen or open a jar. Even a five-month-old octopus in the Munich zoo can open a jar!

The octopus’s name is Frieda, which reminded me of D.H. Lawrence, and thinking of him brought me to the hospital bookstore. It was minimally stocked with anything resembling literature, offering those in pain, afraid, or just dully waiting for test results a choice of pink-jacketed chick-lit, cookbooks, investment guides or glossy thrillers spilling blood as red as that pooling down the hall in the O.R., as though emulating some homeopathic principle of curing a disease by a surfeit of that which caused it.

And perched as eccentrically as the sparrow who sings from the rafters at Loblaws, and looking just as lost, was the only volume of poetry in the store. Reading it I recognized at once what I disliked about the bulky bestsellers nudging it from the shelf like bullies in the halls of high school, their meaty faces full of self-regard, their minds absent of thought. I hate the omni-present present tense, that fake cinematic contrivance meant to create a sense of “being in the moment” with the hero as though life were a constant rush of adrenaline with no possible mood but surprise.

Whereas poetry offers the results of its meditation tentatively; it is not embarrassed to show that thinking—some of it slow, arduous, confused—has taken place. And then poetry doesn’t rush ahead shouting, “Look at me! Look at me!” Instead, it takes your hand, your poor mangled hand, like the good surgeon it is

and massages it joint by joint, feeling for the sore places.
And because it doesn't speak without reflection
you trust it, and let it cut you open.

SUSAN GLICKMAN

On the First Traveling Exhibition of Real Human Bodies

I.

Post-mortals, out of bed,
brazen, in the new theater of anatomy.

Everyman, unsheathed
from his hide, posed

as chess-master, finger bones
on a black rook, a dancer caught

in perpetual arabesque, nerves braided
down pointed toes,

soldiers
without eyes.

One, child-sized,
with ribs of a bird,

shrunk under the blood-rashed flaps
of a winged-man, to take flight only

in death, organ-robbed,
erasable, public.

II.

A hush
among the living,

we breathe in fits of awe,
sacrilege and sacrament.

Tonight we shall caress our skin,
tremble before mirrors.

VICKI GOODFELLOW-DUKE

Paradiso

In a garden they had named their Paradiso
The garage stands with the door always ajar
An old man in the evening waters roses
Plastic flowers grow amid some Pampas grass.

In a garden—and its name is Paradiso
an old woman sets the table for some tea
A veil of lilac blue perfume dances around her
for an instant she's become his young new wife.

In this garden—and its name is Paradiso
Flags of laundry fly their colours in the wind
A picnic table, plastic chairs, mismatched companions
the man whistles for the stray cats to come back.

There's a garden whose name is Paradiso
An old barbecue leans rusting by the vine
Smells of rhubarb, dandelions and wild garlic
Water barrels stand forgotten in the rain.

In the garden whose name is Paradiso
she finds solace as she sits there in the shade
she remembers the good times when they gathered for a feast
Sunday afternoons with friends long gone away.

In her dreams she named this garden Paradiso
In wrought iron its name written on the gate
It doesn't matter—just a dream—the garden lives still within
And she loves him among the stray cats and the rain.

In this garden whose name is Paradiso
There's a teapot on the table, and two cups.
So I miss you but you don't know that you're not here.
We have tea in conversation with stray cats.

MARIA BORYS

The Pardon

Tyburn Gallows, 1447

Slavish to the letter of the law or perhaps just plain
Malefic, the hangman refuses to return his due
And the gallowbirds—babe-naked, marked for

Quartering from Adam's apple to navel—scarcely
Dare meet each other's eye as the messenger
Spurs his nag back to town. Should they kick

Up a fuss? Demand their earthly goods, wood-soled
Shoes and shirts, the woolen hose holding each
Wearer's shape like a ghost? Thwarted, the mob

Rumbles, a faint thunder on the horizon...one felon
Takes his cue and strides off, rubbing at the roadmap
Inked upon his chest with an idle thumb. One sits

Poleaxed at the platform's edge; the Wheel has spun
Too fast to catch his breath. Laughing madly, two leap
Down to join their drunken friends while the last

Looks blinking around him, shaken awake to this
Shadow-dream—the rain-dark fields, glinting leaves,
Kingfisher and reeds of a high summer day—then

Stiffly, like an old man, begins his journey back.

ELLEN WEHLE

Pascal's Advice

All the misfortunes of Man come from his inability
to sit quietly in his room alone.

—Blaise Pascal

I am an old man, and I am content to sit
alone in my room. As a young man I never
really believed I could feel this way, but I guess
I had to live this long in order to reach this point.

Oh, I spent time out in the world long ago,
and like Dostoyevsky's Underground Man,
when I came back home I would beat the walls.
I had so little then and desired so much. Now I

desire nothing, consequently I am rich. And I can
sit here alone, no longer having to make
other people happy, only myself. Besides, they're
all gone—two wives, my parents, all my friends—

and there's no one else to please. Alone in my room
the walls are my friends, the walls keep me safe, and I
no longer beat them. It has taken me a long time to arrive
at this place, but I'm glad that I'm finally able

to take Pascal's advice. Of course you can't close out
all the problems of the world. Pascal was wrong about that.
But if you can be content to sit in your room, you can
be happy, and keep the sadness out, and that is everything.

ED BREMSON

passion fruit
is all about
the way the skin resists
then yields to
purple-edged half-circles
the seeds, the smell,
the texture
bid you
shuck it like an oyster—
the hollow shell
is lined with tiny hands.

KATHERINE GREVILLE

The Pear Trees

She remembered his eyes
before they had become
implements of steel,
honing the blue horizon,
scanning the winds stretching
over the wheatfields
that crumbled in your hand
until the grain ran smooth as birdsong
into the tall silos.

It had been twenty years
since they planted the pear trees.

Little had changed since then.
Seasons opened the earth
to swallow heat
crazed under the hooves
of cattle.
The horse had died,
like a child's game
folding into its skeleton.

Now the pears hung like small golden vases
in the wizened twilight.

If I were to change with the land—she conjectured—
then I must enter
into the trees and stones
and become nothing more than a memory
so old that no calendar
could ever record my presence.

You must lie like an old woman
dying and spent of hope,
and be reborn, again and again,
into the pear trees,
free as the laughter of children

whose bodies lie in lonely graves
far out on the plains,
their voices faint as a
sketch of light in the doorway,

calligraphy of moonlight
upon your hand;

the stars pulled down
like a blind.

DAVID WOOD

Phnom Penh

For Shadrack

The imaginary belt of our heaven extends
90 degrees on each side
Of Lucky Supermarket. Within reach

Are the apparent paths: Pasteur, Preah Monivong, Street 63,
The sun, the moon, the way

You fucked me awake at dawn stumbling
Home from Memphis, Riverhouse, Pontoon, Heart
Of Darkness. The principals, the boulevards,

The zodiac detected
In your hair: menthol, chlorine,
Bombay from the pool before. Hung over

You are pointed as a diver—

It's true I am a water sign.



When I am sick it is a comfort not to understand
French / Khmer / Pidgin.
All morning I sat in the café:

Paracetamol, soda water,
Balm of Ylang Ylang sticky
At my temples;

I catch only the largest particles.

Not everyone gets
An elsewhere, a stolen
Country. As you sleep the barges of flat-black

Motorbikes go floating
Down the Mekong. Your iPod lost
Somewhere in the sheets emits its static

Drift, granular
Lady Gaga.

No one will give you a visa to anywhere.



To the burning, my love,
To the starving—
To the stooping to see in washroom mirrors, to the towns

Just for the bombing.

I understand you are not free.



Tonight I was followed home by two boys sniffing
Glue out of glowing plastic bags,

Reedy, handsome,
Neon-colored, these

Bright green whips of karma,
Driving me back to the well-lit street.

KIM PHILLEY

A Poem for the White-Headed Buffalo Weaver and Tony, the Naturalist at the Samburu Lodge

By the fourth day, the safari van
seemed more like a prison bus as it whizzed
past a pair of grey crowned cranes

beside the rutted road. And I had long grown weary
of the women who sat up front and rolled
their eyes if I asked the driver

what kind of hornbill that was,
or if we could stop for a moment to investigate
an iridescent flash darting between trees.

What were those small birds, I wondered,
that hovered for a moment, then vanished
as if vacuumed into cone-like nests

that knotted the undersides of acacias?
When we stopped for buffalo, from your lesson,
I discerned it was a mating herd, but was just as taken

by the ox-peckers with their fiery beaks.
At the lodge, when the dinner conversation turned
into a muddy river, surging from too much rain

and complaint, you stopped by to quiz us on the colors
of the Kenyan flag, the names of the forty-two tribes.
And now I know that the cheetah hunts daily, leaves

the remains of its prey for the jackal and hyena.
I learned about the small five: lion ant, rhino beetle,
elephant shrew, leopard tortoise and buffalo weaver.

On the last drive through Samburu, while the others
scanned the larger trees for a leopard I knew
we wouldn't see, I quietly counted

those white birds, the largest of the weavers,
whose wings flared the color of fire—
counted them as blessings,

as prayers that might somehow still be answered—
as they lit from thorn tree branches, dipped
and spun into sky.

JACKLEEN HOLTON

Poem of the Paper Bird

My paper bird is white as a dove.
My paper bird is graceful as a crane,
with its long paper neck and pointed beak.

My paper bird has sight like a hawk,
and could give you a scratch:
a stinging paper cut.

My paper bird has a song,
beautiful as a nightingale's,
written on each of its paper wings.

My paper bird has no iron-barred cage;
I keep my paper bird on my kitchen table
next to my paper rose.

MAIA EVRONA

A Postcard from Arkhangai Province, Mongolia

In Arkhangai,
a black cow bellows in the yellow grass;

In Arkhangai, an orange bird
furrows through a green tunnel;

In Arkhangai,
all roads lead to nowhere;

Red-robed monks dance
in the empty blue sky
in Arkhangai.

MARK MINTON

The Rain Stick

If the one who first learned
how the cactus may be turned
outside in, so that the sunny spines
are jousting in the dark siege
with porous charcoal lines
meshed in light's wink, the seeds
retained inside, tipped and churned

slowly through the spines with a swarm
of rain, if the one who formed
this magic stick, the wet applause of leaves
sun hardened to a mandible drum,
were a man, might he not sheathe
his teething molars to a peaceful deaf
gum of loneliness, the saturated life?

But if the one who first entertained
the notion of a desert plant that rained
within itself, the poignant life cycle
of self survival blunted but sought
by empathy, moisture withheld in a miracle
of intuition, were a woman, might the taut
interior echo with turns, refrained?

RICHARD SHORTEN

Ringling the Changes

We woke to the Gabriel bell and bowed our heads at the Ave Bell.
Hard wood, hollow wood, horn and clay, man came slowly to copper and bronze.
Strike the metal for magic sound—beaten metal, rivetted and square, four by four,
standing a foot and lower, struck with a hammer to echo the voice of Celtic gods.
sistrum bells rang always for Isis; golden bells heralded Levitical priests.

Alexander's body was borne away with bells;
Roman sheep were belled against beasts, and sentries' coats jingled the hours of their
watch.
From parish to parish in a medieval France,
Now tongued with clappers, the bells rang warnings like birds before storms—
Alarms for fire and for foe rang from highest notes descending.

The "bell oath" was sacred as sworn in Ireland;
St. Patrick's Bell of Blood routed enemies and endures: the Blessed Bell of Armagh.
Alfred the Great set curfew at eight with bells:
"Put out the fire," they sang. "Good sleep to you."
In Compania, bells were cast, and the Pope had bells from Benvenuto Cellini.

A church with a bell on broad lands gave Saxon men the name of noble thane,
And where Beckett's blood was spilled, the bells rang out unaided.
We know the christening peal, the Christmas chime, Easter's triumphal ring.
Everywhere, the lovely mouths of bells sang out their praise:
"Cantabo Laudes tuas Domini."—"I will sing thy praises, Lord."

Bells called men to feast and fire, the dance and prayer;
Harvesting bells summoned and dismissed the rows of plodding workers.
Morris men, all in white, stepped to the bells and the beating of sticks;
Clock tower bells rang the quarter and the full, and gave our homes Westminster chimes;
Death knells tolled thrice for men, twice for women and singly for the child.

Church bells, hung too long in trees and gates and standing frames,
were covered by canopy—and church towers were born.
Florence's Campanile, Giotto's graceful Tower, was splendid with marble.
Monastic bells rang out to bring the silent men from work and sleep:
Matins and Lauds and Vespers and a day of prayers between.

We hear sheep bells and camel bells, and sleigh bells,
bells that jingle, tinkle and resound, bells that chime and toll and peal.
Bells summoned and warned and proclaimed:
“Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,” calls to bow low to the host’s elevation.
Bells, baptized with water, psalms, holy oil and incense, are voices across the world.

For a thousand years, the Ringing Isle of England had peals of bells;
bells in “round ringing” rang tones from highest to lowest and back again—
eight bells at best, all tuned to scale, and swinging when rung, as few others are.
“Change ringing” burst the tonal sequence;
Campanology devotees still ring the changes.

NANCY TOTH

Roodhouse

I went back to Roodhouse
with my husband and my kids.
It was a bombed-out Beirut of a place,
backstreets full of trash,
smashed glass and porch socials.
Teen moms in extra-large T-shirts
held dull and dirty babies on their laps,
never smiling as they sat
waiting for something to happen.

It was summer, but there was no green,
just the colored metal cars
lining the streets; two for each house,
but one don't work.

No breeze,
yet the sound of television
did waft through the neighborhood,
and the submerged sun
did give off some heat.

We drove slow through the town square,
eyes blighted by chipped red brick
and duct taped panes of glass in shops
where I had set foot as a girl.
Even then things were
worn down,
but not out.

There are ghosts in Roodhouse.
I could see them.

They sat in Mike Todd's diner where teens
met on a Friday night, and at the feed store
where men gathered to read the paper and chew.
Ladies in prim, knee-length dresses
and sharp little hats travelled

from the pharmacy to the butcher, to the beauty parlor
and the library,
while in the park, benches painted thick with enamel green
waited for tired 1940 feet to rest.

And Grandma and Mrs. Kemp were only there
in memory, no longer feeding children and chickens.

G. KAREN LOCKETT WARINSKY

Room Service

2am: sleep has not come for me.
Bells thresh against the double-glazing like wheat.
The air-con whispers of towels in a drier. I lie
stacked beneath layers of strangers
like eggs frozen in ice-cube trays.

In my mind's eye a numbered ball
slips pipe to pipe from floor to floor
down thirty-five floors to the city's sewage.
Another hairy, farting, scab-nosed child
has scorned my offer of mortality. I am a bag of feathers
lying still, reading the pillow menu.
I wanted you to embark on me; climb on my shoulders
with your sandy feet; make me the stone in a rich stone soup.

Hours pass. Again I conduct myself
over the white tiles, cupping a hand, and crouch,
confiding my hinge to the ear and dark throat of the drain.
On this chock-a-block earth I am an ill-planned city
that has built too many tower blocks
for industry that never comes.
Along both sides of the street houses march, denuded of gardens,
piled like debris in the forks of trees
years after the last flash flood has passed.

CATHOEL JORSS

Sandhill Cranes

Out of the overcast sandhill cranes
fall in their grey and irreverent music
To the river. The Platte hustles east, cashed up with Wyoming
Snowmelt. I had seen them in the cornfields
As I drove here—ghosts
in remission, slow food scavengers,
Part-time monogamists—making the most of it in the rain.

Now, at dusk, I stand on the bridge
and watch them,
In their even-numbered ensembles, arrive. They carry their legs
Behind them like music stands they never learned
To fold, and they slash a loose graffiti
on the cloudbank as they come.
They circle the river as if it were not their stage
and nightfall were not their moment:

Their descent an audition,
half diffidence, half desire. Blue
Notes clatter down in five-four time,
And the birds splash down between the bars,
Throwing the baritone sax of their voices

in oblique arcs across the waters—grey sinkers
At the end of long grey lines, cast to hook the twilight and release it

In the dawn, and everywhere,
the spastic eloquence of their dance.
The wind dies and the light dies, too, and ten thousand birds
Disappear inside their own erratic lullabies,
and if you were here, I'd kissed you now.

But there are only the birds,
trying, and trying again, their perfect pitch
in the pure atonality of the night,
And a small breeze shivering the Indian grasses along the shore.

MARK TREDINNICK

The Silence

The dead we know are gone except
when dreams return them. So it was
Frank Sargeson took me aside

in Hell and said, 'You know, my friend,
how well the wind among the reeds
is used by shaman and guru,

rabbi and priest.' He had the face
of Dante's much-loved preceptor
Brunetto Latini among

the sodomites, as we ambled
down the avenues of the damned;
and he, brushing ash from his sleeve

went on, 'Those with a patch of earth
and running water lack vision,
preferring to leave such mysteries

'to desert-and mountain-dwellers
and the poor of Varanasi.
Where little is lacking listen

'always to the silence until
you hear it whisper its name.' So
he faded into fire, and I,

half-waking, wrote to remember
all that he'd said—and listened for
the silence, and could not hear it.

C.K. STEAD

The Silence is Killing Me

I need to hear the screaming voice of
the stereo salesman, who keeps putting
Fritos into his mouth, spewing
microscopic shards like flak, apologizing
that he missed his break, that he has
the best numbers in town, look at the
size of those woofers, dude, more shards,
needing to take cover, but I need the
noise, the bass that goes right through me,
over the hook, the one he is sure to get
the sale with, dude, I'm practically giving
them to you, listen to that mid-range,
digging to the bottom of the bag, wetting
his finger and shoving it into the corner
of the bag, for that last morsel of corn,
because he gets so hungry being the best
salesman in the city, in the state, in the
whole world, noise, noise, noise, which
I need, because the silence is killing me.

MARK VAN AKEN WILLIAMS

Singing at the Table in Iceland

*In Iceland, my great-aunt told me, if you sing
at the table it means you're finished.
Someone can come in the back door
and eat up the rest of your food.*

Now I eat soup alone
in a kitchen in Vancouver.
I wear three sweaters,
keep my hands against the bowl.

I've made a whole pot.
I'll have this all week,
all by myself—the cat
doesn't like vegetables.

My landlord cautioned, *Don't
open the back door, except in emergencies.*
In this neighbourhood you never know
what condition people are in.

*Ég óska sveitum Íslands,
fyrir fimmtíu árum eða meir.*
To leave the door unlatched,
the window open to the fields.

To look out during supper
and see the sheep scamper.
To decide to sing at the table,
knowing someone might hear.

*I wish for rural Iceland,
fifty years ago or more.*

ELENA E. JOHNSON

Some Things Have Hardened that We Did Not Wish to Go Hard

We took it on in Brazil, the sugar.
It had come down to the coast from the Cerrado:
'Closed Lands'—orra name for a plateau
rolled by harvesters, they open seas of crops.

At Santos, we loaded it. It filled the hold:
sweetness for whit New York was swapped,
back when the Indians of Salinas
had just began to quit. Poured in like sand
from the gantry cranes, whit swang through the sun.

Atlantic desert. Low dunes of water strapped
to the equator. I checked, between parallels,
the load wasnae shifting. Easy to capsize
freighters like these. But it lay even.
Everything sleeping-like: siccar and sound.

Made Gibraltar fine. Then Bosphorus lights.
It was Tuapse we were headed for,
the Russian refineries. Wind was cold,
I mind that. Unco cold for the place.

Docked, we slid the hatches aff.
Cranes swang down to our sugar.
Cranes clattered agin it and came up empty.

Glittering rock, that's what it was. The whole load
turned to stone. Couldnae shift it. Wouldnae,
at first, believe it. Not til I touched it—
careful-like, hauding the ladder (men have drowned
in sugar). It was a single welded heart.

I still was half-fear't to drown, week after,
when, done trying all kind of things—
spraying it and the like—we stood on it with rock drills.
It was slow, sticky tunnels that we dug,
through the hardened sweetness in the hold.

When we broke, the chalk cliffs blinded us.
Other freighters came and went, taking coal in easy
from Donetsk, Kuznetsk, Kansk-Achinsk:
no end to it, beneath the sun, the burning rock—
its light was like sweat upon the waters.

I saw the small stones of the shore just along.
Dockers' wives walked on them with bairns, like brooms
doing corners, over and over, tight and slow—
sudden-like melted, into the softness of the pale blue sea.

SOPHIE COOKE

Song of the Canister's Contents

After we thinned out we joined clouds
darkening cleared land and then
we were the shadows of those clouds
crossing open heaths.

Our green breath had to continue
till we were lingering
molecules causing headaches
among Flemish cattle.

When parts of our advancing front
united with water,
we converted damp wagon tracks
to pickling vats.

We had no wish other than to float
past tatters of swans
a half-mile above our objective
in the scored earth.

The one who synchronized it all,
supervising our release,
had a wife who couldn't abide
professional secrets.

She turned his service revolver
on herself in a scene
worthy of a penny dreadful
after our dispersal.

If only a giant bellows, poised
to buoy us skyward,
could have been deployed
by Gallic tunnelers.

But wrists had to go awry as wind
stroked us northwest
through sandbagged parapets
into scorched lungs.

PETER RICHARDSON

The Spa for Grief

This—all that's left when the water is burned off—
two brimming handfuls of bone, here &

there a bit of a tooth, a link of his silver chain not ground
down by the cremulator. I am sorry to have to tell you this.

She is rubbing oil into my feet and her voice too is unguent,
slowly soothing me into silence, as if these facts don't matter

now, not here, and she is right, I think, though it is hard
not to tell her of the chill cringe of dead flesh

and how I lifted his shirt fast to see where they'd stitched,
stroking the coarse indifferent sutures of autopsy like braille

and how around his eyes pooled the blue & gray abrasions of fluid,
bloomings from his four long days of death.

Now I have to pay to be touched, a woman's hands holding
the feet he loved, and not loving them, not offering his gifts,

but still somehow massaging each digit into a kind of feeling,
then, painting the nails red, as if with joy.

CATHERINE OWEN

Spring in Cow Bay, Nova Scotia

After A.F. Moritz

Sad coasts that even these weeks of unrelenting rain from clouds assuming squatters' rights cannot make sadder. They drench silver picnic sands long denuded, scraped to build docks for container ships, landing strips for naval aircraft to muster local jobs, beach rendered defenseless in Atlantic hurricanes; the coast receding ever further, nothing to look at. For whoever has not from him shall be taken away even that he has. The old family cemetery is held in check between commuters' new-builts where tides and ties exert their pull, and surf's adventuring gliders on their circuit. Abraded stones soft among rain-green patches blanketing unknowns and long-forgottens, the swollen yard's one small scar takes the rain as though to nourish new ashes, this closing-out-of-sequence, youngest sister. Our practice of containment. We too as wraiths—unrecognizable, scraped-away grains inhabiting new ports and runways, receding ever further, coasts of mind removed to another place.

BARBARA MYERS

Still Life

The frog is a frustrated, shoulder-bladed beast:
his seasick frown is long and his skin
as moist an imperfection as Galileo's moon.
His temperament is wettest
when it rains and the swamp fills, which he hates.
He would not be a frog if he ruled fate,
or sit all day, like Theseus on a stone
longing to leave, or hop away, but that
each hop would only reinforce the frog in him.
And so, in squatting, he contemplates Cézanne,

a still life by Cézanne, a spill of pubescent peaches,
like light bulbs, yearning to be turned on,
screwed in by Archimedes and by Edison.
These quiet pigments touch
a perfect bubble of two imperfect states
and long to be the thing they illustrate.
But one can't be peaches and still paint
or swap eternity or alternate
with Dioscuri in the sky. They stay the same
intense geometries of Cézanne,

this still life by Cézanne that we look on,
and there's something dazzling in your eyes.
I don't disturb those circles; instead I sigh
at frogs and painted peaches and a friend.

SCOTT DRAPER

The Stiltwalkers

We arrived on horseback. Villagers pooled
around us, faces kind & open. We drugged the water.
We constructed their poverty from scratch.
Poured wine on each other's heads, laughing,
dubbing ourselves kings. Introduced a new law:
each foot of each villager would be severed
& upon each stump a tall wooden stilt be sewn,
so they could not escape the woods. They turned
on us. My comrades fled. I heard the stilts on
cobblestones at midnight like a thunder.
I escaped my palace to the brink of a deep barranca
singing my death chant & hurled myself in.
I survived. Now I walk among them, disguised
as an old woman, feet strapped to stilts,
ankles blistered, toes smashed. They eye me
at market, but I do not break. I hobble to my room
under the stairs. Peel off the mask & wool dress.
O, freedom becomes them. They have grown eloquent
in walking. Running faster than we ever could.
Tall as birches. Their young born that way:
attached. I hear their voices, drowning phonemes,
through the floors. I do not make a sound.
I am afraid to look, but each night I peek out
at their street dances. They lope like puppets &
never fall. Women gyrate in a ring around the bonfire.
Behind, the men jump, ever higher, calling for love.
Women catch them. Everyone begins to spin,
these giants, arms upraised, slowly, then blurring—
impossibly—& sing in a collective low
moan the joy of their dark hearts like gods.

JOHN WALL BARGER

Storm Coming

Along Dollymount Strand,
By waves of rough waves
And little birds swarmed,
White as thrown plume,
I stared, mouth open,
At a great rainbow,
Vast like the gates of Babylon,
Barring entry,
No matter that I walked
To Howth by Sutton Creek,
To learn what the Passion,
Alexander or James Joyce
Could not reveal;

Behind,
In grey plates of turbulent cloud,
The rainbow killer
Tumbled from the Dublin Hills:
Toss me like a somersaulted surfer
As I batten down the hatches
Then, below this rainbow,
In hypostatic bond
Of curve and sandy line,
Turn to the storm.

TONY GILMORE

Sun Flower Sutra

Was this, indeed, what it was supposed to be like,
New York, in summer, this sumac-leaved stammer,
the landscape of ineradicable grit, and towers built
as though to escape the ground they bedded in?

She walked south on Canal past City Hall choked
with an ingress of the smallest cogs of governance.
It was 8:43, and the morning light felt like coarse
linen on the fine lines of her face, her arms exposed.

A dog was peeing, a gusher washing dust from
a front tire, an Escalade's, braced against the curb.
Now, the water came up to lap at its rocky bank.
A derelict tried for a quarter and shambled away.

"And what street compares with Mott Street," she
thought, and thought of Nathan Road where she'd
bought red silk panties whose color bled, staining
the inside of her thighs the first time she wore them.

Somehow, the signs had become confused. One
whispered "79th" and another "3rd Ave." A kiosk
guarded the corner. Doughy pretzels hung looped
from a wooden cart, its owner off taking a leak.

Then, the city turned over, its concrete radiating
heat into the suffocating air. The sky fell open.
A bloom like a dust of pollen overlay the dead cars.
She became the ash the sun scattered everywhere.

STUART JAY SILVERMAN

Swabbing

This evening the swabbies are out on the deck,
swabbing its speckled surface. They are canceling
each other out; their feet are bare. They are swabbing
the mold and bird shit, the fine layer of dirt.

What mysteries slip through the swabbies' minds—
plop—
like turtles into a pond?

The stories they tell stretch as far as the koi can see.
The continents they travel lead through the gazebo and over the bridge.

What should we call them—Swabbies of Life? Swabbies of Death?

So engrossed in swabbing, they don't see
the ruby-throated hummingbird drop faster than sorrow.

Sometimes the swabbies lose their mantras among the river stones.
Sometimes they kick small fires out the back door.
They are hopeless and useless and want another stiff drink.

Oh, these barefoot swabbies, they are too much
trouble and tears, too many nerve endings.

I hadn't known a swabbie's joy as she went about her business
in rolled-up jeans, hair in curlers. As she pushed broom and soapsuds
across a vinyl deck. I hadn't known an island
draped in green, nozzle turned to jet.

An hour ago the deck was a sheet of dirty winter ice
but now it's a summer of cattails and millet puffs,
it's seven reclining chairs.

Tamarind Tree

There are just two people left who can speak [Ayapaneco] . . .
but they refuse to talk to each other. —*The Guardian*

Talk to me beneath the tamarind tree. Before it's too late,
let us bury our quarrel in Tabasco's lowlands. I am old and my heart stutters.
Let us talk beneath the feathery foliage and wide pinnate leaves.
Only we remember the hum and click of our grandmothers' tongues.

Let us bury our quarrel in Tabasco's lowlands. We are old and our hearts stutter.
Why do you avoid me on the street, at the market, in the Zocalo?
Only we remember the hum and click of our grandmothers' tongues.
Before our blood runs dry, speak to me of kolo-golo-nay

on the street, at the market, in the Zocalo. Why do you avoid me?
Rest on this bench awhile. Above us pods bulge white flesh.
Before our blood runs dry, speak to me of kolo-golo-nay
and skins that grow brittle, pulp that turns to a sticky paste.

The pods above us bulge white flesh. Rest on this bench awhile.
Or shake the drooping branches and watch the fruit fall.
The skins grow brittle; the pulp turns to a sticky paste.
Last week another anthropologist washed up on our linguistic island.

She shook the drooping branches just to watch the fruit fall.
What lies between us but three sleeping dogs and a litter of cracked shells?
Another anthropologist has washed up on our linguistic island.
O to be reborn, a flat brown bean along a tree's young shoot.

Lying between us: three sleeping dogs, a litter of cracked shells.
Brother, we speak two different versions of the same stubborn truth.
O to be reborn, a flat brown bean along a tree's young shoot,
but the rain falling on Ayapa sounds a death knell clatter.

Two different versions of the same stubborn truth? Speak to me, brother,
beneath the feathery foliage and wide pinnate leaves.
Listen: the rain falling on Ayapa sounds a death knell clatter.
Before it's too late, talk to me beneath the tamarind tree.

PATRICIA YOUNG

Themba is Dead

Themba is dead
He lies in a coffin of wood
Garment of cotton
Stockings of wool
stiff as stone

Themba is dead
Taking his grief to grave
Hoping never again to be black

Themba is dead
Fifteen years ago
when he crossed the sea alive
Hopes decorated with fantasies of a white life
He lived in the shadows of others
No chance in the light
He struggled in the dark

Themba is a fool
wise only yesterday
Today he is in a coffin of wood
Garment of cotton
Stockings of wool
Stiff as stone

Now...

The municipality is taking samples
consulting the law
Making phone calls
checking cost
To decide which land owns Themba

EMEKA OKEREKE

There is no narrative

to attach to the bird on the shore,
just the facts, that from here it seems a rare
fairy tern, as rare these days as to sit before
a window alone with the time to spare

to watch it pivot, depart, though to be fair
it will be difficult to know whether
truth or memory shaped this pleasure,
and, more difficult, whether to share

it or, instead, like a found, sharp stone
deep in a pocket, to touch and to hold
to oneself. Though quite selfish (so I'm told),
I've written this tern for you, and this poem,

which finds you as you often now appear,
in a chair, by a window, but not at home
wherever you are, especially here,
so this is my gift, to leave you alone

with the struggle over what is certain,
with your decision, what to tell or withhold
from the man just crossing this morning's cold
floor, a woman letting go the curtain

to turn her head to what has taken flight,
and to speak as she will, or not, about
what surely began as surprised delight
then turned quickly enough to doubt.

BRYAN WALPERT

There You Are

Even once aboard, I feel the stinging cold
and as the train begins to heave

away from the old country station,
away from the spiny, alabaster mountains,

I see you,
crossing your arms in midair,

again and again,
your face alit.

At my seat, I prepare to collapse;
in my head I am already in the city.

Ten hours into the future, I sink into my bed,
next to the woman waiting in it,
and tell her of your joyous farewell.

Now, I drop my bags and watch you through the window.

You recede in slowest motion,
your eyes singing,

your whole-bodied smile gently mocking
my exhaustion.

The morning is illumined by your gesture,
not by the stingy sun.

The scarf wrapped round your head
sounds a note of vivid colour,
defying the gravelly sky.

For the last time, you wave your arms,
and I make a noise like a laugh,
astonished by the contrast between us:

you are so young,
I am so old.

Not ten years afterward I dip a shovel
into a mound of earth,
and hear the dirt smack dryly on polished wood,

and begin to describe you
to different women, in different cities.

There's the train, there's the distance;
no more station, no more mountains.

There you are,
slowly windmilling your arms,

and smiling.

MITCHELL ALBERT

They Disappeared in the Night

They disappeared in the night as the white ash of the fire went cold. They disappeared with the tales the almond tree had overheard. Only the stray mountain goat and the restless stones that wandered with our people for years knew their story.

You must understand they left us the way a leper leaves you living in the weak house of your skin. It was late in the life of spring how could this happen?

We searched for signs; a feather from a striped bird, or the fruit of the peach tree wearing the skin of the elders. Who would lead us now? The voice of reason was dead and still dying as we argued into the next day.

Then the old woman spoke: A nightingale is only a nightingale when it confesses its brightest colours are hidden in its throat and a dog becomes the animal we know when it pulls love out of the cruel master's hand.

And as the mangled tree straightened a branch our tongues curled and no one spoke. And the silence fell, and it fell like a man falling off a cliff without having one moment to shout out his name, only the silence filling his body, then the gorge, then the lives of all who knew him. This was the traveling silence, the twin of sorrow that knocks on every door and never tires.

RAFI AARON

Three Monkeys on a Dusty Bureau

On his dusty bureau,
beside the mint lifesavers
my grandfather had a carving of three dark monkeys.
See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.
“Which one are you?” he would ask.
“I don’t have enough hands to decide,” I replied.
“Eventually, everyone must choose,” he said dropping
another ice cube into his drink.

I left home without ever knowing which he had settled on.
My astute arrogance buffered by courageous ignorance,
convinced my life would be free of such passive despair.
I would never face the same decisions.

Now as I settle into this age of glorious imperfections
with its wrinkles and various indignities,
before the promised wisdom had settled upon these tired shoulders,
and the fierceness of youth is whittled down into memory as thin as hair,
I wait in the mornings with my neighbours
at the train station.
Their faces clutched in concentration,
lips filled with woes they don’t consider petty.
An unfocussed restlessness
disturbs the finely ordered
rhythm of my day.

More than ever I need the tenderness of understanding.
Now, I wish those monkeys rested on my bureau.
But they are gone.
Sold in some anonymous yard sale.
And still, I have not chosen.

SHELAGH McNALLY

Tongue

(English could just as well be substituted for French, Portuguese or Spanish)

The lord said in my house there are many
mansions and it's true. My neighbour lives in Punjabi
and the one on the other side is in Woloff and I live in the house
of this poem. When we meet, me and my neighbours
we meet in English, which we all wear with our own style,
with Woloff, Punjabi and a miscegenated mixture of
accessories that shoot the language through with native colours like
weaving. English is the market and also the court like the time when Sister
Mavis's son had a drug problem and stole from me; we heard the story
and the apology in English there in the magistrate's court, all in our best
Englishes.

Arabic and Yoruba stowed away as pirate accents below the decks
of manicured English ships, classical elements making love to mulatto jazz
accented with moonlight and jack-strong liquor;
for Corrinna handing out sausages to the children at the Sunday school braai
her gold tooth glinting as she gives and gives
English is a too tight dress that shows off too much
and Teacher Suzanne's English is too big and drags along the floor;
Andile's English is outside beating at the door.
For friends from India, Aotearoa, Panama to St Kitts
English sits in their mouth
like a new pair of teeth—not like the ones that the dentist makes—
their English really fits.

Things take different routes and for some English moved us
out of our own house of language, forced us out, burnt down the village
bombed the city. All we had to shelter our naked memories was the scraps that
the missionaries gave us, those decent souls, the language that we own is the English that they
loaned, reworked to fit our mouths and houses, our traditional attire
and our fine tailored trousers. Smart and also hand me down.

And it is still used as walls to keep outsiders out, but we are native English speakers
and our home is an English that has been curried and spiced and tossed into a nice salad with
pineapple. We were torn apart from each other and we want to go back home, not to the
house where we were born-born

but the time when we were born in a tongue, a tongue we can now use
to become one: to find our tribe and lose it again, find our tribe and lose it again,
to find our tribe.

PHILLIPPA YAA DE VILLIERS

The Tradition

Meet me in the quiet green quadrangles,
the ones unlocked by maple keys. I have gone
there when the heat shed from the concrete
stalls and the café windows' glassy glares
drove me to the unguarded places
at the heart of the city. It is restful
to look for patterns in the sunlight
that lays itself out on the paving stones
only to shift like a restless creature
from one side of the square to the other,
but there is no great design, only regularity.
It seems a kindness that the silence here
dulls the news of the world's calamities—
yet the longer I stay, the thicker grows
my tongue, thick as the walls charred by time
that cannot speak of their tarnishing.
Decorously the lilies swing small bells,
surely they do not grow into this symmetry,
row on row. The wild seedlings that spring
on the narrow lawns are trod upon;
every generation breeds those who fly
out of bounds, to be routed or to flourish.
Everything turning to the light, what light
there is, limited and brief in an eyeless
sky squared and bound by degrees,
by the scale and measure of our desires.
The apparent order cloaks this struggle,
like the long clinging vines that shroud
the old facades. I watch the breezes stir
the blackbirds from their hanging closets,
not knowing if I am watched, if the high
casement windows are crowded with faces
emerging like masked totems from the dark
to mark the passage of those who seek,
like me, admittance to the clarities beyond.
Or to deny my mute gestures, the flightless,

upward gazes. This is no sanctuary.
But look, now to where the ivy parts—
in the deep recesses, another door.
To leave—to sink further within.

PHOEBE WANG

Transient Eden

Don't change it;
it was perfect:

the cold little room
down a damp alley in Daimon
where you lived—
it was perfect;

the way you awakened
with a cough in your futon
at the dark Hour of the Horse
wanting your back rubbed—
it was perfect;

the lie of pretending
to be married
so we could use
the "honeymoon bath" at the inn at Zeze—
that was our perfect secret too.

Even when you finally went away
and I made a mad scene of it
grandstanding my pain—
it was perfect self-indulgence.

And now it has been long since,
but we remain:
a myth of young Adam, young Eve
in our transient Eden—
it is perfect.

MARK MINTON

Tree

Sapwood's where the action's at.
It bears the liquid thrill
that quickens the tree's last leaf.
It's where to tap for sweet release.
That supple slice of yew
was the fatal flex in the yeoman's bow
the moment before the kill.
It's the yes-I-will wood, the fluid
artery back of the bark
where the plant feels its blood run hot.

Such a pulsing piece of tree
might wish to be christened the heartwood,
but that word belongs to the hardened core—
to those seasoned layers of living
that show their years yet keep the body fast.
Did some ancient namer of things—
an old-world timber-man or arborist—
believe that in the end, the heart
is less concerned with that which flows,
and more with that which lasts?

BARTH LANDOR

Tribe

We followed the water
as far as it would take us,
which was forever.

Each time we moved,
we were careful to leave
a broken arrowhead in the hearth ashes
to make sure our ghosts could not follow.

Do not remember this.
It is better now.
You can fly,
and your fire is invisible.

No dead will ever shadow you.
No beast will trace your steps.
No unbidden voice will whisper
dread into your nights.

The singing circle, though, is gone,
and now the tracks you make,
you make alone.

ROBERTA SENECHAL DE LA ROCHE

Tsunami

Grief comes in waves.
I didn't see you coming.
I'd kept guard for three years
then packed away the sandbags.

My desert island,
so far from the epicenter of you,
I didn't think you'd ever
shake me again.

Your shifting
should have gone unnoticed,
your movements
unannounced,

never again to ripple
my safe harbour.
But the news crashed
through me

like a tsunami,
tore up my shallow roots,
shredded the new growth,
left me like driftwood.

Grief comes in waves,
hits without warning.
You can't fight the ocean,
only try not to drown.

So I will lie here
till my sodden splinters dry
and the sand beneath me is solid.
Even now, I can feel the tsunami receding,

trickling back
to the rocks tears puddle under,
to hide in the hollows of me,
seeping away in streams

to wherever grief goes,
to be still,
lap quietly,
and wait.

BRONWYN LOVELL

Two Four Seasons

in the composer's hometown, back to back
evenings, side by side on the first and last
holiday with my lover of classical music
and all that jazz but not, as it happened,

of me. Beware the sweetness of violins'
cantabile, when the secret squeeze
of a hand does not mean love forever.
We heard about, but never saw that year's

summer, weeping with Vivaldi's shepherd
who knew he should have fled before
it was too late but, like us in the Prigione,

could not rouse himself from the spell
in time, the sky all the while darkening,
the thunder ever more deafening.

We should have known that neither
we nor the hunted stag could outrun
the guns and dogs and that, as suspected
from the start, it was all only about

the chase. And so it proved, though
one of us ran as if our life depended
on it, the other aghast at the carnage.
Not so very long after that second

mid-spring evening, suddenly,
from out of nowhere: winter,
no one inside, fireside, safe,

but a season of stinging winds
and icicles shattering underfoot
like so much Venetian glass. So much.

MARY ROZMUS-WEST

Unlimited

it's a monolith, thought the gull
alighting on her shoulder

a monument, mused the spirit
whistling through her walls

a pillar, whispered the wind
twirling 'round her limbs

a village, revealed the crier
surveying her space

a forest, roared the storm
swirling about her hair

a poem, sang the song
hearing a lute in her hum

a damask, decided the novel
etching a tale on her skin

with the sky in one eye
and the ocean in the other

she decides she's
the gut of the earth

SUPARNA GHOSH

Venezuela Evening

Sweat and sea salt
glitter in the hairy vines
of the old man's beard:
Venezuela, Christmas day, 2010.
His guitar is a lemon slice
he squeezes against his ribs,
pouring his audience blues lemonade.
Between his sun tan and the restaurant tables
a local woman dances, caught like a fish in his song.
Her good looks flap against an orange sky.
When he goes to the bathroom
abandoning his stool,
freckled girls search the hollow of his guitar
for rabbits, moonlight, magic.

I'm lying at the other end of the beach
—the shadowy end.
The ocean hurtles crab dust on to my back.
Musing about the stork I saw this morning
stab the water like scissors through an ancient mirror
and feeling happier because I saw it.
I can hear the tourists
guillotining their burgers and fries.
The wind reeks of banana rum, lobster.
A toilet flushes and the man's
fingers find the Spanish chords,
warm as blood.

I search the clouds for messages.

JOSHUA LEVY

Vermeer in Mind Down in the Lower Countries

I think of you with my eyes raised to full
Alert. Little by little your face arranges.
That's how Vermeer worked. A deft control
In mind saw anecdotal Delft reclaimed
Through recognition. A godly charade.
'Who the hell am I' played out against time's
Indifferent apparitions, the light straying
Far enough to make believe a trousseau of crime.

Vermeer grasped the art of conjugal rhyme.
Your lips holding sway, their youthful hubris
Glossing landscapes, mouthing water into wine.
How could any poor soul try to resist,
Mired in mirrors of anxious insistence!
There's a touch of vertigo, naturally,
With each room housing a young girl blissfully
Engaged, wired to her sovereign soliloquy.

But you, openly dramatic, you embody the dream.
Head and shoulders above the rest. The Lower
Countries, the world at your feet, redeemed
By absolute faith and almighty power.
What might you, in full swoon, see from your tower?
My rolling eye, my hand to your breast?
You see beyond ambitious heavens, how your
Visage ordains my need for repentance.

DAVOREN HOWARD

Village Laundry

Birkenau, Autumn 1942

Something is spoiled. But what?
Feliks doesn't understand
why his mother looks so small
and glum when she hangs the wash.

All day his mother frowns
and his mother scowls
and the sooty dust collects
on every pillow, every quilt.

Even feathers have lost their loft.
His grandfather says to ignore
the constant shudder of the trains,
the relentless stench that rises

from the nearby stacks.
His grandmother insists
he wears his good gold cross
week days, not just for Sunday mass.

He doesn't know where Aaron
or Jakob went. The teacher says
they may have gone to visit
family far away, so Feliks,

mind your own business,
and do your math.
Even the village busybody,
the seamstress who knows the size

and secrets of every local woman,
who waves her flashy bracelet of pins
to clear the foul air,
tells his mother she can't figure out

what those Germans are growing
at the experimental farms
across the road where the freights
pull in day and night.

Son, his mother chides, it is time for bed.
Pay no attention. I will sing you
a lullaby. Feliks does not
listen. Not to the song,

or the way the wind howls
through the leafless birch
outside his window—
it is too late.

JUDITH KRAUSE

Walking Underwater

For Kim Stafford

There is this quietness that hangs over North America.
As if all the days were double-glazed against themselves.
It's uncanny. Tectonic. A kind of grief, a kind of pain
In waiting. Some sort of business unfinished. I feel it here
In the northwest, especially, though it stalked me in Toronto:
A slender quality of northern light, I guess, my southern
Self's unused to, transposed into a season of suppressed sound,
A penumbra of silence cast by too much history, too much
Ecstatic landscape, too many plot points resolved at gunpoint,
And it feels like my life's been lost here from the start.

I'm sorry: I'm talking out of my mood, which is jet-lagged
And dreaming heavily of what it used to think I loved.
There are plates subducting other plates on the mantle
Of my mind; there is disquiet and illness of ease. But look,
Out your windows the prayer flags have stopped
Praying, and moss deckles the edges of the oaks and firs,
Which hold out stoically inside the sweetest excuse for day-
Light I've ever seen. Come out with me, you say; let's wander
Up the river. Let's see what N'chi wana has to say about
The light... Which turns out to be a lot, and most of it profane—

The cock and the cunt, for instance, Neruda's entanglement
Of genitals, right there, gargantuan in basalt, and wrapped in Douglas
Fir on the south bank—and glorious. The robins along the Eagle
Creek drainage seemed convinced it was spring, but the cloud
That streamed downriver on the back of the teal-blue water
And the rising wind and the narrow road coming unstuck beneath
Our feet, were all busy putting winter back in place. And for two
Hours you schooled me in the art of walking underwater; for two
Hours we carried a bright conversation all the way to the falls
And back again in rain that fell like disappointment on my head.

If you're going to call a mountain range The Cascades, this is
What you're going to get—their very name on the map
A long walk in the rain. But it was worth it; it nearly always is:
The afternoon crying out the grief the continent had spent
All morning—all last century, so far as I can tell—trying not to
Confess. The watershed was a Japanese watercolour at risk
Of running off the canvas, the big water carrying its muted palette
Down to the sea and taking a good part of me with it. The gorge,
It turns out, is a green sermon left largely unsaid, and as we drove
Out of it, evening lay on the river like half the psalms I never knew.

Note: The Columbia River is known by many names to the people who live along it. To the Chinook of its lower reaches, it is known as “Wimahi”; the Kwak’waka-speaking peoples of the river’s middle reaches call the river “Nch’i-Wana”. Both “Wimahi” and “Nch’i-Wana” mean “the big water” or “the big river”.

MARK TREDINNICK

Waterfall

What a wonderful wasteful thing is a waterfall
that gathers the threads of a million springs
that spin them bit by bit so patiently and send them
seeping creeping weeping skeins and webs of fineness feeling
blindly down from secret hidden sources
each droplet tiny as an ant's egg merging twining into silvery fibres
streaming through the crumbs of earth and stone
with trickle tinkle music pealing through the monster forest
as though the earth itself shed tears as though the rocks themselves could bleed
sending endless tender threads of crystal tendrils
tuneful singers prayerful pilgrims in procession
mercy wrung from heart of stone
drop by drop toward the thundering great unknown

How great and glorious is the waste of waters
pouring down in tons and tons the gathered threads of brightness boiling
tangled hanks of matter weaving into tapestries of matchless pathless passion
patterns tumbling rumbling leaping stumbling seething wreathing
veils and shrouds of greyness heaving up and over boulders' blackness
lace of silver draping wrapping mossy greenness velvet sopping
mopping up the frayed the splayed the tattered foamy tating
and gravel churning in the surge the hurling down of formless fabric
silk and satin glossy brown the billows denseness bunching folding
tumbling from the river's loom that weaves the threads the forest spun
from droplets made of molten spirit
squeezed out eased out one by one
transparent tears of mercy blood of stone

How joyous boisterous is this greatness
nothing sparing spendthrift splurging surging
roisterous waters hurling headlong lifelong hymn song
roaring whirling out and over stony ledges spouting through the river's edges
pouring down in grand abandon glassy columns crashing crushing into clouds of spray
forsaking earth but never breaking slaking thirst for godly greatness grinding fine as grit
the millstone myths of human history every second of every minute of every day
pouring down in priceless beauty spuming spewing clouds of froth and foam enduring

made of nothing never toiling timeless blameless shameless roiling waste of waters
casting down cascades of glory rising up in clouds of diamond
shouting down with chants of triumph every whisper cautious warning
rising up with life's own laughter rainbow blessings
every second of every minute of every day

EDITH SPEERS

Weeping Birch

Knotted tresses
thwack our windowpane. Juice rings
gleam on the table, the company
is gone. Beside the sink, potted herbs
perk, these are basil
and mint. It is the atmosphere, it is
the nervous twitch of the sky, electrical, predictably
grey. The tree, 20 years,
always the whole
Tarantella of its draggled head.
Tonight, we have invited Kenny to come,
it will be awkward, his mother again
rehabilitated, he working, again
placed. I imagine dark spaces
in his brain where the tissue wouldn't take,
wonder if I walked into one, would it smell
of booze. Says he has nothing
to forgive: at 18, can finally come home
to mom, red and wiry hair
wrapped around the couch
with her new chum; can even have
dinner with estranged relatives while Pauline
bubbles madly over a dry white wine,
talk about une vie normale, or the weather's
languid scribbling on the pane, rain's few
cursory remarks.

NATALIE HELBERG

What Gathers

Twisting stems weave
green to red against leaves
raindrop-shaped and tender,
shelter for blue-black berries.

We taste pure purple. We gather.
We touch our tongues to juice
we've asked to grow for us.

We children in our northern gardens
gather dark sweetness of saskatoons,
indigenous fruit that taught Ojibwe
beadwork patterns of vine and leaf
—winter's longing, worked by hand,
reminder of a hot day to come,
promise bright against threat.

Doubtless that was part of it:
what was gathering long ago,
the rush of other, the great change,
foods, woods, bison, prairie,
gods, songs, goods,
all about to alter.

We touch our tongues to summer.
What gathers now we do not know—
some low rumble on the globe's edge.

We gather. Nail tips and lips
stained, we do as our blood asks.
These berries the same berries
our ancestors plucked,
rolling a thumb against the curved edge,
teasing ripeness, readiness,
old ladies joking: Find me a man
can handle a woman like that!

Swoon in July sun, in sensual acts,
the fruit asks. We do as it wishes, we gather,
chilled still by long winter—
always just behind us, always just ahead.

HEID E. ERDRICH

When The Muses can't be bothered

That is when I visit their mother,
skipping past the post and wire fence,
to a house of cold milk, warm cookies made with butter.
But first, a mutual wriggle inside the non-judgmental bird-dog cage,
its muddy riot of paws, tailslap, wet kisses,
down to my best friend Billy's I-dare-ya pegleg balancing act at the rail yard,
past Charlotte's Daddy's hive-inducing tangy, Concord grapevine arbor,
onward to Mrs. Pinsky's gnarled, forgiving claw of a cherry tree,
then "the run" an arm's-length reach from the bad man's gate—
will the cops nab him this time—as they chase him half-naked down the alley?

Done! Now, flopping near the deep and pale purple iris bed
their weary mother will tend—soon as she returns from work,
pulls off her brown shoes, sighs, strokes the neighborhood tom cat,
who has straggled up to her slanted stoop, just like me,
wearing a mouse-eating grin.

I could go on, but The Muses might be listening.
They are sophisticates. Ashamed of her, with her
faded housedress, her chin wart, her birdbath, her straight path
to the trash bin of what might have been,
her shabbily asphalt-shingled house, ringed
by cheap perfume-blending, I-beam-smelting, can-lid stamping factories.
They are her fair-weather daughters,
flinging derision as they toss their glittery manes,

even as Mnemosyne rakes her silvery hair,
reaches out a steady hand,
fine tunes her radio's scratchy sound,
looks skyward for a good, hard rain.

BARBARA HOBBIE

The White Bicycle

Chained to a fence
in Paris, it suffers all winter the skinny
sleet, a white dog
in sad weather. Imagine the saucers
of such a dog's eyes; its deflated
wheels were worrisome that way, the bike
all bones, leaning soulfully,
becoming pure ghost. Where had its rider
gone? And why?
Wandering, I became proprietary,
glimpsed it again in the flea
market earrings, those pearly twins
from the forties. I couldn't afford
the bad luck of their origin; the woman
who wore them is dead.
I passed murals celebrating
the Occupation's end. Girls on bikes
in the mid-century style: skirts blown, hair
wind-caught. World breathless.
Just yesterday, a soldier pedaled past
on his Schwinn, his girlfriend
perched on the handlebars, clasping his neck,
waving to everyone they were passing.
He sang, troubadour, to her.
The white bicycle persisted,
the swanned Os of its fenders, mated
for life. Like good food, poor fool,
the booted, on foot.
I sang, Who could leave behind
a thing so fine? I sang my swell song
to a doll or a gal, in the forties' style.
Sailing anthem to keep up
the boys' spirits, You've got an angel
back home, remember.
The white bicycle became a brassiere, hitched
to a bedpost, then two Shasta daisies

in a glass on the table. Dogged and weary,
as if it had been here, like the moon's
reflection on water, or war,
or beauty, forever.

PAULA BOHINCE

William Herschel and the Webb Telescope

Well, I miss them. The people from the sun.
Before we checked, all celestial bodies were
inhabited and people walked on the sun's hard surface.
Back then, it hid its inner plasma under a cold cloak
and they farmed the lava flows and wrote
long letters to Uranus, these people from the sun

because this was when we'd just discovered Uranus
and anything was possible. The solar system
set sail through space on a silent path while tiny
civilisations marched through each drop of water
and William found another moon of Saturn.
And another. Are we travelling fast enough?

Outside William's window a black dog
leapt into the sea undaunted by the splash,
the sharp rocks, and we make our telescopes bigger
and bigger. Anything is possible. One more size up
and we can watch the slow progress of civilisations across
the face of the sun. Another size up and we can take

a photograph of the beginning of the universe: the galaxies
spreading out like feathers on the surface of water.
Are we travelling fast enough? With his unwieldy telescope
William found the shape of the Milky Way, round under
his palm. Look at the light on the dog's wet back, and look
at the moons of Saturn. Look at the telescope, unfolding.

ROSAMUND TAYLOR

The Winter Garden (Anglesey Abbey)

The snake god, dark-eyed and bronze,
the genius loci, watches me take the winding
path of beaten bark; all side-roads barred with
iron gates of grim design.

Green rue, and crawling hedera, soft gold
of aconite and hamamelis, vermilion fronds
of brisk willow, comb perfumed rain
out of the February mist.

On the bend, coarse loops of thorn, livid
sere and green, bind rich black earth to earth
itself, sheltering small iris and galanthus flowers;
messengers from other times, who bear
late recipes against forgetfulness.

MIKE BANNISTER

Yiu Ming Cheung

You shred daikon in winter, buckets
of crisp white you stirred with rice flour
and dried shrimp, every year preparing
turnip cake for the spring festival.

A good wife, a good mother, you followed
your husband to Thailand, even though
you both couldn't read the street signs
and on hot days your children would wash

in the city river, you followed him from Bangkok
to Hong Kong, you followed him through bankruptcy,
the night markets in Mong Kok, the nylon factory,
and then one afternoon you shut your eyes.

Maybe you expected a bodhisattva to meet you,
or an Arabian horse, but I only know the nights
when cockroaches chewed at my mother's skin,
finding the fingers she had forgotten to scrub.

You would never see Edmonton, the snow packed
roads, the salty cars, your husband floundering
in the bath tub, living with cancer, his lungs
trying to exhale the words he had learned each week:

disparate, irrupt, patina, perdurable . . .
Sundays you steeped laundry in water,
the detergent cracking your palms, cuticles
bleeding. Where is the honey in this brick?

ASHLEY CHOW

You Over There, Me Here: A Whodunit in Three Sestets

Meantime, where I am, the sun is out
 and the day can't get enough of it;
 she sprawls like a coven of working girls, bare-breasted and perfect and sure of it, nipples
 like rose buds, in the garden beds of this paradise
 I'm lost in. Meantime, five or six cicadas, summer's early adopters,
 are over-achieving in the outstretched arms of mid-afternoon.
 All our stories of belonging start somewhere else, you say. Well, sure. And what's left of them
 end up here. In an exquisite mess on the floor of my studio. Some old moments are rehearsing even now

In hemidemisemiquavers on the silver tongues
 of the leaves of the water poplars by my door,
 and memory streams in blue and unsteady from the east to tease them apart. There was a big bang—
 that's all I remember. Oh, and then she kissed me;
 you can make up the rest. Look, I have no narrative in me;
 I have no story to tell, and no story to tell me otherwise. I have galaxies of words. Congealed voices,
 orbiting, elliptical around a thousand original suns. And I hear these riffs, these chords and notes,
 arpeggios of archetypal weather. But if there was a plot, I lost it long ago.

You don't like cicadas, you say;
but I don't hear them giving much of a damn
about that. The lizard loose on what's left of winter's woodpile
is keeping his tail to himself. Every story starts
in the middle of someone else's wood.
Pieces of it, anyway. Some dark, some light. Meanwhile you're over there,
falling out of yourself into the arms of a new city. While, here, the frogs pick up,
in the dark, stitches the cicadas dropped in the dusk:
dot points in search of a sentence; partners
in need of a crime

MARK TREDINICK

Notes on Contributors

Adil Jussawalla was born in Bombay in 1940, and went to school there. He later studied at a school of architecture in London for a year before opting for literature. He read English at University College, Oxford, and taught at the International Language Centre in London for several years before returning to Bombay in 1970. He is the author of two books of poems, *Land's End* (1962) and *Missing Person* (1976). His third book of poems, *Trying to Say Goodbye*, will be published by Almost Island Books this year.

Adrienne Barrett lives in Woodstock, Ontario. Her poems have appeared in *Arc*, *Prairie Fire* and *The Fiddlehead*.

Alice Abracen is a Montreal-based writer studying at Harvard University. She is a graduate of Royal West Academy and Dawson College. She is an avid theatre actor and spoken word poet, most recently seen in *Rapsodies* at the Montreal Fringe Festival and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* at the Loeb Drama Centre. Alice is the Secretary of the Theresa Foundation, an incorporated non-profit organization dedicated to meeting the needs of grandmothers and orphaned children of AIDS victims in villages in Malawi.

Alina Wilson will be graduating from the University of Victoria this year with a double major in both Writing and in Germanics. After that, she intends to spend some time in Germany, working as an English teaching assistant. Her love of writing grew naturally out of an early love of reading.

Alison Luterman was raised in the Boston area and has lived in Oakland, California, for the past twenty years. She has published two collections of poetry: *The Largest Possible Life* (Cleveland State University Press), and *See How We Almost Fly* (Pearl Editions). Her poems have been published in *The Sun*, *Rattle*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Atlanta Review*, and numerous other journals and anthologies. She has worked as a massage therapist, an HIV test counsellor, a poet-in-the-schools, and a playwright in juvenile hall. She has also taught in the programs Poetry Inside Out, which teaches the art of translation to schoolchildren, and Poetry Out Loud, as a coach for a national contest for high-school students in poetry recitation. Her plays are: *A Night in Jail*, *Hot Water*, *Glitter and Spew*, *Saying Kaddish with My Sister*, and *Human Error*. She performs with an improvisational dance theatre troupe called Wing It! and occasionally teaches improvisation as well as essay- and memoir-writing and poetry through the Writing Salon in Berkeley, California. Her website is www.alisonluterman.com.

Amina Danial was born in 1974 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. She obtained her Bachelor and Master of Arts in English Literature, as well as her Bachelor of Education, from the University of Alberta. She currently resides in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, with her husband and three young children.

Anastasia Cox is an Australian poet, fiction writer and academic living in Melbourne. She has had poetry and short stories published in several journals and magazines, and is currently working on two collections of poetry, *The Armada* and *Cosmisms*, and a novel entitled *Weightlessness*.

Andrew J. Kerbel lives in De Pere, Wisconsin, with Sarah (wife) and their enthusiastic dog, Maddie. He is currently enrolled in the MFA-Creative Writing program at Goddard College, studying experimental forms of creative non-fiction. He received his undergraduate degree in English from the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire. Andrew also volunteers as an ESL tutor at Literacy Green Bay.

Anita Sivakumaran was born in Madras, India, and now lives in England. She has published stories in *Riptide* (volumes 4 and 6), and the 2011 *Asham Award Anthology*. She won the 2010 Ravenglass Poetry Prize, and was recently awarded the 'Grassroutes' commission to write poems about multicultural Leicester. Her experiences growing up in India have fuelled her poetry. Her first collection, *Sips That Make A Poison Woman*, was published in September, 2011. She is currently rewriting Indian myths from the female point of view, as part of her studies at the University of Leicester. She is also writing a novel.

Anne Benjamin is a writer in transition. The author of scholarly articles across education, social development and leadership, she has directed two award-winning national curriculum projects in Australia, including a nationally-awarded series of 28 stories for children, and edited journals both in Australia and the U.S.A. In 2008 she co-edited an anthology of readings on education with contributions from Australia, New Zealand, U.K., U.S.A. and Tonga. She is now enjoying the opportunity to explore other genres. Her current focus is on fiction and poetry and on expanding her non-fiction writing beyond the academic. Her poetry has been published in Australia, New Zealand, U.K., U.S.A., Canada and Japan, and she has won awards for her poems and short stories. A recent major project is a book revisiting her experiences while working in India. Anne lives in Sydney, Australia, with her husband, three young adult children and a cat called Tiger-lily.

Ashley Chow grew up in New Hampshire and attended Milton Academy in Milton, Massachusetts. She received a BA in English and Government from Georgetown University, and an MFA from Boston University where she was the George Starbuck Fellow. Her poems have been published or are forthcoming in *New York Quarterly*, *Poetry International*, and *Crab Creek Review*. She is a recipient of a 2011 Robert Pinsky Global Fellowship to Timor-Leste.

Barbara Hobbie is a freelance community journalist concentrating on not-for-profit organizations. She resides in the former East Germany. Her poems have appeared in *Avant Garde*, *The Granite Review*, *Chicago Journalism Review* and *The Anthology of New England Writers*. She draws inspiration from those around her, leading their daily lives with wit and humility.

Barbara Myers was born and bred in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and now lives in Ottawa, Ontario, where she enjoys being part of a large extended family. Her work in poems, essays and poetry reviews has been published extensively in magazines, journals, and anthologies, and she is a contributing editor to *Arc*, a Canadian poetry magazine. She's proud to have spent seven years facilitating workshops for talented local writers, many of whom are now carving out successful writing careers for themselves. In her experience, writing a satisfying poem can take a long time; it never really gets off the ground until somehow idea and image fuse—and that's only the beginning... Her first full collection, *Slide*, (Signature Editions) came out in 2009; *Whistle For Jellyfish* (Bookland Press), of which she is one of the co-authors, has just been released.

Barth Landor lives in Chicago. His novel, *A Week in Winter*, was published by the Permanent Press.

Brian Stanley is a poet and translator who lives in Quebec.

Bronwyn Lovell is an emerging poet and spoken word performer in Melbourne, Australia, where her poetry has been featured at several events and arts and writing festivals, as well as on local television and radio. She has a writing residency at Kinfolk Cafe as part of Australian Poetry Ltd's Cafe Poets Program, and she is a workshop facilitator for the Centre for Poetics and Justice. In 2011 she travelled to the US, where she was the first Australian to compete in the Women of the World Poetry Tournament. Bronwyn has a Master's in Creative Writing and a Bachelor's in English and Film Studies from the University of Sydney. She is currently completing her Honours in Cinema and Creative Writing at the University of Melbourne, where she was

the recipient of the 2011 H.B. Higgins Poetry Scholarship. Besides poetry and film, her interests include storytelling, comics and linguistics. www.bronwynlovell.com.

Bryan Walpert is the author of two collections of poetry, *Etymology* (Cinnamon Press) and *A History of Glass* (Stephen F. Austin State UP); a short story collection, *Ephraim's Eyes* (Pewter Rose Press); and a scholarly monograph, *Resistance to Science in Contemporary American Poetry* (Routledge). His poetry has appeared widely in journals, such as *Agni*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, and *Tar River Poetry*, and has received such prizes as the James Wright Poetry Award from the *Mid-American Review* and first place in the New Zealand Poetry Society International Poetry Competition. Originally from the United States, he received an MFA from the University of Maryland-College Park and a Ph.D. in English from the University of Denver. He teaches creative writing at Massey University in Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Carolyn Hoople Creed published her first poem, "Arbus," in the student-poetry journal *Mandala* following the final year of her pre-Master's at University of Winnipeg, and has continued, occasionally successfully, to send poems to journals every year since. She teaches Creative Writing, along with English Literature and Composition, to Brandon University students. Her writing has been published coast-to-coast in Canada: from *Prism* on the west coast to *Undertow* in the east. Most recently, her piece "Last of the Flower Children" appeared in the Summer 2011 issue of the NYC magazine *phati'tude*, and her poem "Why Goldfinches Love Thistles" appeared in *sub-Terrain*. Her first sonnet to be accepted for publication, "Whale-Belly Clouds," will feature in the Spring 2012 issue of *The Windsor Review*. Her articles, book reviews and essays have appeared in numerous Canadian journals, and her poetry is carried in the archives of greenboathouse.com.

Catherine Owen is a Vancouver poet and musician. She has published nine collections of poetry, and one of prose, *Catalysts*, is due out from Wolsak & Wynn in spring 2012. Her 2009 book, *Frenzy*, from Anvil Press, won the Stephan G. Stephansson Award; other work has been nominated for the B.C. Book Prize, the CBC/Air Canada Award, the Re-lit, the George Ryga and the Earle Birney Prize. Her poems have been translated into three languages and published in literary magazines across Canada, the U.S., the U.K., Germany & Australia. "The Spa for Grief" is from a manuscript titled *Cineris*, about the life and death of her spouse, Chris Matzigkeit (1981-2010).

Cathoel Jorss is a poet and jazz singer whose debut album, *Hey, Big Splendour* (Cathoel & the New Government), coincides this year with the release of her second volume of poetry, *Comb the Sky With Satellites, It's Still a Wilderness*. Her first collection, *Going for the Eggs in the Middle of the Night*, drew reviewer comparisons with the writing of Julian of Norwich and St. Teresa of Aguilá. *Overland* literary journal called her “a first-rate artist at work.” Cathoel has been writing since the age of nine.

C.K. Stead was born in Auckland in 1932, and educated at Auckland and Bristol Universities. He has published 14 collections of poems and two of short stories, eleven novels and six books of literary criticism. His novels are published in New Zealand and the U.K., and there have been translations into a dozen languages. He was Professor of English at the University of Auckland from 1967 to 1986, when he retired to write full-time. He was awarded a CBE in 1985 for services to New Zealand literature, elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1995, and Senior Visiting Fellow at St. John's College, Oxford, in 1997. In 2007 he was awarded his country's highest honour, the Order of New Zealand. He is married with three children and seven grandchildren.

Christopher Doda is a poet, editor and critic living in Toronto. He is the author of two collections, *Among Ruins* and *Aesthetics Lesson*, both from Mansfield Press. He is currently the series editor for Tightrope Books' annual *Best Canadian Essays* and book review editor for the online journal *Studio*.

Cynthia Woodman Kerkham was born in Toronto and raised in Hong Kong and Vancouver. She has a degree in Asian Studies and English Literature from the University of British Columbia, and has worked as an au pair in France, a potter, a journalist and a teacher. Her poems have appeared in literary journals and online sites in both Canada and the U.S., including *The Antigoni Review*, *Room*, *CV2*, *The New Quarterly*, *The Malahat Review*, *Passages North*, *Your Daily Poem*, *Grain* and *Prairie Fire*. In 2009 she won the Federation of B.C. Writers Literary Writes Competition, and in 2011 she won the *Malahat Review's* Open Season Award for poetry. *Good Holding Ground*, her debut collection of poems, was published in spring 2011 by Palimpsest Press. When not sailing the West Coast, she lives with her family in Victoria in a constant state of renovation.

David Bunn was born in 1946 and studied literature at the University of Melbourne. He has worked as an organiser and an advocate for Australian

labour unions for over 30 years and resumed writing verse and fiction 12 years ago. The themes that engage him include water, light, remembrance, love, friendship, belief and unbelief, the layering of event over event in history, and personal history, resistance, and liberation. For the last three years, with wildly inadequate skills, he has been translating the French poet René Char's challenging post-war collection *Fureur et mystère*.

David Mortimer believes poems are for speaking out loud and for carrying with us, as thought, conversation, music, argument—to entertain the eye, the ear, the mouth and the mind. He is working on a third collection, looking to be published through Puncher & Wattmann in the second half of 2012, to follow *Red in the Morning* (Bookends, 2005) and “Fine Rain Straight Down” (*Friendly Street New Poets Eight*, Wakefield, 2003). Mortimer lives in Adelaide, and has had poems shortlisted for the Blake Poetry Prize 2009 and the Newcastle Poetry Prize 2010. For further information or contact details you can visit the South Australian Writers' Centre website at: www.sawriters.org.au/general/david-mortimer.

David Wood is an Australian poet, writer and musician who lives at Springbrook, a mountain retreat in the Gold Coast hinterland, where he designed and built Xanadu, a domed octagonal building with flanking wings, from historic sandstone. He has published one book of poetry and has published literary criticism in *The Courier-Mail* and *The Canberra Times*. His poetry has been published in *The Weekend Australian* and in Australian literary journals such as *Quadrant* and *Meanjin*. David was principal piccolist in the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and lectured in flute at St. Andrews College, Gold Coast, before becoming a full-time writer.

Davoren Howard is a writer whose artistic life began as a musician and theatre performer, first in Australia, then in France. These pursuits were gradually replaced by years of language, poetry and translation studies in the romance languages, concentrating in particular on Roman satire, and leading to a recently completed Master of Arts (Writing and Literature). Currently living in Melbourne, Australia, he is working on a number of writing and translating projects, including his first book of poetry, *Light (on the blink) houses (on the brink)*, a translation of *Les Antiquitez de Rome* and *Les Regrets* by the French Renaissance poet, Joachim du Bellay, and translations of the *Satires* of Horace and Juvenal.

Dimitra Xidou's poetry has been published by bywords.ca and the *Bywords Quarterly Journal*. Her poetry was also included in the 2001 anthology *Words*

and Wonders: A Guelph Area Anthology. Originally from Ottawa, she is currently living and writing in Dublin.

Donald Givans was born in 1990 in Omagh, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland. He recently graduated with a First Class Honours Degree in English from Queen's University, Belfast, and is currently reading for a Master's at Queen's in Modern Poetry.

Donald McGrath grew up on the Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland. He studied Fine Arts at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and Translation at York University in Toronto and Concordia University in Montreal. In addition to working as a translator, he has been employed as a longshoreman, waiter, printer and factory worker. He has published one book of poetry, *At First Light* (Toronto: Wolsak and Wynn, 1995). A second volume, *The Port Inventory*, is scheduled for publication by Cormorant Books in the spring of 2012. He currently lives in Montreal.

Donna Reese taught English for 33 years at Los Gatos High School in California where she held the department record for teaching the longest ninth grade poetry unit without parent complaint. When she was eight, riding in the back seat of her family's '36 Plymouth, she heard Kay Starr sing, "Detour, there's a muddy road ahead," and in that instant understood that the words were about more than road conditions, understood enough about poetry to know her life would be possible. She has lived by poems ever since. She now lives in Grants Pass, Oregon, with her partner of 24 years. She writes, paint and does freelance editing.

Ed Bremson is a retired State employee, a widower, and a stay-at-home dad. He has been a writer for about fifty years, and in 1968 published his first poem. In 2009, at the age of 61, he earned an MFA in Creative Writing. Now he spends his days mostly reading and writing poetry. He also spends a lot of his time contributing to the online Twitter community (@EdBremson) where he has posted thousands of haiku, haiga, senryu, gogyohka, and other short poems. Since earning his Master's degree, Ed has published a dozen poetry ebooks. In 2011 he edited and published two ebooks of haiku by the young Vietnamese poet Vy Vo. Ed lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, with his son.

Edith Speers was born in the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia and grew up in Vancouver and graduated from Simon Fraser University. In 1974 she emigrated to Australia where she established herself as a widely published and prize-winning poet with two collections of verse. She has returned often

to Canada, and a series of poems titled *Soul of a Great Nation* was inspired by her travels across the country. ‘Waterfall’ is one of them.

Elena E. Johnson has been a finalist for the CBC Literary Awards, the Alfred G. Bailey Prize for poetry, and *This Magazine’s* Great Canadian Literary Hunt. Her work can be found in recent issues of *Dandelion*, *This*, *Arc Poetry Magazine* and *The Literary Review of Canada*. Originally from New Brunswick, she now lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Elif Sezen, a visual artist and poet, was born in Melbourne in 1981. She moved with her family to Western Turkey in 1992 and studied painting and sculpture, gaining her Master’s degree at the University of Dokuz Eylul (Izmir). Returning to Melbourne in 2007, she is now a PhD candidate at Monash University. She was shortlisted for the Avni Olez Poetry Prize in Turkish Literature in 2010. She was a speaker at Poetry and the Trace: An International Poetry Conference, which took place at the Victoria State Library in Melbourne (2008). She has made hand-printed books of poetry, including *Dead Grass* (2008), *Birthday* (2010) and *The Visitor* (2011). Her poetry has appeared in national anthologies.

Ellen Wehle’s poems have appeared in Canada, Europe, the U.S. and Australia. Her first collection, *The Ocean Liner’s Wake* (Shearsman, 2009). In her spare time Ellen writes poetry book reviews, a “labor of love,” she says, “in order to help bring exciting new poets to a larger audience.” She lives with her husband and two dogs in Massachusetts.

Emeka Okereke is a poet from Nigeria. He is the Artistic Director of Invisible Borders Trans African Photography Initiative.

Gary Geddes has written and edited more than forty books of poetry, drama, fiction, non-fiction, criticism, translation and anthologies, and won a dozen national and international literary awards, including the Commonwealth Poetry Prize (Americas Region), the Lieutenant Governor’s award for Literary Excellence (British Columbia) and the Gabriela Mistral Prize from the Government of Chile, awarded simultaneously to Vaclav Havel, Octavio Paz, Ernesto Cardenal, Rafael Alberti and Mario Benedetti. His most recent books of poetry are *Skaldance*, *Falsework* and *Swimming Ginger*. He is also the author of two bestselling non-fiction titles, *Sailing Home* and *Kingdom of Ten Thousand Things*; his most recent work of non-fiction is *Drink the Bitter Root: A writer’s search for justice and redemption in Africa*. He taught for many years at Concordia University and is now living on the west coast on Thetis Island with his wife, the novelist Ann Eriksson.

Harry White was born in Dublin in 1958. He was educated in Dublin and Toronto, where he was awarded the E.J. Pratt Medal for Poetry by the University of Toronto in 1984. He is Professor of Musicology at University College, Dublin, and has published widely on the cultural history of music in Ireland and on music in eighteenth-century Germany and Austria. His most recent book is *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

Heid E. Erdrich is the author of four collections of poetry. She is an independent scholar, curator, playwright, and founding publisher of Wiigwaas Press, which specializes in Ojibwe-language publications. Heid grew up in Wahpeton, North Dakota, and is Ojibwe, enrolled at the Turtle Mountain reservation. Heid attended Dartmouth College and Johns Hopkins University. She taught college writing for two decades, including many years as a tenured professor. Heid has served as a visiting author and scholar for dozens of colleges, universities, libraries, and arts organizations. She has won awards from the Minnesota State Arts Board, Bush Foundation, The Loft Literary Center, and elsewhere. Her third poetry collection, *National Monuments*, won the 2009 Minnesota Book Award. *Cell Traffic: New and Selected Poems* is forthcoming in 2012 from University of Arizona Press.

Iain Higgins is a writer, translator, critic, and teacher. He was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, and has lived most of his life on the west coast of Canada. His books include *Then Again* (poems), *The Invention of Poetry* (a translation of Polish poet Adam Czerniawski's Selected Poems), *The Book of John Mandeville* (a translation of a fictional medieval travel book about the East), and *Writing East: The "Travels" of Sir John Mandeville* (an academic study). His poems and translations have appeared in small magazines throughout the English-speaking world, as well as in *Best Canadian Poetry in English 2008*, *The New Canon*, and *Rocksalt: An Anthology of Contemporary BC Poetry*. His creative non-fiction has appeared in *Maisonneuve*.

Jackleen Holton's poetry has appeared in journals and anthologies, including *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, *Evansville Review*, *Red River Review*, *Serving House Journal*, *The Mountain Astrologer* and *The Giant Book of Poetry*. Her chapbook *Devil Music* was published by Caernarvon Press. She lives in San Diego where she works as an astrologer, intuitive life coach, and poet-teacher with California Poets in the Schools.

James Thomas Wills was born in 1947 in Des Moines, Iowa. He studied English and Philosophy at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Conception,

Missouri. After discontinuing studies for the priesthood, he attended Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, in the College of Education. He and his wife live in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. They have three sons and seven grandchildren. James is currently employed as a real estate consultant. He has been active in trade and civic organizations, including Rotary, private elementary school boards, the International Right of Way Association and the Mortgage Bankers Association. He enjoys travelling to recreational and fishing venues, especially the Upper Mississippi River and Branson, Missouri. Water is everything.

Jeff Steudel's work has appeared in several Canadian literary magazines, including *The Fiddlehead*, *CV2* and *Prism International*. In 2010, he received the Ralph Gustafson Poetry Prize. In 2011, he was a finalist in the CBC Literary Awards for poetry. He lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Jillian Pattinson is an Australian writer based in Melbourne. Her poems have been published in the *Australian Book Review*, *Griffith Review*, *Meanjin*, *Going Down Swinging*, *Island*, *Blue Dog*, *Poetry New Zealand*, *Antipodes* (U.S.A.), *Quadrant*, *Famous Reporter*, *Poetrix*, *The Best Australian Poems 2007*, *Motherlode: Australian Women's Poetry 1986-2008*, and the *Newcastle Poetry Prize* anthologies. The working manuscript for Jillian's first poetry collection, *The Infinite Library*, won the 2010 Alec Bolton Prize for an unpublished manuscript. In 2010, Jillian's poem "The Still Point" won the inaugural UTAS Place and Experience Poetry Prize. Other poems have been shortlisted for the Peter Porter, Josephine Ulrick and Rosemary Dobson Poetry Prizes.

John Wall Barger was born in New York City on the night of one of the Manson murders, a few days before Woodstock. Over the last twenty years, he has lived in Halifax, Vancouver, Ottawa, Rome, Prague, Dublin, and Tampere. His first book of poems, *Pain-proof Men*, came out in 2009 with Palimpsest Press. His next book, *Hummingbird*, is forthcoming with Palimpsest in spring 2012. He now divides his year between Canada and Finland.

John Greening (b.1954, London) received a Cholmondeley Award in 2008 and in 2010 was made a Hawthornden Fellow and a Fellow of the English Association. His collection *To the War Poets* appears from Oxford Poets (Carcanet) in 2013, and his most recent books are *Poetry Masterclass* (Greenwich Exchange, 2011), a study of Elizabethan love poets, and his *Hunts: Poems 1979-2009*. There have been studies of Ted Hughes, Hardy, Edward Thomas and the Poets of the First World War, together with a dozen earlier poetry collections, including *The Tutankhamun Variations* (Bloodaxe, 1991).

He has won the Bridport Prize and the TLS Centenary Prize and was included in the top six in the Arvon/Observer competition by Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney. He writes regularly for the *Times Literary Supplement* and has just completed a prose memoir of two years spent teaching in Upper Egypt. His website is at www.johngreening.co.uk.

Joshua Levy lives in London, England, where he is the founder of the Poetry Evening series at Goodenough College. He was a winner of the 2010 CBC Writing Competition and a finalist of the 2008 CBC Writing Competition. His work has appeared in *Maisonneuve* and *Feathertale* and he has been published in three Véhicule Press anthologies. Joshua is co-founder and managing director of an online media company.

Judith Krause is a Regina poet, editor and educator whose publications include four books of poetry—*Mongrel Love* (Hagos Books, 2008) is the most recent— and a collaborative chapbook, *blue transport/the insistence of green* (JackPine Press, 2007). Judith has studied writing in Canada, France, and the U.S., where she completed an MFA in Creative Writing at Warren Wilson College in North Carolina. She has also been awarded residencies and fellowships in the U.S. at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Vermont Studio Center and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. She is currently completing a fifth collection.

G. Karen Lockett Warinsky is a mother of three fantastic children and a former reporter who now teaches high school English. Currently she lives in Connecticut, but she grew up in Illinois and graduated from Northern Illinois University with a Bachelor's degree in Journalism in 1978. After graduating she moved to North Dakota and worked in small-market television for two years before moving to Seattle, Washington. She lived in Seattle from 1980-84, doing public relations for Cornish Institute, an arts college. When the economy soured and her job was cut to half-time, a friend encouraged her to sell her worldly goods and take a job teaching English in Japan. Very hesitantly she decided to have a grand adventure, sold most of her things, and moved to Kokura, Japan, living there from 1984-88. During that time she met her husband, married, had her first child, and moved to Connecticut. She currently lives in Woodstock and teaches at a high school across the border in Massachusetts.

Katherine Greville is an emerging West Australian writer who believes in poetry as both a sanctuary and a call to arms. Combining observation with

invention, her writing explores everyday subjects and imagined worlds. Kath creates deeply textured poems that delicately dismantle the boundaries between the personal and the universal; between loss and gain; between our lives and the stories we tell about them. With a degree in Creative Writing from Curtin University, Katherine has most recently been published in the Australian journals *Querelle* and *Dot Dot Dash*.

Kathryn Mockler is the author of the poetry book *Onion Man* (Tightrope, 2011). Her writing has been published most recently in *Joyland*, *The Antigoniish Review*, *Rattle Poetry*, and *CellStories*, and she has poems in upcoming issues of *The Capilano Review*, *Descant*, and *The Windsor Review*. Her short films have been broadcast on TMN, Movieola, and Bravo, and have screened at festivals such as the Toronto International Film Festival, Palm Springs International Festival, and EMAF. Currently, she teaches Creative Writing at the University of Western Ontario and is the co-editor of the UWO online journal *The Rusty Toque*.

Kelly Norah Drukker was born in Montreal and grew up in the Laurentian region of Quebec. She has lived and taught English in Canada, France, Switzerland, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. Her work has appeared in *The Malahat Review*, *enRoute Magazine*, the *Literary Review of Canada*, *Room Magazine*, *Poetry New Zealand*, *Headlight Anthology*, and *carte blanche*. In 2006, her set of long poems, "Still Lives," won second prize in the CBC Literary Awards, and an abridged version was aired on CBC Radio. Her work has since been featured on CBC Radio's *Cinq à Six* and CJAD's *The Irish Show*, and she is a frequent guest at several reading series in Montreal. Kelly is currently enrolled in the Master's program in English and Creative Writing at Concordia University in Montreal, and is at work on her first collection of poems.

Kenneth Steven is from Highland Perthshire in Scotland and is a poet and writer of fiction for adults and children alike. He also works as a translator from Norwegian; some years ago he was commissioned to translate the Nordic Prize-winning novel *The Half Brother*. The translation went on to be short-listed for the International IMPAC Award. He gives readings all across the UK and abroad, and undertakes creative writing workshops and retreats for many groups. He and his wife Ute live on the edge of the woods above the village of Dunkeld; they have a daughter called Willow who has just celebrated her halfth birthday.

Kim Philley was born in Singapore and grew up in Indonesia, Thailand, and Virginia. She is a graduate of the MFA Poetry Program at the University of

Virginia. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Caravan*, *Indiana Review*, and *AGNI Online*, among other publications.

Kristen Lang lives at the foot of Mt. Roland near the small town of Sheffield on the island of Tasmania (Australia). She studied at Deakin University as an off-campus student, graduating in 2004. Her collection of poems and colour photographs, *Let me show you a ripple*, was published in 2008. Her second book, *Creative Redemption: Uncertainty in Poetic Creativity*, considers various elements of creativity and was also published in 2008. Kristen's poems have appeared in journals across Australia as well as on national radio. Workshops and tuition, both in person and online, form part of Kristen's interest in poetry, as do public readings. She has read in pubs, libraries, caves, on mountaintops, in art galleries, with harps, and with her husband. She is currently preparing a second collection of poems.

Lara Bozabalian is the author of the poetry collection *The Cartographer's Skin*. She has featured at literary festivals and universities across North America and abroad, including Toronto's Art Bar, Lit Up Singapore, Vancouver Poetry House, Toronto Harbourfront, Queen's University, Kingston Writer's Festival, Luminato, FEMBCAB, and the Words Aloud Festival. She has collaborated with members of the University of Toronto Faculty of Music, creating and performing original poetry alongside complementary musical compositions. An active member of the Toronto poetry community, Lara competed at the Individual World Poetry Slam, the American National Poetry Slam, and the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word. As head of English at a public high school, Lara founded and runs a spoken word festival for high school students across York Region, and is a founding member of Toronto Poetry Project, a collective dedicated to fostering social change and creative writing opportunities for youth.

Leslie Danel Batty is a writer, teacher, and doctoral student in the Department of English at Purdue University in Indiana, where her research focuses on modernist British fiction. She is also at work on a collection of poems, tentatively titled *These Three Winters*, about the weight and weirdness of grief.

Leslie Timmins has published poetry and short stories in numerous literary magazines. She has lived in France and Germany and now makes her home with her husband and cat a few short blocks from the sea (the sea, the sea...) in Vancouver.

Linda Rogers is a poet from Victoria, B.C., and the author, editor or illustrator of several dozen books of poetry, fiction and non-fiction. She participates in Poets for Peace and 100 Thousand Poets for Change. She loves the wor(1)d hug, cross-pollination with poetry, and has teamed up youth poets in the international Po(etry)pal program. Currently Rogers is editing an anthology of Victoria painters and poets and tweaking a novel set in Turkey, while her husband plays New Orleans blues with Sweet Papa Lowdown. In the sixties, her father called her an incorrigible rebel and nothing has changed.

Lizy Mostowski studies Creative Writing at Concordia University in Montreal, where she co-curates Synapse Reading Series and is an editorial assistant for Lemon Hound. This year, she is editor-in-chief of *Soliloquies Anthology*.

LM Rochefort is an Ottawa, Ontario and Val-des-Monts, Quebec-based poet and slash/careerist. Her poetry has won awards for *Geist* magazine's 2010 Jack Pine Sonnet Contest, Carleton University's 2009 International Writing Competition, and H.M. for *Arc Poetry Magazine's* 2007 Diana Brebner Prize. A social animal, she is dangerous when cornered.

Lynn Smith is an independent animation filmmaker, and illustrator. She is a multi-award winning filmmaker who has animated, written, directed and produced a number of independent films that have been seen in over 60 festivals around the world. Among those films are: *The Shout It Out Alphabet Film from A to Z*, *Teacher*, *Lester Bit Me!*, *Sandburg's Arithmetic*, *Pearl's Diner* (winner of a Genie). *This Is Your Museum Speaking*, *The Sound Collector*, and *Siena* were created for The National Film Board of Canada. Her films have been screened on television in Canada, the USA, Great Britain, France, Finland and Italy. She is currently working at the NFB on a film called *Soup of the Day*, based on a song by her songwriter husband Zander Ary. This year she retired from Concordia University, where she had been teaching Storyboarding for Animation for over 20 years.

Maia Evrona was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and grew up west of the city, though she has since spent time outside of the United States, travelling in Eastern Europe and living for two years in Jerusalem. In addition to poetry, she is writing a memoir about growing up with a chronic illness, and she translates poetry from Yiddish and Spanish into English. She can currently be found back in Massachusetts, though this is subject to probable change. Her work is featured in the Winter 2011-12 issue of *Ploughshares*.

Margaret McCarthy's poetry and fiction have been widely published. Her most recent work appears in online journal Eureka Street. Her first poetry collection, *Night Crossing*, was launched in 2010 and includes the popular people's poem "Westgate Sister." She teaches professional writing and editing at Victoria University. Her speciality is in short fiction and poetry. She holds a Bachelor in Communications (Hons) at the University of Technology, Sydney, and the Master of Creative Writing at Melbourne University. She lives with her daughter in Melbourne, Australia.

Raised in Scotland, **Margaret Malloch Zielinski** now lives in Ottawa. She has won many awards for both her poetry and prose, and her work has been published in various anthologies and literary journals, including *Soundings* (Buschek Books), *The Antigoniish Review*, *Amethyst Review*, *Bywords*, *Contemporary Verse 2*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *Geist*, *Quills*, *Room* and *Zygote*, and is upcoming in *Untying the Apron* and *A Crystal Through Which Love Passes: Glosas for P.K. Page*. She is one of the six Fieldstone Poets in the collection of travel poetry, *Whistle for Jellyfish*, published by Bookland Press.

Maria Borys was born in Poland and spent her formative years in Mexico. She holds a Master's degree in Spanish-English Translation from the University of Ottawa and an MBA (Finance) from McGill University. She has been writing and translating business, academic and literary texts in English, Spanish and Polish. Her work has recently been published in *Chilean Poets: A New Anthology*, ed. Jorge Etcheverry (Marick Press, 2010), and *Borealis: Antologia Literaria de El Dorado* (Verbum Veritas/La cita trunca, 2010).

Mark Minton lives and works in New York, where he has been president of the Korea Society of the United States—an American non-profit promoting contacts with Korea—for the last two years. Previously, for over three decades, he was an American diplomat serving in Japan, Korea, the United Nations and Mongolia, where he was U.S. Ambassador, 2006-2009. While there, he sponsored the first anthology of American poetry in Mongolian translation ever published. He was born and raised in Bloomington, Indiana, and educated at Columbia and Yale Universities.

Mark Tredinnick, an award-winning Australian poet, is the author of *Fire Diary*, *The Blue Plateau*, *The Little Red Writing Book*, and eight other works of poetry and prose. Mark lives, writes and teaches along the Wingecarribee River, southwest of Sydney. *The Lyrebird* (2011) is his most recent book of poems, and a new collection (*Body Copy*) will appear in 2012. Mark's poem "The Wombat Vedas" won Australia's most prestigious poetry prize, the

Newcastle Poetry Prize, this year—a prize Mark also won in 2007—and his book *Fire Diary* (2010) landed this year's WA Premier's Book Award for Poetry. *The Blue Plateau: A Landscape Memoir* won the Queensland Premier's Award and was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards in 2010. Mark's work is published widely in Australia, the U.K., and the U.S.A. His other honours include the Blake Poetry Prize and the Calibre Essay Prize. His new book, *Australia's Wild Weather*, a lyric essay on the weather of who we (Australians) are, and how it got that way, and how it's all rapidly changing, comes out in November 2011.

Mark Van Aken Williams grew up in Shaker Heights, Ohio. His maternal grandfather, William J. Van Aken, was the mayor of Shaker Heights for four decades. His paternal grandfather was Clyde E. Williams, the second director of Battelle. Williams is the author of *The Prophet of Sorrow* (Lucky Press, LLC 2010), a finalist (historical fiction category) in the following awards: 2010 Book of the Year Awards (Foreword); 2010 International Book Awards; National Best Books 2010 Awards. He is also the author of *Circus by Moonlight: Poems 1997-2007* (Lucky Press, LLC 2009).

Mary Rozmus-West was born and raised in the United States but has lived in Bath, England, for the last 23 years. She holds a doctorate in English Literature from Fordham University in the Bronx, New York.

Matt Radz lives in the Point St. Charles neighbourhood of Montreal.

Matthew Hittinger is an American poet and writer currently based in New York City. His titles include *Skin Shift*, *Platos de Sal*, *Narcissus Resists*, and *Pear Slip*, winner of the 2006 Spire Chapbook Award. The recipient of a Hopwood Award and the Key Deeter Award, his work has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, including *Best New Poets 2005*. Matthew has worked with a number of artists in other disciplines, including ekphrastic collaborations with painters Kristy Gordon and Judith Peck, and art song collaborations with composers Randall West and John Glover. You can read more of his work at www.matthewhittinger.com.

Mike Bannister was born in Alvechurch in Worcestershire, England, a child of the Radio Age. After military service, he worked in Community Schools, mostly in the inner cities, before retiring to Suffolk in 1994 to focus on writing poetry. In that year, his poem "The Fourth Warming" was nominated for the Housman Society's Poetry Prize. He published *Greenstreet Fragments* (Orphean Press) in 2003 and *Pocahontas in Ludgate* (Arrowhead Press) in

2007. *The Weir of Orinsay, Poems New and Selected* is near completion. Mike's poems have appeared in *Other Poetry*, *Envoi*, *The Long Poem Magazine*, *Brittle Star*, *The Interpreters House*, and *The London Magazine*, and have earned awards, including The George Crabbe Memorial Prize for "The Second Scrivener." "Satin Moth" appears in *The Best British Poetry 2011* (Salt). Mike is currently convenor of The Café Poets in Halesworth, a venue for working poets across Norfolk and Suffolk.

Miller Oberman was the recipient of *Poetry* magazine's 2005 Ruth Lilly Fellowship and has recently had poems appear in the *Minnesota Review*, *Rattle* and *Lilith*. Miller has an MFA from Georgia College and State University, a BA from Sarah Lawrence College, and is currently a doctoral student in English at the University of Connecticut. Miller's manuscript, *Useful*, was a finalist for the 2011 National Poetry Series.

Mitchell Albert is a London, U.K.-based book and magazine editor, born and raised in Montreal. He is also the editorial director of PEN International, the worldwide association of writers. Although he has fielded countless submissions of poetry, essays, short stories, articles and novels, his entry for the Montreal Prize represents the first time he has submitted his own work for a publication or prize.

Nancy Toth has been writing poetry since childhood and at age eleven made a conscious commitment to poetry as a life priority. She has taught English at all levels of the education system, including teaching at the university during graduate studies. Nancy, a Canadian of Hungarian ancestry, has an MA in English and is ABD (all but dissertation for the Ph.D). She has had several dozen poems printed in literary periodicals and anthologies, including one in Hungary. She self-published a collection of her work which was included as Canadian content in two first-year university English courses. Nancy's work has been read on stage, national radio and local television, and has been the basis for composition of music and choreography of dance. A life-long educator engaged in continuous learning, she has taught creative writing in poetry and coached aspiring poets. Nancy continues to write while working in Human Resources.

Natalie Helberg's poetry has appeared in *Exile Quarterly* and *The Fiddlehead*. She recently contributed to the Alberta Research Group's "Manifesto to Contest the Manifesto Contest," which won *The Capilano Review's* 2011 Manifesto Contest. She once functioned as an editorial group member and chapbook designer for the Olive Reading Series in Edmonton, AB. She is a

Foucaultian cyborg. She is also an MFA student studying playwriting at the University of Guelph, and akin to ivy.

Noel King is a writer, actor and musician, native of Tralee, Co. Kerry. His poetry, haiku, short stories, articles and reviews have appeared in publications in over thirty countries, the poetry in journals as diverse as *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Sunday Tribune*, *Bongos of the World* (Japan), *The Dalhousie University Review* (Canada), *Kotaz* (South Africa), *Poetry Salzburg Review* (Austria) and *Polestar* (Australia). Along the way he has been a singer with the famous Bunratty Castle Entertainers and has worked as an arts administrator. He edits Doghouse Books, a poetry imprint, with 30 titles published since 2004. His debut collection, *Prophesying the Past*, was published by Salmon Poetry in 2010. His second, *The Stern Wave*, is due in 2012.

Noli Manaig was born in the Philippines in 1971. He grew up in Bayombong in the province of Nueva Vizcaya and was educated at the University of the Philippines. While at school he was thrice awarded the Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio Literary Award for Poetry. His work has appeared in such local publications as the *Philippines Free Press*, *Sunday Inquirer Magazine*, and *The Likhaan Book of Poetry and Fiction*. In his spare time, he scours the metropolis for second-hand books, listens to indie pop, and attends film festivals.

Patricia Young has published ten collections of poetry, most recently *An Auto-erotic History of Swings* with Sono Nis Press. She has twice been shortlisted for the Governor General's Award for poetry and twice won the B. C. Book Prize for Poetry. She has also won the Pat Lowther Award for poetry, two National Magazine Awards, the League of Canadian Poets National Poetry Prize, the CBC Literary Award for Poetry, the Arc Poem of the Year Prize and the inaugural Metcalf-Rooke Award for *Airstream*, a collection of short fiction. Her poems have been included in *Best Canadian Poetry in English* (Tightrope Books) in 2009, 2010 and 2011. She lives in Victoria, B. C. with her husband, Terence Young.

Paul Hetherington has published eight collections of poetry. His poems have been published in anthologies, literary journals and magazines in a variety of countries, including the USA, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Japan. Paul was a finalist in the 1993 Antipodes Poetry Contest (USA) and was winner of the 1996 ACT Book of the Year Award and the 1997 ANUTECH Poetry Prize. He was awarded a Chief Minister's ACT Creative Arts Fellowship in 2002. He edited and introduced the final three volumes of the National Library of Australia's four-volume edition of the diaries of the artist Donald Friend,

the final volume of which was shortlisted for the Manning Clark House 2006 National Cultural Awards. He was founding editor of the quarterly humanities and literary journal *Voices* (1991–97) and is one of the founding editors of the international online journal *Axon: Creative Explorations*.

Paula Bohince is the author of two poetry collections, both from Sarabande Books: *Incident at the Edge of Bayonet Woods* (2008) and *The Children* (forthcoming, 2012).

Peter Norman's poems have appeared in several journals and anthologies, including *Jailbreaks: 99 Canadian Sonnets* and the 2008 and 2009 editions of *The Best Canadian Poetry*. His first poetry collection, *At the Gates of the Theme Park*, published by Mansfield Press in 2010, was a finalist for the Trillium Poetry Book Award. His debut novel is forthcoming from Douglas & McIntyre. A native of Vancouver, British Columbia, Norman now lives in Toronto.

Peter Richardson was born in Norwalk, Connecticut, and moved to Quebec from Vermont in 1969 at age 20. For 25 years, he was a ramp worker for Air Canada at Mirabel and Trudeau airports. He has published three collections of poetry with Véhicule Press in Montreal: *A Tinkers' Picnic* (1999), shortlisted for the 1999 Gerald Lampert Award; *An ABC of Belly Work* (2003), finalist for the Acorn-Plantos People's Poetry Award; and *Sympathy for the Couriers* (2007) which won the QWF's A.M. Klein Award for 2008. His work has appeared in *Poetry Magazine* (Chicago), *Sonora Review*, *The Malahat Review*, *The Rialto* (U.K.) and *Poetry Ireland Review*, among others. He lives in Gatineau, Quebec.

Philip Nugent was born in London, grew up in Wiltshire and Sussex, took a degree at Edinburgh, and lived for a while in Greece where he taught English. Nugent was for many years a police officer in North London. Now he lives with his family in East Anglia.

Phillip Crymble was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and lived in Zambia for several years before permanently emigrating to Canada with his family at the age of ten. His poems have appeared in *Vallum*, *Arc*, *The Malahat Review*, *The Hollins Critic*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The New York Quarterly*, and numerous other publications worldwide. In 2002 he received his MFA from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and was awarded the top Hopwood prize in graduate poetry for his thesis manuscript. After teaching as a lecturer at Michigan for many years, he returned to Canada in 2010, and now lives in Fredericton, New Brunswick, where he serves as a

poetry editor for *The Fiddlehead*. *Not Even Laughter*, his first full-length collection of poems, will be released by Salmon Poetry, Ireland, in 2012.

Phillippa Yaa de Villiers wrote for TV series, worked as a hospital entertainer and played Theatresports before she produced the play *Where the Children Live*, and her first collection of poetry, *Taller than Buildings* (2006), followed by *Original Skin* (2008), a solo piece based on her life story, and “A Thousand Births” for the birth-story anthology, *Just Keep Breathing* (Jacana, 2008). In 2009 she won the Writing Beyond the Fringe/de Buren competition with “The Day that Jesus Dropped the Ball” and followed this with her second collection, *The Everyday Wife* (Modjadji, 2010). She co-edited *No Serenity Here*, an anthology of African poetry translated into Mandarin with Isabel Ferrin Aguirre and Xiao Kaiyu, and edited the South African contribution to *A Megaphone*. Her poem “Consider the Birds” appears in the anthology *Letter to South Africa: Poets Call the State to Order* (Umuzi, 2011). Blog: www.de-Scribe.posterous.com

Phoebe Wang is a first-generation Canadian who has lived in Ottawa and Vancouver. She attended York University and is currently completing her MA in Creative Writing at the University of Toronto. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Arc*, *Canadian Literature*, *Descant*, *Hart House Review* and *Diaspora Dialogues’ TOK 6: Writing the New Toronto Anthology*. She recently placed second in *Grain* magazine’s 2011 Short Grain Contest. She has worked with Pen Canada, Harbourfront Centre, Hospice Toronto, and she is currently serving as editor of *Echolocation* magazine.

Polyxeni Angelis was born in Athens, Greece. She emigrated from Greece to America with her family in 1967. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of Minnesota. Writing is her passion. She resides in Minnesota with her son.

Rachel Lindley began reading poetry to recover language comprehension skills involving the understanding of symbolism, which were damaged after brain surgery to remove a tumour. She soon developed an abiding love of the craft, along with a compulsion to write her own work. Since then, she has had both dramatic and light verse published in the *CBC Alberta Anthology*, *Margie Review*, *Alsop Review*, *Light Quarterly*, *Stitches*, and the anthology *Kiss and Part*. In 2006, she was shortlisted for the CBC National Literary Award in poetry. Rachel is currently continuing to work on two poetry series: *Seven Chakras for a Split Brain* and *Fair Voices: Songs in Three Rings*.

Rafi Aaron's book *Surviving the Censor—The Unspoken Words of Osip Mandelstam* (Seraphim Editions, 2006) won the Jewish Book Award for poetry in 2007 and was on the reading list for A.F. Moritz's course on Canadian Literature at the University of Toronto. Rafi read his poems in Russia when he delivered the Alexander Mackenzie Memorial Lecture at the University of St. Petersburg. His previous book of poetry, *A Seed In The Pocket of Their Blood*, was acquired by Syracuse University Press in 2000, and launched in the United States with a reading at the Canadian Consulate in New York City. He has received grants and scholarships from the Ontario Arts Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Banff Centre for the Arts, and The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. A documentary on Rafi's poetic works entitled *The Sound Traveller*, produced by Endless Films, has aired on Bravo TV and Book Television.

Richard Harrison is the author of six books of poetry. Among them are the Governor General's Award finalist *Big Breath of a Wish*, a book about his infant daughter learning to speak, and *Hero of the Play*, the first book of poetry launched at the Hockey Hall of Fame. His most recent book of poems, *Worthy of His Fall*, is a meditation on faith and violence. He teaches English and Creative Writing at Calgary's Mount Royal University, and his work has been translated into French, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic.

Richard Shorten was born in Winnipeg in 1946. From 1953 to 1969 he lived in Ridgewood, New Jersey, and Seattle, Washington. He attended Central Washington State College, where he received a B.A. in Philosophy. He is retired from Canada Post after 32 years as a letter carrier. Richard has been a poet for fifty years, and has a book in need of a publisher. He lives in Vancouver.

Rina Terry, a former college administrator, is an ordained United Methodist minister who spent the majority of her clergy career as Supervisor of Religious Services at Bayside State Prison, an adult male facility. She currently pastors Cape May United Methodist Church in Cape May, New Jersey. Jazz is her primary spiritual discipline.

Robert Wrigley teaches in the MFA program in Creative Writing at the University of Idaho. His books include *Moon in a Mason Jar* (University of Illinois, 1986); *What My Father Believed* (Illinois, 1991); *In the Bank of Beautiful Sins* (Penguin, 1995), winner of the San Francisco Poetry Center Book Award; *Reign of Snakes* (Penguin, 1999), winner of the Kingsley Tufts Award; *Lives of the Animals* (Penguin, 2003), winner of the Poets' Prize; *Earthly Meditations: New and Selected Poems* (Penguin, 2006); and most recently, *Beautiful Country*

(Penguin, 2010). He is the recipient of two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Among his other awards are the J. Howard and Barbara M. J. Wood Prize; and six Pushcart Prizes. He lives with his wife, the writer Kim Barnes, near Moscow, Idaho.

Roberta Senechal de la Roche is an American historian, sociologist, and poet born in western Maine and raised in upstate New York. She graduated from the University of Southern Maine and the University of Virginia, where she received a doctoral degree in history. Currently Professor of History at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, she lives in the woods outside of Charlottesville near the Blue Ridge Mountains. The premodern and agrarian imagery in some of Senechal de la Roche's poetry reflects her family's Micmac Indian and French origins in rural Quebec.

Robyn Black is from Tatura, Victoria—Australia. When she isn't working in the food manufacturing industry as a Human Resource Specialist, she is a poet and short fiction writer. Former editor of *Tamba Magazine* (Australia), she has had short fiction and poetry published in *Tamba* and *Ripples* magazines. Black won the 2009 and 2010 Joseph Furphy Commemorative Literary Prize—Open Section—Poetry, and was a finalist in the Joseph Furphy Commemorative Literary Prize—Open Section Poetry 2006 and 2007 and Fiction 2004. Black has published short fiction in *That's Life* magazine (Australia) and poems in several editions of *International Who's Who of Poetry*. Her short fiction has appeared in several other publications, including local newspapers. She is a member of the Goulburn Valley Writers Group Inc. (Shepparton, Australia), and former committee member of Country Festival of Writing (Shepparton, Australia).

Ron Pretty's seventh book of poetry, *Postcards from the Centre*, was published in 2010. Until he retired in 2007, he ran the Poetry Australia Foundation and was director of Five Islands Press. He taught Creative Writing at the Universities of Wollongong and Melbourne. He has edited the literary journals *SCARP* and *Blue Dog: Australian Poetry*.

Rosamund Taylor was born in Dublin in 1989. She currently lives in Edinburgh and is a student veterinary nurse. She was a runner-up for the Bridport prize in 2008, and has been published by New Writing Dundee and the Ragged Raven Press.

Russell Thornton's books are *The Fifth Window* (Thistledown, 2000), *A Tunisian Notebook* (Seraphim, 2002), *House Built of Rain* (Harbour, 2003), which was a finalist for the ReLit Award and the B.C. Book Prize, and *The Human Shore* (Harbour, 2006). He won the League of Canadian Poets National Contest in 2000 and *The Fiddlehead* magazine's Ralph Gustafson Prize in 2009. His poems have appeared in several anthologies, among them *Open Wide A Wilderness: Canadian Nature Poems* (Wilfrid Laurier, 2009), *A Verse Map of Vancouver* (Anvil, 2009), *Rocksalt: An Anthology of Contemporary BC Poetry* (Mother Tongue, 2008), *Thessalonki: A City in Literature* (Metaixmio, 2002), and *Into a Foreign Tongue Goes Our Grief: Poems On or After Cavafy* (Bilieto, 2000). For a number of years, he divided his life between Vancouver and Aberystwyth, Wales, and then Salonica, Greece. He now lives in North Vancouver. See: <http://www.Thornton999.blogspot.com/>

Ruth E. Walker's poetry and fiction have been published in journals and anthologies in Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. Her very first submission won *Canadian Living* magazine's short story contest in 1996 and she has gone on to receive other awards and accolades for her fiction and poetry. Ruth has read her poetry on radio and television, at book launches, literary festivals and on a floating dock in northern Ontario. A founding editor for the literary journal *LICHEN Arts & Letters Preview*, she is an Artist in Residence in Education with the Durham District School Board. Ruth is a partner in Writescape, delivering workshops and organizing retreats in southern Ontario for all types of writers at all levels of their writing journey. Ruth lives and writes in Whitby, Ontario, Canada and can be reached at walkwrite@sympatico.ca.

Sally A. Moore was born in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Her writing credits include a poetry prize from the Ontario Poetry Society, and published articles in *The Globe and Mail*, *Word Weaver*, *Ottawa Business Magazine*, and *Sustainable Cities IV*, published by Wessex Institute. Sally is the recipient of the Len Cullen Writing Scholarship in Durham Region, and currently serves as Vice President and Workshop Coordinator on the Board of Directors for the Writers' Community of Durham Region. Sally's writing has appeared on websites, radio broadcasts, advertisements, industry magazines and promotional materials, including the ArtShow series of books, Building a Sustainable Future educational initiative, and *Inside MasonryWorx* magazine. Sally holds a Diploma with Distinction in Commercial Communications, an Executive Education Certificate from York University's Schulich School of Business, and has earned Certificates of Achievement from Humber School

for Writers, studying under Canadian authors Alistair McLeod, Susan Swan and Nino Ricci.

Scott Draper trained in Classics and classical French cuisine. He lives in Toronto, where he divides his time between vegetables and verse.

Shane Neilson is a Canadian poet.

A child of the '50s, **Shelagh McNally** grew up in Ottawa, escaped Ottawa to live in Toronto, escaped Toronto to live in Mexico on a beach. She returned to Canada after 9/11 and settled onto a tiny island outside of Montreal. She's been a closet poet since she was 12 years old but has worked as a journalist and travel writer for the last 23 years.

Sophie Cooke (b.1976) is a Scottish poet, short story writer, and novelist. She grew up in Perthshire and studied Social Anthropology at Edinburgh University. Her poetry is published in *Product*, *Gutter*, and *The Istanbul Review*. This year, she won the Genomics Forum Poetry Competition, which was organised in conjunction with the Scottish Poetry Library. She recently worked on a project with the British Council in Ukraine, translating poems from Ukrainian into English. She read her poem "Antarctica" at the opening of the Lviv International Literary Festival. Her short stories have been published in literary magazines and anthologies across Europe, and broadcast on BBC Radio. Her short story "After The Reunion" is also available on Kindle. She is the author of the novels *The Glass House* and *Under The Mountain*, both published by Random House, and was shortlisted for the Saltire First Book of the Year Award. She lives in Edinburgh.

Sophie Grimes graduated from Oberlin College in 2007 with majors in both Creative Writing and East Asian Studies. After college, she spent two years in Kunming, China as an Oberlin Shansi Fellow. She completed her MFA in Creative Writing at Boston University this spring and is currently back in Asia as a Robert Pinsky Global Fellow. She lives in Chicago. She has had poems published in *419 Magazine*, *Crate*, and was a finalist for the *New Letters* Poetry Prize this year.

Spencer Reece was ordained an Episcopal priest at Iglesia Catedral del Redentor in Madrid, Spain, in October, 2011. He now lives and works there. His first book of poems, *The Clerk's Tale* (Houghton Mifflin), won the Bakeless Prize, and was selected by Louise Glück in 2003. James Franco made the title

poem into a short film which closed the Cannes Film Festival in 2010. He has won fellowships from the NEA, Guggenheim, Whiting Writers, Library of Congress and Amy Lowell Traveling Grant. His poems have appeared in *The New Yorker* and *Poetry*. His second book of poems, *The Road to Emmaus* and a devotional book of meditations, *The Little Entrance*, will both be published by Farrar Straus Giroux in 2013. "Among Schoolchildren" concerns the orphanage of Our Little Roses, founded by Dr. Diana Frade, for abandoned and abused girls in Honduras. Reece hopes to return with a Fulbright to Honduras to help the girls write poems about their lives, publicizing Frade's story of founding the orphanage.

An east coast expatriate, **Stuart Jay Silverman** taught college in Alabama and Illinois before retiring to homes in Chicago, IL, and Hot Springs, AR. His *The Complete Lost Poems: A Selection* is published by Hawk Publishing Group. Some 400 of his poems and translations appear in journals in Canada, the U.S.A., England, and France.

Suparna Ghosh is a poet and painter based in Toronto, Canada. Her words and visuals are collaged to create narratives and yarns, myths and mysteries. Her poems have been featured in various magazines and anthologies. She has recited her poetry at several venues to the accompaniment of musical instruments, particularly the sitar, and exhibited her works in galleries in Toronto, New York, Mumbai and New Delhi. Suparna has published a collection of poems and drawings, *Sandalwood Thoughts*, and *Dots and Crosses*, a long prose poem with sketches, and a musical CD based on the same book. She was an initial member of the Art Bar, the longest-running poetry reading series in Canada, a member of the League of Canadian Poets, Canadian Authors Association, Ontario Poetry Society, United Poets Laureate International, the International Writers Association, and the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto. Please visit: suparnaghosh.com

Susan Glickman has published five books of poetry with Véhicule Press, most recently *Running in Prospect Cemetery: New & Selected Poems* (2004); a sixth, *The Smooth Yarrow*, is due out in 2012, the same year as her second novel, *The Tale-Teller* (Cormorant Press). Her first novel, *The Violin Lover* (2006), won the Canadian Jewish Fiction Award. *The Picturesque & the Sublime: A Poetics of the Canadian Landscape* (1998) won both the Raymond Klibansky and the Gabrielle Roy prizes, and the Canadian Children's Book Centre called *Bernadette and the Lunch Bunch* one of 2008's best kids' books. A sequel, *Bernadette in the Doghouse*, was published in fall 2011, and the third book in the trilogy, *Bernadette to the Rescue*, will be coming out in spring 2012.

Susan Holland was born in Stoke-on-Trent, England, in 1952 and grew up in the Borders of Scotland. She then lived for 30 years in London where she worked in the Information Science Department of City University and taught creative writing in London schools and colleges. In 2003 she returned to Scotland to look after elderly parents and now lives in Campbeltown on the West Coast with her husband. She has won many awards for short fiction, including the first Asham Prize for writing by women and, most recently, she was runner-up in the V.S. Pritchett Memorial Award 2008, organised by the Royal Society of Literature. Her poem “The Red Sandals” was shortlisted for the Bridport Prize in 2009.

Talya Rubin is a Montreal-born, Sydney-based poet, playwright and performer. Her poetry won the National Canadian Bronwen Wallace Award and was shortlisted for the Winston Collins/Descant prize for Best Canadian Poem of 2011. Her writing for theatre has been nominated for a MECCA (Montreal English Critics Circle Award) for best new text and she was commissioned to adapt and perform a solo play for ABC Radio National (Australia), where it was broadcast nationwide. She has toured internationally with her solo plays, and performances include: Arts House (Melbourne), Performance Space (Sydney), Brisbane Festival’s Under The Radar, Centaur Theatre’s Wildside (Montreal) and Summerworks (Toronto). Her poetry, short stories and non-fiction have been published in *Grain*, *Matrix*, *Macleans Online* and *ascent* magazines. Talya is currently undertaking an MFA in Creative Writing at UBC’s Optional-Residency Program.

Toni Gordon lives in Dunedin, New Zealand, and although she has spent many years writing she has never attempted to publish any of her work. She decided this was a year for change. She is currently working on two novels inbetween working, raising her children and painting.

Tony Gilmore is a poet and teacher. He is a native of Dublin. His work has been published in the *Irish Poetry Review* and in *Living Streets*, 2009, 7 Towers Publishing. He has, for many years, given readings at venues in Dublin and also in Liverpool. Tony teaches mathematics in the Liberties, the old centre of Dublin. He is married to Helen and has three adult children.

Travis Mossotti was awarded the 2011 May Swenson Poetry Award by contest judge Garrison Keillor for his first collection of poems, *About the Dead* (2011, USU Press), and his work has appeared in such places as the *Antioch Review*, *Manchester Review*, *The Writer’s Almanac*, *Poetry Ireland*, *Subtropics*, *Vallum* and many others. In 2009, he was awarded the James Hearst Poetry Prize

from the North American Review by contest judge Robert Pinsky, and in 2010 his poem “Decampment” was adapted to screen as an animated short film. He currently resides in St. Louis, Missouri, with his wife Regina and their daughter Cora.

Vicki Goodfellow-Duke lives in Calgary, Alberta, Canada; she is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Communications at Mount Royal University. Her poetry has appeared in various publications, including *The Dalhousie Review*, *Rock Salt Plum Poetry Review*, *Room Magazine*, *CV2*, *Kaleidowhirl*, *The Grist Mill*, and *New Millennium Writings*. She has received various awards, including The Dorothy Sargeant Rosenberg Memorial Poetry Prize, Cyberslam, The Ray Burrell Award, and Prairie Poetry Friends’ Prize. In 2007, she was the recipient of the Shaunt Basmajian Award for her chapbook *The Year We Quit Believing*.

Victor Tapner is a British poet living just outside London. He has won several poetry prizes, including the Academi Cardiff International Competition. His first full-length collection, *Flatlands* (Salt Publishing, 2010), has been shortlisted for the Seamus Heaney Centre Prize for Poetry. A former journalist on the *Financial Times* newspaper, he is now a full-time writer.

Vona Groarke was born in the Irish Midlands in 1964. She has published five collections of poetry with Gallery Press (and in the U.S., with Wake Forest University Press), most recently *Spindrift*, which was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation in Autumn 2009 and was shortlisted for the Irish Times Poetry Prize. Her translation of the classic eighteenth-century Irish lament by Eibhlín Dhubh Ni Chonaill was published in 2008 as *Lament for Art O’Leary*. She teaches poetry in the Centre for New Writing at the University of Manchester in the U.K.

Notes on Editors

Anand Thakore is a Hindustani classical vocalist by training and vocation. His first collection of verse, *Waking in December*, was published by Harbour Line. He lives in Mumbai where he teaches music privately and gives frequent public performances of his music and poetry.

Eric Ormsby has published six poetry collections. His poems have appeared in such magazines as *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, and *PN Review*, and are included in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. An essayist and reviewer, he has also published two collections of essays on poetry and translation.

Frank M. Chipasula is a Malawian poet, editor, fiction writer and publisher of Brown Turtle Press. Chipasula is currently working on *The Burning Rose: New and (Re)Selected Poems*. He has also edited several anthologies of African poetry. His poems have been translated into French, Spanish and Chinese.

Fred D'Aguiar is a poet, novelist, playwright and essayist born in London of Guyanese parents and brought up in Guyana. His ten books of poetry and fiction were translated into a dozen languages. Currently, he teaches at Virginia Tech where he is Gloria D. Smith Professor of Africana Studies and Professor of English. For more see, freddaguaiar.com

John Kinsella was born in Perth, Australia. His most recent books include *Activist Poetics: Anarchy in the Avon Valley* (LUP/CUP, 2010), and *Sand* (Fremantle Press, 2010). His *Peripheral Light: Selected and New Poems* (WW Norton, 2004) was selected and introduced by Harold Bloom. He is the editor of *The Penguin Anthology of Australian Poetry* (Penguin, 2009).

Michael Harris has written seven books of poetry, won several prizes, and has been published in leading journals in North America and Europe. The founding editor of Véhicule Press's Signal Editions, Harris has edited over fifty books of poetry by over thirty-five authors. His book *Circus* (2010) was shortlisted for the Governor General's Award.

Odia Ofeimun is a Nigerian poet and political journalist. He is currently compiling the anthology—*Twentieth Century Nigerian Poetry*. Ofeimun's poems have been anthologised in many collections, including *Okike* (ed. Chinua Achebe), *Poems of Black Africa* (ed. Wole Soyinka, 1975), and *The*

Heinemann Book of African Poetry in English (1990). His poetry collections include *The Poet Lied* (1980), and *A Handle for the Flutist* (1986).

Sinéad Morrissey was born and raised in Belfast. She has published four collections of poetry: *There was Fire in Vancouver* (1996); *Between Here and There* (2002); *The State of the Prisons* (2005), and *Through the Square Window* (2009), all with Carcanet Press. Her awards include The Patrick Kavanagh Award, an Eric Gregory Award, the Rupert and Eithne Strong Award, and the Michael Hartnett Poetry Prize.

Stephanie Bolster is a Canadian poet whose first book *White Stone: The Alice Poems* won the Governor General's Award and the Gerald Lampert Award in 1998. She has published two other poetry collections, *Two Bowls of Milk*, which won the Archibald Lampman Award, and *Pavilion*. Bolster's work has been translated into French (*Pierre Blanche: poèmes d'Alice*), Spanish, and German.

Valerie Bloom was born and grew up in Jamaica but now lives in England. She is the author of several volumes of poetry for adults and children, picture books, pre-teen and teenage novels and stories for children, and has edited a number of collections of poetry for children. Recently, Valerie Bloom was awarded an MBE for services to poetry.

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